

# **Serving Those Who Served**

**The Official Newsletter of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs**



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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# Commissioner's Corner

## Commissioner's Corner

Greetings teammates,

We just completed our first quarter of FY25 and have some great things to highlight and look forward to.

To start off, KDVA was recognized by the DoD Vietnam War Commemoration as a Partner/Top Performer in support of Vietnam veterans and their families. We were awarded a \$300K VA grant to combat veterans' suicide. We conducted a state-wide Mental Health/Suicide Prevention virtual event and 9-11 Patriot Day ceremony, and supported various national, regional, and state partners' events to include Women Veterans Quadrennial Summit, Tennessee Department of Veteran Services Annual Training Conference and Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame. Furthermore, we've learned our Radcliff Veterans Cemetery will be receiving the National Cemetery Administration's Operational Excellence Award.

Moving into October, we've got some great events lining up especially our Homeless Veterans Program event, the KDVA 5K Run/Walk event. In the spirit of fun and the "spooky season", we're inviting you and your family to participate as the event is for all ages, and costumes are highly encouraged. This is a free run but we're taking donations to support our Homeless Veterans Program activities.

Finally, October marks 26 years of service for KDVA, with many more years to come in supporting our great veterans and their families!

HOOAH!

***Commissioner Whitney P. Allen, Jr.***  
*Kentucky Department of Veteran Affairs*



## Latest VA News

### VA awards \$4.3M in cooperative agreements to states, territories to help understand and prevent Veteran suicide

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced it will award more than \$4.3 million in cooperative agreements to states and territories to help fund and provide technical assistance to suicide mortality review committees, which aim to identify and characterize local suicide deaths to better inform Veteran suicide prevention strategies.

This [fiscal year's cooperative agreements](#) will support 10 states and two territories in establishing local understanding of Veteran suicide, identifying populations or locations of special concern, and informing data-informed suicide prevention strategies for Veterans. These awards advance VA's [National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide](#), the Biden-Harris Administration's [strategy to reduce military and Veteran suicide](#), and the newly published [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Federal Action Plan](#).

"It is our responsibility to be at the forefront of researching the drivers of Veteran suicide, all with the goal of ensuring no Veteran is lost to suicide," said **Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** "We are working with our intergovernmental partners to establish suicide mortality review committees, which will tailor our efforts to the unique and diverse needs of all Veterans."

These agreements help advance President Biden's Unity Agenda for the nation and are part of VA's broader efforts to prevent Veteran suicide, and contribute to the objectives of the [Governor's and Mayor's Challenges to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families](#) — an effort between VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to create enhanced suicide prevention action plans across 50 states and five U.S. territories. This month, VA [awarded another \\$52.5 million in grants](#) to community organizations implementing tailored suicide prevention programs and services for Veterans and their families. VA has also launched a [new webpage](#) with resources for suicide loss survivors. VA intends to award up to an additional \$10 million through the Suicide Mortality Review Cooperative Agreements program in FY 2025. Learn more about the [program and the Governor's Challenge](#).

# VA makes tele-emergency care available nationwide, offering Veterans more virtual care options

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that tele-emergency care (tele-EC) is now available nationwide, a step that increases timely access to virtual emergency care options for Veterans enrolled in VA health care. This expansion of care — piloted in recent months — has already shown promise for Veterans, helping more than 61,182 callers with a 59.4% case resolution rate (meaning Veterans' needs were resolved without having to travel from their homes to urgent care or an emergency department).

Tele-emergency care is a part of [VA Health Connect](#), a phone service that Veterans can call nationwide. Veterans who contact VA Health Connect will speak to a clinical triage nurse, who will connect them to tele-emergency care when clinically appropriate. Tele-EC providers will then evaluate the Veteran over the phone or on video and recommend treatment or follow-up, including if in-person care is needed. In life-threatening emergencies, the clinical triage nurse will call 911 and stay on the line until help arrives. It is important to note Veterans experiencing a life-threatening emergency should immediately contact 911, versus seeking support via tele-EC.

This expansion is a part of VA and the Biden-Harris Administration's efforts to expand access to timely, world-class care for Veterans. Veterans enrolled in VA health care can now access tele-EC nationwide by calling [VA Health Connect](#), and through the [VA Health Chat](#) app. Veterans can find their local VA Health Connect number by [searching for their facility](#).

"Veterans can now be evaluated for possible emergencies from the comfort of their home," said **VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal, M.D.** "Sometimes, you're not sure whether what you're experiencing is a minor emergency or not — and tele-emergency care can help you resolve those questions. Veterans can get immediate, virtual triage with a VA medical provider who has direct access to their medical records. This avoids having to potentially drive to the nearest emergency department and wait to be evaluated, if appropriate."

Through VA's tele-emergency care, Veterans now have increased and quicker access to timely emergency care from VA clinicians, helping them get the right care, at the right time, from the right place. While tele-EC does not replace the need for in-person emergency evaluation, for Veterans in rural areas or those with mobility and transportation challenges, in-person immediate care can be difficult to access. VA's tele-EC helps bridge this gap through quick, virtual triage assessments.

VA continues to increase Veterans' access to VA health care through initiatives like tele-EC, [access sprints](#), and by designing and implementing [more virtual care options](#). Since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law, VA is delivering more care to more Veterans than ever before. Nearly [740,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care](#) in the past two years.

Veterans' trust in VA is at an all-time high, with outpatient health care trust scores reaching 91.8% in the latest [VA Trust Report](#). For the second consecutive year, [VA outperformed non-VA hospitals](#) in a major independent, nationwide review of care quality, with the majority of VA facilities receiving 4- and 5-star ratings. At the same time, 79% of VA facilities received 4- or 5-star ratings for patient satisfaction — the ninth consecutive quarter in which VA facilities have outperformed non-VA counterparts in this independent review.

For more information about VA care, visit [VA's health care website](#). For more information about Veteran trust in VA, visit the [VA trust website](#). To enroll in VA care, visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply/>.

# Upcoming Events

## KDVA 5K Run Walk

Costumes are encouraged,  
Prizes for best costumes!



**October 19, 2024**  
**Saturday**

7:30 AM Packet Pickup  
8:15 AM Kids 100 Yard Dash  
9:00 AM Race Starts

Donations Only,  
\$25 Recommended

Iroquois Park  
1080 Amphitheater Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40214

Powered By  
**TEAM  
KENTUCKY**  
KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT  
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

*All funds will go towards KDVA's Homeless Veterans Program*



Register Here





## KDVA Veterans Claims Clinic

This is an opportunity for veterans and families to file claims for veterans disability compensation, non-service connected pensions, survivor benefits, healthcare, and educational benefits.

**October 25, 2024**

**9:00 AM to 4:30PM**

Taylor County Public Library  
1316 East Broadway St  
Campbellsville, KY 40718

**PLEASE BRING**

DD214

MEDICAL

RECORDS

MARRIAGE

LICENSE

SOCIAL SECURITY  
NUMBERS



## KDVA Veterans Claims Clinic

This is an opportunity for veterans and families to file claims for veterans disability compensation, non-service connected pensions, survivor benefits, healthcare, and educational benefits.

**November 18, 2024**

**9:00 AM to 5:00PM**

Army National Guard Armory  
3300 Tamarack Rd.  
Owensboro, KY 42301

**PLEASE BRING**

DD214

MEDICAL

RECORDS

MARRIAGE

LICENSE

SOCIAL SECURITY  
NUMBERS



**SAY 'THANK YOU' THIS  
VETERANS DAY**



**LEST  
WE  
FORGET  
THE CONCERT**

**FRI 8TH NOV 2024**

**FEATURING SONGS WRITTEN  
WITH OUR KENTUCKY VETERANS**

**THE HISTORIC  
STATE THEATER  
ELIZABETHTOWN**

**WITH AWARD WINNING  
SINGER/SONGWRITER**

**TAMARA STEWART**  
**& THE NASHVILLE SMASH BAND**

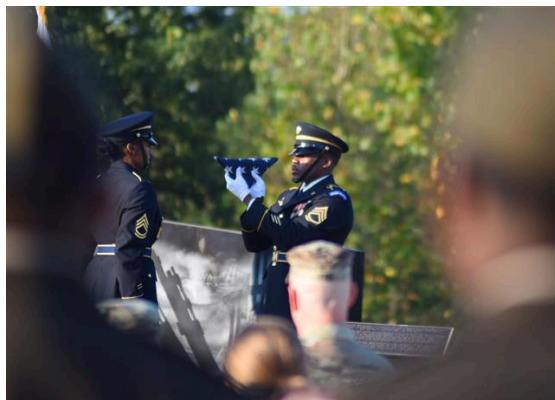
**ADMISSION**

**\$25 ASSIGNED SEATING  
\$20 VETERANS DISCOUNT**

**PROUDLY PRESENTED BY THE  
RADCLIFF VETERANS CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**What's New at KDVA?**

# Patriot Day Ceremony



A Patriot Day Ceremony was held at the Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central in Radcliff, Kentucky, September 11, 2024 to pay respects and honor those who died in the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. Fort Knox service members performed a flag fold and wreath laying during the event.

# Bowling Green Veterans Center's New Administrator

Robert E. Spiller Bowling Green Veteran Center (BGVC) hires its new administrator: Jason Gumm.

He has been a long-term care administrator for 28 years bringing a breadth of knowledge and experience to the brand-new facility which is expected to open in 2025.

While Gumm isn't a veteran himself he comes from a family where both of his grandfathers were World War II Army veterans. He has a few driving factors as to why he wants to work at a facility oriented to caring for veterans.



"Some of the factors would include number one: my desire to be here in Bowling Green which is the community I live in," Gumm said. "Number two: (BGVC) is a brand-new facility and then number three is the commitment and resources that the veteran centers have. The number of employees, staff and the commitment to provide the best care."

Gumm explained that he worked for companies in the past who have said their mission is about the care of the residents, but their budget didn't reflect what they were saying.

"When I come here and I see what sort of resources and commitment they have to caring for the veterans, those numbers match (in such a way) that says we're going to make sure we provide the resources and what the individual administrators need to ensure that the facilities run the way they should," Gumm said. "We're not doing it to make a buck. It's more about matching that with the mission, and the mission is to take care of the veterans."

During his training process and learning more about the active veteran centers, he toured the Radcliff Veteran Center to see how it looked and operated.

"I saw the center, how it presented and that commitment. It just reinforced with me that this is the place that I want to continue my career," Gumm said.

As it gets closer to opening day, which is still to be determined, Gumm says he has lofty goals from staffing and hiring to connecting with veteran service organizations in the region to give residents a greater community.

"We're working hard to get everything up and operational and ask for you to be patient with us as we take the proper steps to make this a very special place. If you honor us with choosing our facility as the place that you want to come and be a part of, we're going to give you the care, dignity and the respect that you deserve."

# **KVCC to receive NCA Operational Excellence Award**



This past July, Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central (KVCC) went through a three day Compliance Review Program (CRP). This assessment of KVCC'S operational standards and measures is broken down into three different priority levels. They consist of six critical priorities, thirty eight high priorities and forty nine medium priorities for a total of 93 inspectable measures. KVCC and its staff ended the CRP assessment with 6/6 100% for the critical priorities, 35/38 92% for the high priorities and 48/49 98% for the medium priorities. These scores make KVCC and its 16 member staff eligible for the National Cemeteries Administration's, Operational Excellence Award.

The Improvement and Compliance Service (ICS) administers the CRP Recognition Program which is available to VA grant-funded State and Tribal Veteran Cemeteries (STVC). This program is designed to encourage and recognize superior performance by focusing on customer service and compliance with NCA cemetery standards, measures and appearance. The Operational Excellence Award will be presented by The Under Secretary of Memorial Affairs (USMA). KVCC will be the first State Veterans Cemetery in Kentucky to receive this award. Last April, Kentucky Veterans Cemetery South East (KVCSE) Received the Stewardship award for their outstanding accomplishment during their CRP assessment.

We hope to have the Award presentation at KVCC later in the fall.

# KDVA recognized as Top Performer





DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
THE UNITED STATES VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION  
241 18<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH, SUITE 101  
ARLINGTON, VA 22202

22 July 2024

Dear Kentucky Department Veterans Affairs,

On behalf of a grateful Nation and the entire staff of The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, we commend you for being a *Top Performer* Commemorative Partner! Since the inauguration of the commemoration in 2012, your organization has faithfully represented our Nation by selflessly hosting five or more events which thanked and honored our Vietnam veterans and their families. As such, your team is among the TOP 15 percent of the more than 13 thousand commemorative partner organizations that have participated in this noble effort. Congratulations on this achievement!

Your dedication and initiative contributed significantly to this national tribute, whereby over 4 million veterans and their families have been recognized for their service and sacrifice through 28 thousand events over the past thirteen years. While truly amazing, your indelible impact cannot be measured in numbers, but rather in the hearts and faces of those whose lives were touched and will never be the same again. Your worthy efforts have helped facilitate healing and bestow honor to these veterans, their families, and our communities.

As a token of gratitude, we present you with the enclosed certificate of appreciation, especially designed for *Top Performer* Commemorative Partners. Thank you again for your incredible support of this generation of patriots, their families, and of the Vietnam War Commemoration.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Chrystal Jr.,  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Director

Maj. Gen. Edward Chrystal, U.S. Army Director, has presented KDVA with the Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration certificate recognizing KDVA as a Top Performer Commemorative Partner.

## Flag Presentation to Radcliff Veterans Center





World War II and D-Day Veteran, SGM (Ret) William Facemire's daughter and family presented a flag which flew over Normandy on June 6, 2024, the 80th anniversary of D-Day. They presented the flag to the staff of Carl M. Brashear, Radcliff Veterans Center (RVC) as a token of their appreciation for the great care provided to Mr. Facemire.

## Fort Campbell Retiree Appreciation Day



The KDVA Benefits Field Representative II, Sherrie Sellers, along with two fellow employees, Hope King and Amber Roy, attended the Fort Campbell Annual Retiree Appreciation Day hosted by Fort Campbell Personnel Services Division at the Soldier Support Center, Ft. Campbell, KY on September 21, 2024.

The purpose of this event was to keep retired service members, and their Families informed about any changes to their benefits and privileges. There were dozens of agencies and vendors there to provide information and services, such as, DEERS/ID Cards, VA claims and benefits, veterans treatment courts, veteran cemeteries, patient advocate, and healthcare needs to include: flu, pneumonia, RSV, shingles vaccinations and more.

According to the stats, there were over 300 retirees/veterans present. KDVA representatives were able to answer numerous questions and give direction for other resources.

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## KY Veterans Higher Education Interest Survey

KDVA and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) are interested in helping our veteran community understand their educational benefits. Research has shown that a workforce certificate or college degree can significantly increase your annual wages. Additionally, there are a number of programs to help veterans gain these types of certifications and degree programs. Your input will help us assist veterans across the state. Your feedback is very important.

Click on the button below or click [here](#) to participate in the brief survey.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Veteran\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Veteran_Survey)

Survey

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## I Support Veterans License Plates



### Who is eligible

Any owner of a noncommercial motor vehicle required to be registered for use on Kentucky Highways.

### Steps Requirement

Application must be made at your local County Clerk's office. Upon receipt of this plate, your regular (special) issue license plate must be turned in or issued to another vehicle.

### Decal Expires Customer's Birth Month

\$10.00 of the initial and \$5.00 of the renewal registration fee goes to the Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs. For more information, please visit <http://veterans.ky.gov> . This plate is available for personalization with an additional \$25.00 fee annually. Personalization is limited to a maximum of 5 characters.

Relevant KRS [186.162](#)

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## Military Women's Memorial "Tell Her Story"



The Military Women's Memorial (MWM) is the only major national memorial honoring all servicewomen – past, present and future. The MWM honors more than 3 million women who served and continue to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces since the American Revolution.

Women's military service should be no less recognized than men's but historically the focus of history and preservation has been on men.

### **Why it's Important to Register?**

EVERY STORY is important, EVERY STORY deserves to be told. Yet we have lost most of our WWI women veterans and our WWII women are fast coming to their final chapter. What history we have not recorded will be lost with them. We absolutely CANNOT let another generation go by without ensuring that our collective contributions are captured and remembered.

Please REGISTER HERE : [www.womensmemorial.org](http://www.womensmemorial.org)

There is no cost to register! You can register any woman you know who is in or has served in the military. Let's keep "HER-Story alive!"

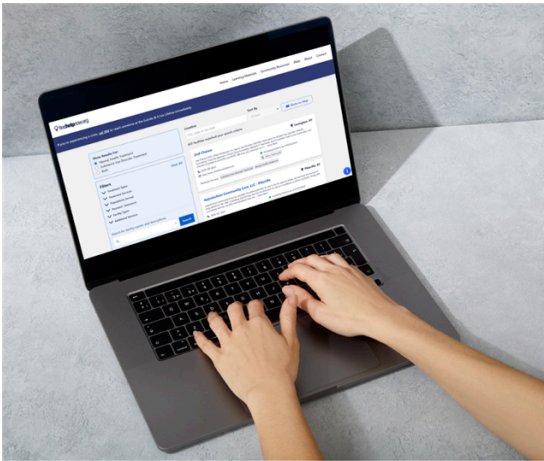
### **Useful VA Links**

- **VA Housing Assistance Page** - Information about home loans, eligibility, interest rates reductions and other related topics: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/>
- **National Center for PTSD** - Provides information and resources to veterans, care providers and organizations relating PTSD: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- **Covid-19 Vaccine Updates** - Latest updates on Covid-19 guidance and vaccinations: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>
- **VA Life Insurance (VALife)** - <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp>
- **Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E)** - job training, education, employment coaching, etc.: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp>

## Upcoming Veterans Dates and Events

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month (**October**)
- U.S. Navy Birthday (**Oct. 13**)
- Columbus Day (**Oct. 14**)
- KDVA Run, Walk or Stroll 5K (**Oct. 19**)
- Day of the Deployed (**Oct. 26**)
- Navy Day (**Oct. 27**)
- Halloween (**Oct. 31**)

## Resources for Veterans



At the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, we are committed to supporting our veterans with the resources they need.

Discover a wealth of services and support options through [FindHelpNow.org](https://www.findhelpnow.org) - your go-to resource for immediate assistance.

Whether you're looking for mental health support, housing assistance, or employment resources, [FindHelpNow.org](https://www.findhelpnow.org) has got you covered! Be sure to look for the

"Veterans/Military" population filters

available. The website displays near real-time available openings at substance use disorder and mental health facilities, recovery houses, naloxone distribution sites, and social services resources. Visit [FindHelpNow.org](https://www.findhelpnow.org) today to explore these enhanced resources and find the support you need! See YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWfaLHnz\\_kk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWfaLHnz_kk)



## Telehealth Urgent Care Services are available:

**Monday thru Friday From 8AM-6PM**

502-287-4000 / 800-376-8387

Select Option #3, then 1 for primary  
care nurse

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Robley Rex VA Medical Center  
Louisville, Kentucky

## Be seen at home or on-the-go

Telehealth Urgent Care Service at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center

### Care you can get with Telehealth:

- Influenza, Covid-19
- Prescription Management
- Urgent care issues like colds, coughs, and stomach aches
- Back pain
- Urinary symptoms
- Dental Pain
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Arthritis
- Gout

### Telehealth Advantages

- Can be seen anywhere if you have internet or access to a phone.
- Time flexibility
- Avoid the ED waiting room
- Friendly and professional staff



Be seen at home or on-the-go with Robley Rex VA Medical Center Telehealth Urgent Care Service. Available Monday thru Friday from 8AM - 6PM. Call (502) 287-4000 or (800) 376-8387. Select Option “#3”, then Option “1” for primary care nurse.

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