

VETERANS UPDATE

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BLUE WATER AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTION



Landing signal officer, Lt. j.g. Ronald E. Braley, signals to the pilot of a Kaman UH-2 Seasprite helicopter, as crewmen tie it to the landing deck of the USS Coontz, July 1969. (U.S. Navy Photo)

Eligible “Blue Water Navy” Veterans may now be entitled to disability compensation benefits.

Veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, may be eligible for presumption of herbicide exposure and may also qualify for a presumption of service connection if they have a disease recognized as being associ-

ated with herbicide exposure.

“VA is dedicated to ensuring that all Veterans receive the benefits they have earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all Veterans filing for disability compensation.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug. 15, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., Joint Veteran Town Hall, 5th floor auditorium, main hospital, 830 Chalkstone Ave. Get updates from VA New England Director Ryan Lilly, as well as leadership from the Providence VAMC, VBA Regional Office and R.I. Office of Veterans Affairs. Note: this meeting has been rescheduled from Aug. 7.

Veterans who were previously denied for a presumptive condition related to Agent Orange can now file a new claim, based on a change in the law.

For more information, visit <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/> or call VA toll-free at 800-827-1000.

TOSS OUT TOBACCO — BETTER STARTS TODAY

Summer's here, and it's time to toss out tobacco.

Better starts today! So put out the cigarette, ditch the dip, and spit out the chew. There's no better time to start living a tobacco-free life than right now.

Get the support you need to take the first step! Talk to your primary care provider or call the Providence VAMC Tobacco Cessation Program at 401-273-7100, extensions 4210 or 3694.

For daily text reminders and encouragement, text VET to 47848.

Information and resources are also available from SmokefreeVET by visiting <https://veterans.smokefree.gov>.



SUMMER ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC



Jackie Morrison from Sail to Prevail, far left, sails near Fort Adams State Park in Newport, R.I., July 16, 2019, with, from left to right, Army Veteran Johnny Vacca, a patient of the VA Hudson Valley Health Care System; Navy Veteran Russell Cokonis, a patient of the VA Boston Healthcare System; Army Veteran Paul Raiche, a VA Boston patient, and his wife Barbara; and Navy Seabee Veteran Jim Tynan, a patient of the Brockton VA Medical Center. (Providence VA Medical Center photo by Winfield Danielson)

The Providence VA Medical Center and VA Boston Health Care hosted the annual Summer Adaptive Sports Clinic July 15 through 18 for VA New England Health Care Veterans.

Nearly 40 disabled Veterans traveled to Rhode Island for the clinic, which featured adaptive cycling, golf, kayaking, sailing and surfing.

"The summer sports clinic is a powerful experience for both Veterans and volunteers," said Dr. Susan MacKenzie, director of the Providence VAMC. "It helps

the Veterans refocus from what they can't do to a wide range of activities they can do with practice and the right equipment."

Photos, left to right: Navy Veteran Russell Cokonis, a patient of VA Boston, surfs at Second Beach in Middletown, R.I. (Providence VA Medical Center photo by Ava McConnell); Air Force Veteran Robert Val-landingham, a patient of VA Central Western Massachusetts, at Button Hole Golf Course in Providence, R.I.; Veterans and volunteers kayak at Johnson's Pond in Coventry, R.I.; and Army Veteran Edward Dusick, a patient of VA Connecticut on the Greenway Bike Path in Coventry (Providence VAMC photos by Kimberly DiDonato); during the VA New England Summer Sports Clinic hosted by the Providence VAMC and VA Boston July 15 through 18, 2019.



Providence VA Medical Center

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Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):
401-457-3336

Website:
www.providence.va.gov

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