

VETERANS UPDATE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 12 DECEMBER, 2020

VA COVID-19 CLINICAL TRIALS



As part of VA's fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the department announced an effort Nov. 16 to recruit volunteers for COVID-19 clinical trials at VA facilities across the country.

"Volunteering for our trials is a way people can help our country more quickly find vaccines and treatments to end the pandemic and get life back to normal," said

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

VA's volunteer list is open to Veterans and non-Veterans, 18 years old or older. Participation in any research study is strictly voluntary. Volunteers go through an informed consent process that ensures they understand the risks and benefits to joining a study before they make the decision to participate.

Several vaccines and treatments

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Dec. 15, Blood Drive, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., 5th Floor Auditorium, main hospital. By appointment, visit www.ribc.org/drives, sponsor code 0182.

Jan. 14, Virtual Legal Assistance with Military Discharge Upgrades, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call 202-733-3324 or email upgrades@vetsprobono.org for an appointment to meet with an attorney for free!

are being studied by VA.

Veterans interested in signing up for the volunteer list can visit <http://www.va.gov/coronavirus-research>.

For more information about VA's COVID-19 clinical trials and other research studies, please visit <https://www.research.va.gov/covid-19.cfm>.

BOOK A VBA REGIONAL OFFICE APPOINTMENT ONLINE

Veterans and family members can now use their computer or smartphone to book an appointment with the VA Providence Regional Benefits Office.

Just visit the VBA Providence Online Scheduler at <https://v2.waitwhile.com/welcome/providencevaro> or scan the QR Code in the photo to book a 30-minute appointment between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on weekdays.

At the time of your appointment, a VA benefits representative will call you. They can assist you with compensation, pensions, survivor benefits, life insurance, home loan guaranty benefits and more.



CARING FOR THE CAREGIVERS



- Pace yourself
- Allow time for relaxation
- Be gentle with yourself
- Ask for support

A presentation slide from a virtual self-care workshop taught by April Green from the VA's National Caregiver Center. The VA Providence Healthcare System organized virtual support sessions in November as part of National Family Caregivers Month.

By John Paradis, VA New England Healthcare System

You're not in this alone – that was an important message for family caregivers of Veterans during support sessions held in November as part of National Family Caregivers Month.

There are more than 1,300 family caregivers across New England who care for chronically ill, disabled or aged Veterans, helping them live as independently as possible in their own homes. The VA Caregiver Support Program provides support, and offers other important resources and services.

The VA Providence Healthcare System organized several virtual self-care workshops taught by April Green from the VA National Caregiver Center. The webinar-style classes focused on self-discovery, resilience, problem-solving and self-care, as well as tips for daily breathing exercises and meditation.

"The intent was also to acknowledge the difficult challenges the family caregivers face and to help them think about ways they can help themselves,"

said Stacey DeOrsey, a licensed independent clinical social worker and caregiver support program coordinator with the VA Providence HCS. "Sometimes they get so involved in the Veteran's needs that they forget about themselves."

Participants in the online sessions are enrolled in VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, or PCAFC. The program provides a monthly payment to a caregiver, along with access to health care benefits and respite care, as well as education and training.

"Not only has the presentation reinforced a lot of the things that I do, but I learned about things I never even thought about before, such as the breathing techniques and how to better focus on yourself," said one of the caregivers, a Rhode Island man who takes care of his Veteran female spouse, who is disabled.

Isolation has been a factor during the pandemic, with caregivers not able to access the typical social supports of friends and neighbors, who they may have previously relied on for in-person interaction.

VA



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

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

Website:

www.providence.va.gov

Facebook:

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

Twitter:

twitter.com/VAProvidence

For caregivers who also have children at home, the "double duty" further complicates work-life balance, added DeOrsey.

Green, who was a caregiver for her elder parents, urged caregivers to recognize their limits, change their routines, focus on one good thing that happened each day, make time for themselves, develop a "buddy system" for support, and make use of VA resources. Above all, she said caregivers should acknowledge their feelings of anger, frustration and sadness, and recognize that they are normal. "And remember to give yourself credit for all that you are doing," Green told participants.

For more information on caregiver support, visit www.caregiver.va.gov or call the VA Providence Caregiver Support Coordinators at 401-273-7100 ext. 13283.