

# VETERANS UPDATE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 4      APRIL, 2020

## GI BILL CONTINUES DURING COVID-19



President Trump signed into law S. 3503, March 21, which enables VA to continue providing education benefits to students having to take courses online due to the coronavirus response.

Thanks to the law, GI Bill students will continue receiving the same monthly housing allowance payments they received for resident training until Dec. 21, or until

their schools resume in-person classes.

In the wake of COVID-19, many students nationwide have needed to transition to distance learning as educational institutions adopt social distancing guidelines.

“I commend President Trump and Congress for their work on this important law,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It will give Veteran

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*All in-person events and meetings are being rescheduled during the national response to the new coronavirus.* Watch this space for virtual events and new in-person events when social distancing guidelines are no longer needed.

students certainly as they continue their education.”

Students receiving GI Bill benefits are not required to take any action. The education benefits will continue automatically.

Students with specific questions can contact the VA Education Call Center at 888-442-4551 between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

About one in four women and one in 10 men report experiencing intimate partner violence.

The spread of the new coronavirus and necessary precautions can increase pressure and stress on individuals vulnerable to IPV and potentially abusive partners.

Social distance doesn't have to mean disconnected — VA can help! The IPV Assistance Program provides resources and support.

For assistance, call Lucy Ramos, the VA Providence IPV Program Coordinator, at 401-443-0278 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233.



# VA PROVIDENCE CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS



Street signs marking the intersection of Army Road and Navy Lane on the VA Medical Center Campus in Providence, R.I. Across from this intersection as you take Navy Lane in from Chalkstone Ave. is the main entrance to the hospital building, where everyone is being prescreened to help minimize risk. (VA Providence Healthcare System photo by Winfield Danielson)

To reduce the risk of spreading the new coronavirus and prepare for an influx of COVID-19 cases, the VA Providence Healthcare System has adopted several precautions.

“In accordance with state and federal guidance, we are re-scheduling non-urgent, elective procedures and appointments,” said Erin Clare Sears, acting director of the VA Providence HCS. “We are calling all Veterans who need to be rescheduled, but please call to check before coming to your appointment.”

Employees not essential for urgent or emergency healthcare delivery are working remotely wherever possible, as well.

To minimize risk for inpatients and others who need to enter the medical center, everyone coming to the facility is being prescreened at the hospital’s main entrance. The screening consists of three questions:

1. Do you have a fever, worsening cough, shortness of breath, or flu-like symptoms?
2. Have you or a close contact traveled to an area with wide-

spread or sustained community transmission of COVID-19?

3. Have you been in close contact with someone, including health care workers, confirmed to have COVID-19?

Individuals who may be at risk based on the screening will receive further evaluation and instructions, and may then be isolated in accordance with CDC guidance and VA protocols.

Visiting inpatients is temporarily suspended and the Pharmacy is now only using mail-order refills, except for emergency prescriptions. Refills and renewals can be requested by calling the Pharmacy Call Center at 866-400-1241, mailing in their refill slips, or making a request through My HealtheVet.

VA Providence clinics and offices in other buildings and locations are closed for most in-person visits, as are the VA community clinics in Middletown, R.I., and Hyannis and New Bedford, Mass., which will provide virtual care only. Virtual care through VA Video Connect, telephone care or other telehealth systems will be used in place of in-person care whenever possible.



## Providence VA Medical Center

830 Chalkstone Ave  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-273-7100

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

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

Pharmacy Call Center:  
866-400-1241

Office of Community Care  
401-273-7100 ext. 3015

Account Balances:  
401-457-3344

VA Benefits Information  
800-827-1000

Website:  
[www.providence.va.gov](http://www.providence.va.gov)

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