Montana VA to host PACT Act Week of Action events to inform Veterans, survivors about new health care and benefits

Virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, In-person Events in Billings and Fort Harrison on Thursday

FORT HARRISON, Mont. -- Beginning Dec. 13, Montana VA will host a PACT Act Week of Action events to inform Montana Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors about the PACT Act (The Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022).

Events include a virtual Town Hall on Dec. 13 and in-person events on Dec. 15 at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center in Helena and the Benjamin Steele VA Clinic in Billings. These events will help Veterans apply for care, receive a free toxic exposure screening and learn about benefits they have earned.

The Dec. 13 PACT Act Awareness virtual town hall (beginning at 5:00 p.m.) will include a 30-minute speaking program. The Town Hall will provide information on the PACT Act discussing benefit eligibility, who is now eligible for expanded benefits, what toxic exposure screenings look like, and how to apply for expanded benefits.

Then, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 15, Veterans can ask questions of VBA staff about claims and benefits, apply in-person for benefits, complete toxic exposure screenings, and enroll in VA health care on-site at the Benjamin Charles Steele VA Clinic in Billings and at the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center. Veterans located outside of Billings or Helena/Fort Harrison can learn more by visiting www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/ or calling 1-800-698-2411 option 8.

"Across Montana, there are Veterans who were exposed to toxins like burn pits and radiation during their service, and now face the health impacts of that exposure. With the PACT Act, enrolled Veterans may have increased access to services, and unenrolled Veterans may be eligible for services," said Montana VA Executive Director, Dr. Judy Hayman. "For too long, Veterans and their families weren't able to get the toxic exposure-related benefits and health care they deserve. But now, those days are over. We hope that all Veterans make sure that they are receiving all the benefits and services that they have earned, and Montana VA is here to help."

The PACT Act is the largest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in decades. This Week of Action event is part of VA's broader efforts to ensure that *every* eligible Veteran and survivor gets their PACT Act-related health care and benefits.

The expanded health care eligibility outlined in the law now allows new Veterans to become eligible for VA care or and increases health care benefits for impacted Veterans already receiving care.

Please see below for further details of the three events:

PACT Act Awareness Virtual Town Hall
- When: Dec. 13, 5-6:00 p.m.
- How to connect: Dial 866-478-3358 to join by phone or livestream the PACT Act virtual town hall from www.access.live/MontanaVATownHall or from Montana VA's Facebook page.

Billings PACT Act Open House: Montana VA staff will be present to help Veterans to apply for benefits, complete toxic exposure screenings, and enroll in VA health care. Veterans are asked to bring their DD214 document.
- When: Dec. 15, 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- Where: Benjamin Charles Steele VA Clinic, main conference room, 1766 Majestic Lane, Billings

Fort Harrison PACT Act Open House: Montana VA staff will be present to help Veterans to apply for benefits, complete toxic exposure screenings, and enroll in VA health care. Veterans are asked to bring their DD214 document.
- When: Dec. 15, 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.
- Where: Fort Harrison VA Medical Center, Rec Hall (look for wayfinding signs), 3687 Veterans Drive, Fort Harrison

Montana VA serves over 47,000 enrolled Veterans across Montana—an area roughly 147,000 square miles in size. Veterans are cared for by a staff of 1,400 at 18 sites of care across the state. One third of Montana VA employees are Veterans. Veterans can connect to their VA healthcare records, information, and message their VA care teams 24 hours a day through the MyHealtheVet patient portal (https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/how-to-use-mhv). Montana VA information, updates, and events are available on the Montana VA website (https://www.va.gov/montana-health-care) and Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/VAMontana).

# # #