Disabled American Veterans

Blind Veterans National Chapter #1

WEB SITE: http://www.davbvnc1.com/contents.htm

July thru October 2017 Newsletter

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**"IF I CANNOT SPEAK GOOD OF MY COMRADE,**

**I WILL NOT SPEAK ILL OF HIM OR HER."**

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PLEASE, if you know of a member who is sick or deceased contact one of the above ASAPP.

**10 Things About The Veterans Choice Program**
The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) is a benefit that allows eligible Veterans to receive health care from a community provider rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility.

1. Am I eligible for the Veterans Choice Program?

To be eligible for the program, you must be enrolled in VA health care and must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

•You are told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days for an appointment.

•You residence is more than a 40 mile driving distance from the closest VA medical facility with a full time primary care physician.

•You need to travel by air, boat, or ferry to the VA medical facility closet to your house.

•You face an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on a geographic challenge, environmental factor, medical condition, or other specific clinical decisions. Staff at your local VA medical facility will work with you to determine if you are eligible for any of these reasons.

•You reside in a State or a United States Territory without a full-service VA medical facility that provides hospital care, emergency services and surgical care, and reside more than 20 miles from such a VA medical facility. Note: This criterion applies to Veterans residing in Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also note that some Veterans in New Hampshire reside within 20 miles of White River Junction VAMC and are therefore not eligible for the Veterans Choice Program.

2. What if I think I am eligible?

•Call the VCP Call Center at 866-606-8198 or visit the Veterans Choice Program website to verify eligibility and set up an appointment here.

3. Can I call my non-VA doctor to make an appointment?

•No, please call the VCP call center at 866-606-8198 to verify eligibility and set up an appointment.

4. How is the 40 mile calculation determined?

•This calculation is based on the driving distance from your permanent residence (or active temporary address) to the closest VA facility, including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers. You are eligible if you live more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility that has a full-time primary care physician.

5. If I am eligible for the Veterans Choice Program, can I receive Beneficiary Travel for travel to appointments with a VCP provider?

•Yes, the Choice Act does provide funding to pay for travel to VCP providers for Veterans who are eligible for Beneficiary Travel. However, it did not provide any new Beneficiary Travel eligibility.

6. If I didn’t get my Choice Card or I lost my Choice Card, what do I do?

•You do not need your Choice Card to access the VCP. If you didn’t receive a Choice Card or lost your Choice Card, simply call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

7. How do I get my prescription filled if I use the Veterans Choice Program?

•The community provider you see through the VCP can issue a prescription for up to a 14 day supply of a national formulary drug. You may have the 14 day supply filled at any non-VA pharmacy of your choosing.

•Prescriptions can be reimbursed through the Business Office/Non-VA Care Coordination Office at VA facilities. This reimbursement may take 30-45 days to process, and requires a copy of the prescription and the original receipt. Veterans cannot be reimbursed at the VA Pharmacy.

•For prescriptions needed past 14 days, please follow standard procedures to fill a prescription at the VA pharmacy.

8. If I use the Veterans Choice Program, does that affect my VA health care?

•No, not at all. You do not have to choose between the two. The VCP is here to make it easier to access the care you need. VA is building a high-performing integrated health care network to deliver the best of VA and the community. This integrated network will give Veterans more choices to access care and ensure care is delivered where and when you need it.

9. What is my responsibility for co-payments to my other insurance?

•Nothing. VA is now the primary coordinator of benefits for VCP, so you are only responsible for your VA copayment.

•Your VA copayment will be determined by VA after the care is provided. VA copayments will be billed by VA after the appointment.

10. How does the new VCP extension law affect me?

•Public Law 115-26, enacted April 19, 2017, made three key changes to help improve the VCP. The law removed the expiration date for the program, made VA primary coordinator of benefits for services provided to you, and it removed barriers with sharing necessary health information with community providers.

**Described Video via Blindy TV: "Taking the Vision out of Television"**

Imagine a television network where you could tune in any time, 24/7, and every show on every channel automatically included audio description.

Sounds farfetched, you say? Well, believe it or not, it's available right now, albeit in limited form.

You can't tune into this network on your TV set, even if you have one of the newer, accessible sets. Instead, you'll need to use a computer or mobile device to go to the website for Blindy.TV, whose slogan is: "Taking the Vision out of Television."

Log onto Blindy.TV and you will discover five channels of described audio TV and documentary content--no video, just the soundtrack.

Channels include: Comedy, Drama, Sci-Fi, Brain, and one called simply Etcetera. Each channel offers multiple ways to listen: you can use the site's accessible online player, download and install the Blindy.TV Windows app, or use your computer's own media player.

Click one of the channel name links on the homepage and along with starting the audio stream, you will also find a table with the day's schedule. For instance, at the time of this writing, the weekday Drama channel schedule included: CSI: NY, House M.D., Boardwalk Empire, Charmed, Blue Bloods, Bones, Numb3rs, Murder She Wrote, Law and Order: UK, Castle, Rizoli and Isles, NCIS, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, House M.D., Numb3rs, Cold Case, Revenge, and Criminal Minds. Currently, Blindy TV has over 7,000 audio-described television series and documentary episodes. "We do a small quantity of audio narration in house, but mostly we depend on donated off-air recordings and recorded media that contain audio narration tracks," the representative says. "We edit out the commercials and station breaks from off-air recordings, then those episodes are posted for viewing." According to the Blindy.TV representative, "We want blind individuals to enjoy our offerings, but that's not the main reason we do this. Our main goal is twofold. First, there are still a lot of vision-impaired individuals, especially the elderly, who don't know audio description is even available. We want to show them what's possible so they can help us with our second goal: encouraging listeners to pressure the various content producers, networks, and online services to produce a lot more audio-described television."

According to the Blindy.TV representative, Blindy.TV uses a considerable amount of UK-described TV. "[The UK] buy[s] a lot of syndicated American series, like Friends and Star Trek. Since they are going to broadcast each of these repeatedly during their contracted runs, it makes financial sense that these would be high on their priority list to narrate. I won't say it's the best audio description--British English and American English do have their differences, after all. But it is described TV, and without it our listeners usually can't even get these shows audio described." While the BBC does not provide programming directly to Blindy.TV, they do know it's being used. According to the Blindy.TV representative: "We've met several of their representatives at various conferences, and mostly what they tell us is how sorry they feel for us here in the US because of our lack of described content." Netflix finally began offering audio description on all of its Netflix Originals and for other programs that have available audio description.

**International Association of Audio Information:**

The below has links to 32 Radio Talking Book radio stations across the country. These radio stations read local news papers, magazines, and other reading materials to visual impaired/blind and reading impaired persons. They also inform the handicapped listeners to important events in the local areas that may be of benefit to local residents.

This web site is sponsored by the International Association of Audio Information Services (IAAIS) https://iaais.org/stations/

The Blind Chapter’s Adjutant tunes in and listens to WJCT Radio Reading Service which broadcasts out of Jacksonville, Florida to the northeast section of Florida. “It is nice to start out the morning listening to the reading of the newspaper over a cup of java” notes the Adjutant. The link to the Jacksonville, Florida service is: http://www.wjct.org/radio-reading-service. For those with Smartphone most of these reading services can be listened to via the “Tune-In Radio” App. Using the mobile devices saves time sitting in front of one’s computer, or even the need for a computer.

**New GI Bill Passes Senate**

Lawmakers on Capitol Hill have unanimously passed legislation to make major changes to education benefits for military veterans. Now all that’s left is for President Trump to sign it into law. The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017 has garnered strong bipartisan support in Congress, where lawmakers have worked to fast-track the bill to the president’s desk. Senators passed the legislation by voice vote Wednesday, less than three weeks after the Forever GI Bill, as it’s become known, was introduced in the House of Representatives. “This bill invests in the proven success of our veterans,” said Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga, chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans‘ Affairs. “When our veterans return home, they should have every opportunity available to them to pursue their desired profession and career. I thank Congress for quickly approving this bipartisan, bicameral legislative package. This is a great victory for our veterans and their futures.”

**U.S. Army Blind Veterans Competed in Powerlifting at 2017 Rocky Mountain State Games (Jul 27, 2017)**

The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) sent two powerlifters to compete in the 16th Annual Rocky Mountain State Games; Charles King (Philadelphia, PA), local athlete, Thomas Monroe (Pueblo, CO).

**King**, a post-Vietnam war veteran who was honorably discharged from the Army for health reasons has overcome depression, homelessness and cancer since losing his sight to acute glaucoma. King competed in his first powerlifting competition at 60 years old in 2010 and has competed in multiple international competitions since, including the 2015 International Blind Sports Association (IBSA) World Games in Seoul where he finished 4th overall in the Mall 100 kg division. Charles competed in the Male Masters 3B (age 65-69) Raw Men's with a lift of 120+ kg (266 lbs). **Monroe** served in the Medical Service Corps with the U.S. Army, active duty, from 1972 to 1975 and on reserve from 1975 to 1981. He experienced vision loss as a result of detached retinas and cataracts, and has competed for USABA since 2009. This yearMonroe returns to Colorado Springs where he set several age-group records at last year’s State Games. Thomas Monroe also competed in the Male Masters 3B (65-69) Raw Men's with a lift of 93 kg (206 lbs). USABA proudly partners with Colorado Springs Sports Corp on the Rocky Mountain State Games each year. The event gives athletes an opportunity to compete against peers and challenge their level of skill. For more information on the United States Association of Blind Athletes go to www.usaba.org .

**“GOD BLESS AMERICA”**