



## AFSA Retiree and Veteran Affairs Newsletter

### - AFSA VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM

We are honored to have the following Professional Development Speakers scheduled for our virtual Professional Development Symposium. We need your help! Please share the link to the vPAC <https://www.fedstreaming.com/AFSAPAC2020> with everyone you know and encourage them to join in. We have slated a cadre of wonderful, powerful, and impactful speakers.

If you have a particular question for a upcoming presenters, please send it now [afsacomm@hqafsa.org](mailto:afsacomm@hqafsa.org)

In the subject line, please state: Question for (Speaker's Name)

#### **Virtual Professional Education & Development Symposium** 25-28 August 2020

- AFSA International President's Annual Brief ~ CMSgt (Retired) Michael R. Carton
- Professional Development Forum: Resiliency ~ Dr. Russell Ledet
- Legislative Up-to-the-Minute Update ~ Matthew Schwartzman
- AFSA International Executive Director's Annual Brief ~ Keith A. Reed, MBA
- Professional Development Forum: Five Voices ~ Mark Tilsher
- Professional Development Forum: Financial Readiness~ CMSgt (Retired) Gerardo Tapia
- Professional Development Forum: Senior Leadership Perspective ~ General Charles Q (CQ) Brown, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force & CMSAF JoAnne Bass
- Virtual AFSA International and CMSAF Award Ceremony ~ Guest Speaker: CMSAF #5 Robert D. "Bob" Gaylor
- Professional Development Forum: Senior Leadership Perspective ~ CMSgt Roger Towberman Senior Enlisted Advisor, United States Space Force
- Professional Development Forum: Leading on Purpose ~ Dr. Kevin Basik (Basik Insight, LLC)
- Professional Development Forum: CMSgt (Retired) Anthony Brinkley, On the Brink Consulting
- Professional Development Forum: Air University K12
- Professional Development Forum: Former CMSAF Panel ~ CMSAF#14 Gerald R. Murray & CMSAF#15 Rodney J. McKinley

- Professional Development Forum: CMSgt (Retired) Todd Simmons, Courageous Leadership Alliance
- Professional Development Forum: Senior Leadership Perspective DIAMOND ONE ~ CMSgt Nathaniel M. Mike Perry
- Professional Development Forum: Conference CapStone ~ CMSAF JoAnne Bass (AF/CCC)

## - IMPORTANT TRICARE UPDATE

As of right now, if you are a Group A retired beneficiary, on January 1, 2021, you and your family will begin to pay a monthly TRICARE Select enrollment fee to maintain your TRICARE Select coverage. Effective January 1, 2018, Congress directed the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to implement TRICARE Select retiree enrollment fees in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017, but delayed the implementation of these fees until January 1, 2021. (**Note: Group A** – If you or your sponsor's initial enlistment or appointment occurred before January 1, 2018. **Group B** – If you or your sponsor's initial enlistment or appointment occurs on or after January 1, 2018.)

Tentatively, come January 1, 2021, retirees using TRICARE Select will pay \$150 per year for an individual and \$300 for a family and must pay a \$30 copay for a primary care visit or urgent care visit at a network physician, or 25% of the cost for non-network care, as well as \$45 or 25% at a network or non-network specialty care provider. It is also important to note that the enrollment fees do not apply to active-duty family members on TRICARE Select or Medicare-eligible retirees on TRICARE for Life.

Our legislative team has been in contact with leading officials at the DHA to better understand what these changes will exactly look like. In short, this is the information we have received:

- Effective Jan. 1, 2021, TRICARE Select Group A retired beneficiaries will be required to pay TRICARE Select enrollment fees. This must be done via allotment, where feasible. This is a change. TRICARE Select Group A retired beneficiaries have not paid enrollment fees for TRICARE Select previously
- This fee also applies to TRICARE Overseas Program Select Group A retired beneficiaries. Enrollment fees are waived for Chapter 61 retirees and their family members and survivors of deceased active duty service members.
- There is no change for TRICARE Select Group B beneficiaries, they currently pay enrollment fees. Active duty family members in group A and B do not pay TRICARE Select enrollment fees
- To maintain health care coverage, TRICARE Select Group A retired beneficiaries must take action and pay their TRICARE Select enrollment fees. During TRICARE Open Season, beneficiaries can set up an allotment for enrollment fees with their regional office. Beneficiaries who don't set up their TRICARE Select enrollment fee by Jan. 1, 2021 will be dis-enrolled from TRICARE Select due to non-payment
- Beneficiaries will have 90 days from their termination date to request reinstatement. If they don't take action, beneficiaries will only be able to get care from a military hospital or clinic if space is available (i.e. all civilian healthcare costs will be their full responsibility)

AFSA remains committed to our legislative platform's goal to resist TRICARE fee increases and pharmacy co-pays. With Veteran representation in Government is at an all-time low, sharing your story is an opportunity to give our nation's lawmakers a better understanding of the issues we face today. Your unique story puts a human face on complex institutional issues whose solutions often require systemic change.

If you would like to share your story then please visit: <https://www.hqafsa.org/takeaction.html?vsrc=%2fhome>

## - AFSA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Founded in 1961, the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA) legislates, advocates and educates America's elected, military and community leaders in support of the quality of life for our 100,000 military members and their families. AFSA continues to work long and hard to ensure the many benefit reductions being proposed are minimized or nullified. Your membership will continue to pay dividends in terms of fair and equitable pay increases, retirement programs, educational benefits, and affordable and available health care.

AFSA MEMBERSHIP is open to all: UNIFORMED SERVICES: Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Retired and Veteran Military Members (Joint Services Enlisted and Commissioned Officers), Public Health Services (PHS), and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) personnel; FAMILY MEMBERS of Uniformed Service Members, and ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: DoD Civilians, Civil Air Patrol, JROTC, Mission Partners/Sponsors and all Military Supporters. Visit: [WWW.HQAFSA.org](http://WWW.HQAFSA.org) for more information and to join.

## - MENTAL HEALTH TOOLS

Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness during their lifetime.

Below are practical tools that everyone can use to improve their mental health and increase resiliency regardless of the situations that they may be dealing with or attempting to handle.

- [Managing Anxiety.pdf](#)
- [Managing Stress Workbook.pdf](#)
- [Progressive Muscle Relaxation.pdf](#)
- [Mental Health Phone Apps for Veterans.pdf](#)

Remember, changing the way you think is one way you can change the way you feel.

## - YELLOW RIBBON SCHOOL AID

If you're a current or prospective student Veteran, the Yellow Ribbon Program can help you afford your tuition for out-of-state college, graduate school, and various training programs that the GI Bill doesn't cover.

[Find out if you're eligible for the Yellow Ribbon program.](#)

## - CLAIMS EXAMS RESUMING

VA continues to safely resume in-person Compensation & Pensions (C&P) exams across the country. If you require a C&P exam and live in a resumed location, a VA medical exam provider will contact you for scheduling. Watch the [YouTube playlist](#) to learn what to expect during your exam.

## - UPDATE YOUR BENEFICIARY

Keeping your beneficiary information up-to-date guarantees your insurance proceeds are distributed the way you intend and makes it easier for your family to file a claim and receive the benefit quickly.

[Review and update your beneficiary information online.](#)

## **- VA HEALTHCARE FOR RECENTLY DISCHARGED VETERANS**

Veterans: You can receive free VA health care for up to 5 years after discharge or release for any condition related to your service in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan or Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation New Dawn in Iraq.

For more information visit: [www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/active-duty/](http://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/active-duty/)

## **- VA SLOWLY WELCOMING BACK VOLUNTEERS – WITH SAFEGUARDS**

VA medical facilities are expanding services and will welcome back our volunteers gradually with several safeguards. We've created new volunteer roles, adapted some, and continue to pause others.

Now, across the country, VA medical facilities are expanding services, including previously cancelled elective procedures and routine in-person appointments. Along with these services, we will begin welcoming back our volunteers carefully and gradually with several safeguards.

Based on our critical needs, we've created new volunteer requirements. Before showing up for work, volunteers should obtain approval and complete orientation and safety training. Like everyone at VA facilities, they need to wear a face covering and follow physical distancing guidelines while on duty. They also need to consent to health screenings, including temperature checks, prior to entering the facility.

Volunteers interested in returning to work should contact their local Voluntary Service office to discuss current facility needs and their interests. Visit <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/directory/> and click "VOLUNTEER OR DONATE NOW" to find your local office.

Before showing up for work, volunteers should obtain approval and complete orientation and safety training. Leadership will bring back volunteers in phases, beginning with the most essential assignments. Volunteers should consider their own personal safety and comfort before returning to service.

Older people and people of any age who have serious health problems are at higher risk of developing serious symptoms of COVID-19. Those health problems include: heart or lung conditions, weakened immune systems, severe obesity and diabetes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people at higher risk stay home when possible. They should also keep distance between themselves and others if COVID-19 is spreading in their community.

We know how dedicated our volunteers are to their service and we look forward to their safe return as soon as possible.

## **- ARE YOU A VETERAN IN CRISIS OR CONCERNED ABOUT ONE?**

Did you know that VA offers same day services in Primary Care and Mental Health at 172 VA Medical Centers across the country? Contact the Veterans Crisis Line (1-800-273-8255 and press 1, Chat, or Text 838255.)