

VETERANS UPDATE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 10 OCTOBER, 2020

VA HOME LOAN COVID-19 RELIEF



VA is allowing home mortgage loan deferments for Veterans who experienced financial hardships due to COVID-19.

Many Veterans have taken advantage of the forbearance program that is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act, which grants borrowers with federally backed loans forbearance of their

mortgage payments for up to 360 days. As Veterans exit the CARES Act forbearance periods, they must work with their mortgage company to make up any missed payments.

VA regulations generally prohibit a large, lump-sum payment from being included in the loan, but temporarily waiving the regulation means Veterans have additional options after a CARES Act forbear-

UPCOMING EVENTS

In-person events are being rescheduled due to COVID-19.

Oct. 5-8, Domestic Violence and Breast Cancer resource table, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the entrance of the main hospital building. October is Domestic Violence Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Oct. 8, Blood Drive, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 5th Floor Auditorium, main hospital. By appointment, visit www.ribc.org/drives, sponsor code 0182.

ance — without penalty.

“A loan deferment can work like a reset button to help alleviate economic burdens some Veterans may be experiencing,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

Veterans who want to know whether a loan deferment is an option for them should consult their mortgage company directly.

DON'T FLU AROUND — GET YOUR FLU SHOT!

It's more important than ever to get your flu shot!

Veterans will be offered a flu shot during appointments, or walk in to the Seasonal Flu Clinic at Building 32 on the medical center campus now till Dec. 31, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to noon — no appointment needed. Open to all enrolled Veterans and staff.

VA community clinics and the Eye Clinic at Eagle Square will offer flu shots, as well. Ask your clinic for details or call 401-457-3336.

Enrolled Veterans can also get a flu shot from a VA Community Care Network provider, find one at www.va.gov/find-locations.



Lawrence Connell, director of the VA Providence Healthcare System, gets his flu shot at the Providence VA Medical Center Sept. 23, 2020 (VA Providence HCS photo by Winfield Danielson).

STAND DOWN: HELPING HOMELESS VETERANS



A Veteran checks-in for a flu shot with Erica Madaus, a social worker with the VA Providence Healthcare System, during Operation Stand Down Rhode Island's 29th annual Stand Down Weekend at the War Memorial Park in Johnston, R.I., Sept. 18 and 19, 2020 (photo courtesy of OSDRI).

By John Paradis, VA New England Healthcare System

Winter is fast approaching and the VA Providence Healthcare System is working to reach homeless and at-risk Veterans before the cold weather sets in — a challenge even more urgent and difficult amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fall season for homeless Veteran outreach usually starts with Operation Stand Down Rhode Island's annual stand down weekend, typically an overnight, in-person encampment during which VA staff and community agencies provide food, clothing and health care.

This year's 29th annual Stand Down Weekend, Sept. 18 and 19, was different. No longer overnight, attendance was limited to Veterans and caregivers.

The scaled-down version of the event was held at the War Memorial Park in Johnston, R.I. Veterans were screened for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors upon arrival.

Despite the changes, more than 160 Veterans attended the event and received services —

about 25 percent less than previous years, according to Erik Wallin, executive director of Operation Stand Down Rhode Island. Of those Veterans, he said that 31 met with employment and training specialists, 20 received help with social security benefits, and 22 received housing assistance.

Two homeless, COVID-19 vulnerable Veterans were provided hotel rooms, and the VA Providence team was able to assign two new Veterans to its Homeless Veterans Clinic, said Kevin Price, nurse manager for the clinic.

In addition, more Veterans this year sought legal advice than last year — a sign that the pandemic has increased the need for such assistance, said Wallin, who is also an Air Force Veteran.

Other services included immunizations — 68 flu vaccines, nine pneumonia vaccines and seven Tdap vaccines — as well as access to other health care services, VA benefits and Veterans service organizations. Volunteers also provided items to help get Veterans through the coming cold weather.

Representatives from the Vet Center were on hand, as well, to



Providence VA Medical Center

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

Website:

www.providence.va.gov

Facebook:

[facebook.com/
VAProvidence](https://facebook.com/VAProvidence)

Twitter:

twitter.com/VAProvidence

provide combat Veterans, victims of military sexual trauma and their families with access to confidential counseling services.

"As always, the effectiveness of this event can be measured by not only the number of flu shots given, but also the number of Veterans who we're able to help," said Price.

With the increasing importance of virtual services during the pandemic, the event served to underscore the importance of the traditional direct services that reach Veterans who may not have access to internet-based services.

"We are committed to making sure Veterans are still able to access the most essential services available," concluded Wallin.