

TDVS Benefits Bulletin
23-8

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This month's bulletin is 1,045 words and will take just 4 minutes of your time.

1 big thing: TDVS Inaugural Advocacy Summit

ANNUAL TRAINING 2023
ADVOCACY SUMMIT
TN Department of Veterans Services

REGISTER NOW FOR THIS FREE EVENT!
LUNCH PROVIDED

“SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED”

Tennessee’s Efforts in Support of the Governor’s Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families
*Tennessee Department of Veterans Services
Commissioner Tommy Baker (MG Ret.)*

Preventing Suicide Among Servicemembers, Veterans, and Their Families in Tennessee: A Boots on the Ground Perspective
Panel Discussion with State, Local, & Community Leaders

REGISTER HERE!

Break Out Sessions & Workshops
Lethal Means Safety Training
Coalition Building
Postvention – Lived Experience & Resources

Partner Introductions
Identify New Resources To Support Your Community

October 4, 2023
11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST
Marriott Knoxville Downtown
525 Henley Street, Knoxville, TN 37902

† CEU Credits Pending

TDVS Updates

TDVS Town Hall – Collierville



2023 TN Property Tax Relief Brochure Available

Disabled Veteran homeowners or their surviving spouses may be entitled to property tax relief. Tennessee's Comptroller recently released the [2023 Property Tax Relief Program Brochure](#).

Here are additional resources:

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [2023 Property Tax Relief Program Brochure](#)

Training Updates

What's next: Here's the training schedule for the remainder of the calendar year.

- September Lunch and Learn, September 13th, 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. CST - [2023 Annual Training Conference Update and Q&A](#)
- Annual Conference, October 2nd - 4th, Knoxville, TN
- November Lunch and Learn, November 8th, 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. CST
- Annual Examination, November 17th, **or** November 20th - [Invites will be extended soon to select a block of time on either the 17th or the 20th.](#)
- December Lunch and Learn, December 13th, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST
- [2023 Training Schedule](#)

Check out:

- [The Annual Training Conference website](#)
- [The Inaugural Advocacy Summit website](#)

PACT Act Toolbox - Updates

TDVS has created a [PACT Act Toolbox](#) to help you serve Tennessee Veterans and their families. It's an advocate's one-stop shop for all things PACT Act -

- VA Fact Sheets
- VA Web Resources
- TDVS Fact Sheet
- TDVS FAQs
- Bill Text, Summaries, and More
- Training Resources

What's new:

- [VA PACT Act Dashboard](#) - [Anniversary Issue](#)
- [Next PACT Act Deadline - Health Care](#) - Thanks to the [PACT Act](#), many Veterans are now able to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits - but for

some, the time to apply is running out. There are two related groups with different deadlines, as described below.

- **1st** - Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left active duty after September 11, 2001, and before October 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for disability compensation benefits. **Their deadline to apply is September 30, 2023.**
- **2nd** - Veterans who deployed to a combat zone, never enrolled in VA health care, and left active duty on or after October 1, 2013, are eligible to enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for disability compensation benefits. **Their deadline to apply is 10 years after they left active duty, meaning some Veterans' eligibility could end as early as October 1, 2023**

Here's VA's [press release](#).

VA and Veteran Benefit Updates

VA to Review Connections Between Toxic Exposure and More Cancers

VA will review possible connections between toxic exposures and acute leukemia, chronic leukemia, and multiple myeloma. VA plans to assess the scientific literature and historical claims data to see if there is a relationship between them and toxic exposures.

Why it matters: This review will help VA determine whether these conditions become presumptive in the future. It also matters because it will use the new process for establishing presumptive conditions, which was part of the PACT Act.

I want to learn more:

- Here's VA's [press release](#).
- You can view VA's notice and comments in the [Federal Register](#).

VA Expands Breast Cancer Screenings

Veterans under 40 that may have been exposed to burn pits and other toxins are now eligible for breast cancer risk assessments and mammograms at VA.

Who does this help: These services are available to Veterans who served in the following places and timeframes regardless of VA health care enrollment status:

- Iraq between Aug. 2, 1990, and Feb. 28, 1991, and from March 19, 2003, until VA determines burn pits are no longer used in Iraq.
- The Southwest Asia theater of operations, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar (but not including Iraq), from Aug. 2, 1990, until VA determines burn pits are no longer used in such locations.
- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen from Sept. 11, 2001, until VA determines burn pits are no longer used in such locations.
- Other locations and time periods as determined by the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

Here's VA's [press release](#).

Call 1-800-MYVA411 to Report Sexual Assault or Harassment at VA

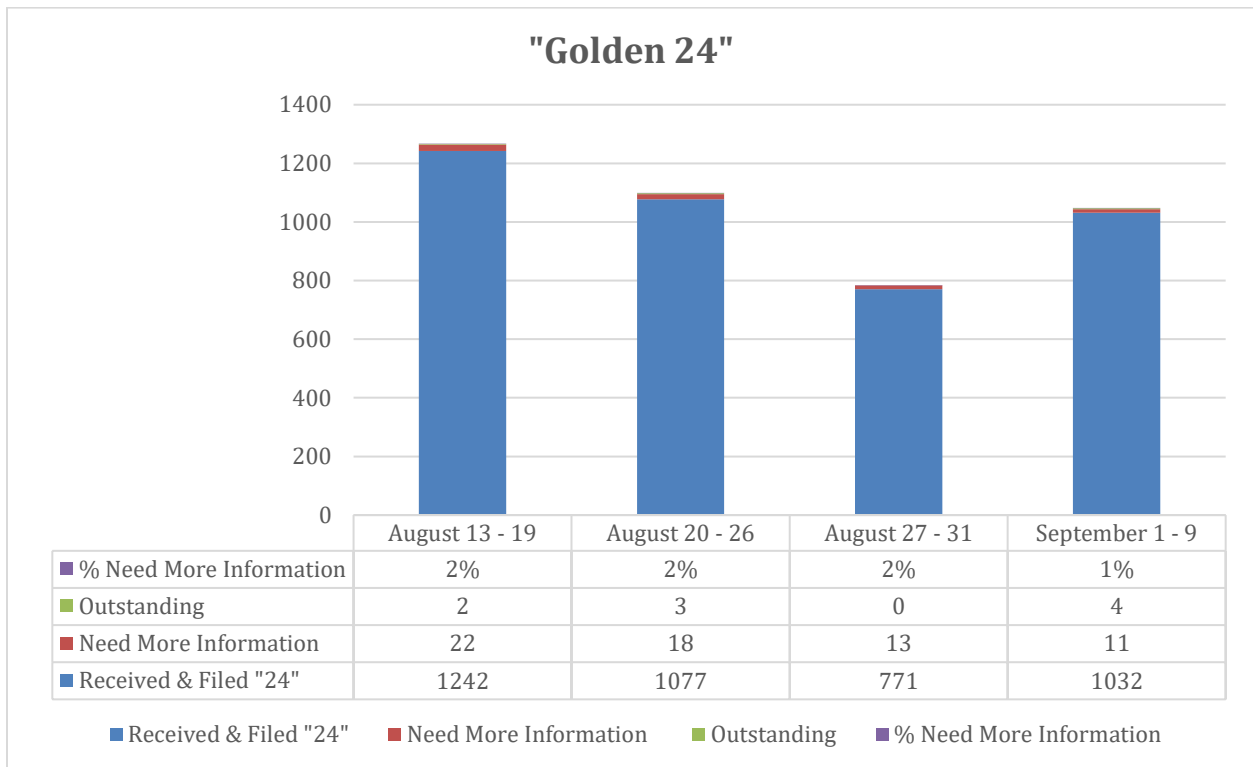
Veterans and others can now call 1-800-MYVA411 to report sexual assault or harassment in VA facilities.

Here's VA's [press release](#).

Practice Like a Pro

TDVS Quality Review

As part of the Golden 24 initiative, forms and documents are being filed with VA within one business day 98-99% of the time. A small % are returned to the VSO/CSO for correction before filing.



What's new:

- VSOs/CSOs can now file POA and ITF using VetraSpec filing tools.
- TDVS continues to provide quality review of packaged forms and documents. However, it's based on more [objective standards](#).

Why it matters:

- VSOs/CSOs can gain immediate access to a Veteran's record using VetraSpec filing tools.
- Forms and documents are getting to VA faster ensuring TDVS doesn't contribute to decision wait times.
- As some filing shifts to VSOs/CSOs, the Local Appeals Team is gaining capacity to provide more oral and written advocacy in support of appeal resolution and timeliness.

Advocate Spotlight

Veteran advocacy comes in all shapes and sizes. The work of a VSO certainly involves a lot more than just filing claims. Here's a great example.

Give me the background: A faith-based organization connected with a TDVS field office offering assistance to Veterans that needed help with chores or small projects around the

house. A few weeks later, a Veteran sought the assistance of the field office in finding a resource to help with fence repair following storm damage. The organization fixed the fence free of charge.

What a win: The success put a big smile on the TDVS team members face. We hope it puts a smile on yours as well as you recall your “wins” and advocacy that didn’t involve a VA claim.

Do you have an advocacy success story or something you'd like to see included in an upcoming bulletin? If so, [share](#) for a future bulletin.

TDVS Benefits Bulletins Can Be Found on the [VSO Tools](#) Portion of TDVS's Website

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