



## AFSA Retiree and Veteran Affairs Newsletter

### - VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS AIM HIGHER FOR CONTINUED EDUCATION WITH A NEW AFSA MEMBERSHIP

AFSA has partnered together with Columbia Southern University to provide a sponsored One-Course Scholarship (**Over a \$700 value. Plus Registration Fee-Waiver and Books at No Cost!**) for all military veterans/retirees and family members.

#### **This Is A Continued Educational Opportunity For Those Who Have Borne The Battle!**

AFSA is honored to help Military Veterans/Retirees and their Family Members on their journey to reach higher educational goals. Join AFSA now to participate. Membership will be validated before scholarship is awarded. Participants must enroll in the CSU College course within six months of joining the AFSA. Visit our website at [www.hqafsa.org/edconnect](http://www.hqafsa.org/edconnect)

### - VETERANS DAY

While many realize that Veterans Day, which always falls on November 11, is a day to honor our Veterans, few realize the historical significance behind the day.

Veterans Day originated as Armistice Day and marked the end of hostilities of World War I that occurred at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. Therefore, the day is always recognized on November 11th, regardless of the day of the week the 11th falls on.

Americans are encouraged to say thank you to those who fulfill this patriotic duty to maintain the freedoms of our country.

### - VA, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PARTNER TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE PROTECTIONS FOR VETERANS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced the two agencies will compare information on questionable Veteran health care providers both in VA treatment facilities and through purchased care programs in their communities.

VA and CMS expect the first Medicare Sanction data exchange to occur by the end of the year and continue at recurring intervals.

“CMS is an industry leader when it comes to identifying questionable providers and nefarious medical practices,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Their willingness to partner with VA puts Veterans first by allowing us to identify providers who do not meet our quality standards.”

“CMS is proud to work with VA and share our innovative data analytics and best practices for detecting and preventing potential fraud, waste and abuse across other federal healthcare programs to improve care to our nation’s Veterans,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma.

Medicare Sanctions include abusive billing practices, felony convictions or improper prescribing practices. Employing CMS protocols provides VA with a proven tool to use data to address potential problems earlier and more systematically. VA will carefully review matches to determine employees’ continued suitability for VA employment and providers’ continuing participation in community care programs and will take swift action to protect Veterans.

This data match for provider enrollment information is one of many efforts planned as part of the VA and CMS partnership first announced in January 2018. The agencies are actively exploring additional data sharing focused on identifying fraud, waste, and abuse in health care payments.

#### **- VA FINALIZES PLAN TO RESOLVE LEGACY APPEALS BY THE END OF 2022**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that it has finalized its plan for resolving legacy appeals across the department and expects to complete the remaining legacy appeals by the end of calendar year (CY) 2022. Legacy appeals are claims for which the VA provided notice of decision prior to implementation of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 (AMA) and the claimant has not elected to participate in the AMA process.

In response to the growing number of legacy appeals, VA implemented AMA as of Feb. 19, giving Veterans more choice and control over the process of their appeals.

“AMA has been in place for almost a year and we are finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel for the resolution of legacy appeals,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “I am proud of the work being done here at VA to make sure those Veterans waiting the longest for a decision get their results.”

This past year, VA decreased the number of pending legacy appeals despite receiving thousands of new appeals. VA is successfully reducing legacy appeals while also working AMA appeals to ensure Veterans receive their decisions in a timely manner.

VA’s three administrations –Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery Administration – plan to resolve their non-remand legacy appeals by the end of CY 2020. The Board of Veterans’ Appeals will continue to work appeals from the administrations and plans to resolve its legacy appeals inventory by the end of December 2022.

Resolving legacy appeals aligns with VA’s strategic plan to modernize IT systems and processes and supports VA’s mission to provide exceptional customer service to Veterans and their families. Veterans who are waiting for their decisions are encouraged to check the status of their appeal via the appeals status tracker.

For more information about the appeals process, visit [VA decision reviews and appeals](#).

## - **HELPING VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH PERSONALIZED MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATIONS**

Most of us do better when we are part of a social network and surrounded by people who care about us. As a result, involving a Veteran's close family members and friends in his or her mental health treatment can have many benefits.

Benefits include improving Veterans' treatment satisfaction and their ability to cope with mental illness or emotional challenges. It also enables them to enjoy a richer, fuller life.

Involving family, friends in mental health treatment:

Many Veterans want to involve family and friends in their care but don't know how to start. The Veteran-Centered Brief Family Consultation (VCBFC) allows providers to involve loved ones in a Veteran's mental health care.

VCBFC helps Veterans decide who they want to support them in their recovery. They can involve family members, friends and other encouraging people. Sessions may include only the loved ones, or the Veteran as well as his or her family and friends.

What is VCBFC?

VCBFC focuses on problem solving and decision-making. There usually are one to three, but no more than five, brief sessions. The Veteran and loved ones work with the care provider to agree on topics related to the Veteran's well-being. Topics may include conflict resolution or making a mental health support plan. VCBFC is not traditional family therapy; therefore, it does not focus on past family issues.

Family consultation sessions vary depending on the Veteran's goals. Sessions might include:

Information about mental illness. Ways for loved ones to support the Veteran's path to recovery. Support for family members and other caregivers. Ways to advocate for the Veteran. Communication and/or problem-solving skills training. Referrals to mental health resources. Liaison with other mental health and rehabilitation services, both inside and outside VA. Who are good candidates for VCBFC?

Veterans may benefit from VCBFC sessions if they:

Have frequent relapses or are at risk for relapse. Often have mental health symptoms that interfere with their daily life. Need support to navigate a transition point in life. Rely a lot on others. Experience suicidal urges or thoughts.

Others who may benefit include:

Family members and others invited by the Veteran who need education or support. Family members who frequently contact the treatment team. Those who are considering family therapy and wish to take a first step in assessment or treatment planning.

How do I get involved? Your mental health provider can provide more information on VCBFC. To find a provider near you, use the VA locator tool.

Family and friends of Veterans can find information at: [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/families/index.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/families/index.asp).

## - VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS 2019, FREE MEALS, RESOURCES EXCLUSIVE TO VETERANS

### **Veterans Day Discounts and Meals at Restaurants:**

#### **Hometown Buffet – November 11, 2019**

Active duty, reserve, or retired military personnel in uniform or with a valid ID receive 15% discount on Military Mondays (Every Monday including Memorial Day) at Hometown Buffet. Be sure to ask your server for more details. Visit the BJs Wholesale website for details. <http://www.hometownbuffet.com/military/>

#### **Old Country Buffett – November 11, 2019**

Active duty, reserve, or retired military personnel in uniform or with a valid ID receive 15% discount on Military Mondays (Every Monday including Memorial Day) with up to four members of the family at Old Country Buffett. Be sure to ask your server for more details. Visit the BJs Wholesale website for details. <http://www.oldcountrybuffet.com/military-2/>

#### **Applebee's – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active-duty military receive a free meal from a limited menu at participating Applebee's on November 11. Dine-in only. Visit the Applebee's website for details.

#### **Chili's Grill & Bar – November 11, 2019**

All Veterans and active duty military personnel can get a free meal on Veteran's Day Monday, November 11, 2019, at all participating Chili's Grill and Bar restaurants. Please call ahead to your local Chili's restaurant if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day meals. Visit the Chili's website for details. <https://www.chilis.com/restaurant-events/veterans-day>

#### **Baker's Square – November 11, 2019**

All Veterans and active duty service members receive a free meal on Veteran's Day (November 11, 2019) from Baker's Square. Visit the Baker's Square website for details.

#### **54<sup>th</sup> Street Grill and Bar – November 11, 2019**

Veterans + Active Duty military personnel who dine inside a 54<sup>th</sup> Street Grill and Bar receive a free entrée up to \$12 on Veteran's Day (11-11-2019). Visit the 54<sup>th</sup> Street Grill and Bar website for details.

#### **Golden Corral – November 11, 2019**

Military Veterans, retirees, and active duty members are being offered a free sit-in "thank you" dinner on Monday, November 11, 2019, from 5pm -9pm. For more details visit the Golden Corral website. <https://www.goldencorral.com/military-appreciation/>

#### **Red Robin – November 11, 2019**

Veteran's and Active Duty Military are being offered a free dine-in Red's Tavern Double Burger and Bottomless Steak Fries on Veteran's Day, 11/11/2019. Visit the Red Robin website for details.

#### **Mission BBQ – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty members will receive a free sandwich and slice of cake (while supplies lasts) at Mission BBQ on Veteran's Day, 11/11/2019. Visit the Mission BBQ website for details.

#### **O'Charley's Restaurant – November 11, 2019**

Veterans of the armed forces and/or officers still serving, you can enjoy a free meal at O'Charley's this Veterans Day, with several fan favorites from the restaurant's menu to choose from. Visit the O'Charley's website for details.

**Grub Burger – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active military members can get a free meal at a Grub Burger Bar location on Saturday, November 11, for Veterans Day. Visit the Grub Burger website for details.

**IHOP – November 11, 2019**

All Active duty and Retired Veterans in observance of Veteran's Day, November 11, are invited to come in to IHOP and enjoy a "free" breakfast. Visit the IHOP website for details. <https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/ihop-military-discount/>

**Lucille's BBQ – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military will enjoy a complimentary dessert with proof of service on November 11. Visit the Lucille's BBQ website for details. <https://www.lucillesbbq.com/promos/military-family-month>

**Fogo De Chao – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty personnel receive discounts on November 11, which includes 50% towards their meal at Fogo De Chao, in addition up to three of their guests enjoy 10% off. Visit the Fogo-De-Chao website for details.

**Texas Road House – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active military receive a free lunch on November 11, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at all Texas Roadhouse locations. Visit the Texas Road House website for details.

**TGI Fridays – November 11, 2019**

Military guests with a valid military ID will be treated to a free lunch menu item up to \$12 on November 11, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. These guests also will receive a \$5 coupon for their next meal at Fridays. Call your local TGI Fridays for details.

**Subway – November 11, 2019**

Military Veterans with a valid ID are being offered a free six-inch sub on November 11 at select locations. Call or visit your nearest location for details.

**Outback – November 11, 2019**

Veterans with a military ID can get a free Bloomin' Onion and non-alcoholic beverage on November 11, and 20 percent off their check Nov. 12 to Dec. 31. Call or visit your nearest location for details.

**BJs Restaurant Brewhouse – November 11, 2019**

Military and Veteran's with a valid ID are being offered a free entree up to \$14.95 and a free Dr. Pepper beverage on November 11. Call your local BJ's Restaurant Brewhouse for details. <https://www.bjsrestaurants.com/VeteransDay>

**Bandanas BBQ Restaurant – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military are being offered a free meal on November 11. Call or visit your nearest location for details.

**Manhattan Bagel Company – November 11, 2019**

All active, former and retired military personnel with valid identification are invited to enjoy a free bagel and cream cheese at Manhattan Bagel Company's participating locations on Veterans Day November 11. No additional purchase is required. Call or visit your nearest location for details.

**Houlihan's – November 11, 2019:**

All military members – both active-duty and Veterans – will receive a free and complimentary meal on

Veterans Day. Guests must come with proof of duty by an I.D., photo in uniform, earning receipt or any other form of proof. Call or visit your nearest location for details.

**Bombshells Restaurant & Bar – November 11, 2019**

Veteran's families and active service members receive free meals at Bombshells Restaurant & Bar on November 11 **from 11 AM – 2 AM**. Please call ahead to your local Bombshell's restaurant if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day meals.

**California Pizza Kitchen– November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active U.S. military members with proof of service have an invitation to enjoy a complimentary meal from CPK's Veterans Day menu at all participating California Pizza Kitchen locations nationwide. Please call ahead to your local California Pizza Kitchen if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day meal.

**The Chop House – November 11, 2019**

Veterans receive a 50% discount with a valid military ID **on November 11**. This does not apply to alcoholic beverages. Please call ahead to your local Chop House if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Cici's Pizza – November 11, 2019**

All active duty or retired military with a valid military ID are being offered a free pizza buffet on **November 11**. Please call ahead to your local Cici's Pizza if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Connors Steak & Seafood – November 11, 2019**

Veterans with a valid military ID receive a 50% discount on November 11. This offer does not apply to alcoholic beverages. Please call ahead to your local Connors Steak & Seafood if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Cotton Patch Cafe – November 11, 2019**

All Veterans and active military members are being offered a free Chicken Fried Steak or Chicken Fried Chicken with a drink on November 11. Please call ahead to your local Cotton patch café if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Famous Dave's – November 11, 2019**

Military personnel and Veterans are being offered a free meal on **November 11th** at participating locations only. Proof of military service is required. Please call ahead to your local Famous Dave's if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Farmer Boys – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military with valid proof of service get a free cheese cheeseburger on November 11. Please call ahead to your local Farmer Boys if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Firebirds Wood Fired Grill – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military with valid proof of service get a free lunch or dinner entree on November 11. Please call ahead to your local Firebirds Wood Fired Grill if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

**Fired Pie – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military with valid proof of service or are in uniform on receive a free entree November 11 for Veterans Day. Please call ahead to your local Fired pie if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Joe's Crab Shack – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military with valid ID will enjoy 20 percent off on November 11. Please call ahead to your local Joe's Crab Shack if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Little Caesars Pizza – November 11, 2019**

**Veterans and active duty military with valid ID will** receive a free \$5 hot-n-ready lunch combo. On **November 11**, from 11am to 2pm. Please call ahead to your local Little Caesars Pizza if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Logan's Roadhouse – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and active duty military with valid proof of service will receive a free American Roadhouse Meal on **Veterans Day**. Please call ahead to your local Logan's Roadhouse if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Luna Grill – November 11, 2019**

Veterans, military service men and women **with valid** proof of service will receive their choice of a complimentary meal when they purchase a meal from **November 9-11**. Please call ahead to your local Luna Grill if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Menchie's – November 11, 2019**

Veterans, military service men and women **with valid** proof of service will receive a free frozen yogurt on **November 11**. Please call ahead to your local Menchie's if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

### **Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt – November 11, 2019**

Retired and active duty military **with valid** proof of service will receive a free froyo at participating locations on November 11. Please call ahead to your local Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

## **VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS AT GROCERY STORES**

### **BJs Wholesale – November 11, 2019**

Active duty military personnel and Veterans receive discounts on November 11, 2019, at BJ's Wholesale, which include 30% off standard membership fees. Additional incentives like extra money off coupons are occasionally offered for new members. Visit the BJ's Wholesale website for details.

### **Publix – November 11, 2019**

Veterans, active military, and their families receive 10% off purchases on November 11, 2019. Exceptions apply. Must show Veteran or military ID, discharge documents, or driver's license with Veteran designation. <https://ww4.publix.com/pages/veterans-day-discount>

### **Hy-Vee – November 11, 2019**

**Veterans and active duty military with valid ID receive** a free breakfast buffet during regular breakfast hours **from 6am to 11 am on November 11**. Please call ahead to your local Hy-Vee if you have any questions about your Veteran's Day Discount.

## **Veterans Day discounts for haircuts**

### **Great Clips – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and current military members can visit a U.S. Great Clips salon on November 11 to receive either a

free haircut that day or the free haircut card to use at a later date. Visit the Great Clips website for details. Visit the Great Clips website for details.

### **Sport Clips – November 11, 2019**

Some locations will be offering free haircuts on November 11. Visit the Sports Clips website for details.

### **SmartStyle Hair Salons – November 11, 2019**

Current or former military members, and veterans are being offered a 10% discount off any services and professional products on November 11. Please show proof of service to receive this special discount at participating salons. Walk-ins welcome. No double discounts. Discount may vary per location. Visit the SmartStyle website for details.

## **VETERANS DAY HEALTH**

### **American Family Care – November 11, 2019**

Veterans are being offered free flu shots on Veterans Day, Monday, November 11. Veterans interested in obtaining a free flu shot are encouraged to visit AFCUrgentCare.com to find the nearest American Family Care. Visit the American Family Care website for details. (Reminder, Veterans receiving health care at VA are eligible for Free flu shots at your local Walgreens)

### **True Rest Float Spa – November 11, 2019**

Free True Rest Float Spa 60-minute float session for active duty military and Veterans. Visit the True Rest website for details.

## **VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS IN RETAIL**

### **The Home Depot – November 11, 2019**

Veterans are being offered a 10% military discount on in-store purchases on select items. All veterans are eligible for this discount during the Veterans Day weekend. Visit the Home Depot website for details.

### **Walgreens – November 8-11, 2019**

20% off for military, Veterans and their families. Walgreens also provides free flu shots for VA-enrolled Veterans. Visit the Walgreens website for details.

### **Rack Room Shoes – November 11, 2019**

United States Military and families with a valid ID receive 10% off your entire purchase on November 11. In store only. Visit the Rack Room website for details. <https://www.rackroomshoes.com/military-discount>

### **Dollar General – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and families receive an 11 % discount on qualifying items in store and online. See website for details.

### **Rack Room Shoes – November 11, 2019**

United States Military and families with a valid ID receive 10% off your entire purchase on November 11. In store only. Visit the Rack Room website for details. <https://www.rackroomshoes.com/military-discount>

### **Living Spaces – November 4-24, 2019**

For every purchase of a select Revive product, Living Spaces will donate a mattress to a Veteran. Qualifying Revive products range from select mattresses to adjustable bases. <https://www.livingspaces.com/event/buy-one-give-one/veterans>

## **VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS ON TRAVEL**



### **La Quinta – November 11, 2019**

Veterans and their families who book and stay at La Quinta hotels in the U.S. and Canada can take advantage of the 15% off military discount in light of Veterans Day on November 11. Visit the [La Quinta](#) website to book.

### **Legoland – November 11, 2019**

Each U.S. service member on Monday, November 11, can receive a free American flag wristband and flyer (describing the discounts and events of the day) at the LEGOLAND Florida Resort ticket window. A wristband entitles the wearer to the special discounts on November 11 only. Visit the [LEGOLAND Florida Resort](#) website for details.

### **Harley Davidson Museum – November 11, 2019**

All active military, Veterans and their families can gain free Museum entry into the Davidson Museum with valid Military or Veterans ID for 1 additional adult and up to 4 children 18 years old or younger On November 9-11. Visit the [Harley-Davidson Museum](#) website for details.

### **National Parks – November 11, 2019**

Over 100 national parks will waive admission fees on November 11, 2019, in honor of Veterans Day. Contact your local park for information. ([Disabled Veterans eligible for free National Park Service Lifetime Access Pass](#))

### **- VA ENHANCES RESEARCH & EDUCATION EFFORTS RELATED TO AIRBORNE HAZARDS & BURN PIT EXPOSURE**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently established the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (AHBPCE) as part of its ongoing efforts to improve health care for Veterans.

“VA is addressing Veterans concerns about the health effects of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Establishing this program through the center is a testament to that and we will continue to collaborate with outside partners to ensure its ongoing success.”

The AHBPCE, located at the New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, will specialize in clinical and transitional research related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure. The new center, which formally began operations in May 2019, will initially focus on: Expanding understanding of health outcomes and treatments with intensive clinical research to support Veterans that may have been affected by airborne hazards and open burn pits. VA providers may consult with the AHBPCE about the assessment and treatment needs of Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare with airborne hazard and burn pit exposure. When appropriate, Veterans may be invited for a comprehensive, multi-day health evaluation from a specialized team. Referral is done for complex clinical presentations that are unable to be diagnosed or if a development of a medical management plan is impossible to do locally. Veterans receiving VA-authorized care in the community may be referred for consultation or an examination for the same clinical reasons. Enhancing training and education initiatives to build and expand a network of specialized clinicians Analyzing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry data to monitor VA’s overall clinical response to exposure concerns. The center will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and with academic partners. For more information visit <https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/index.asp>.

### **- 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.)