



THE SITREP

The **Situation Report** is provided by the Isanti County Veterans Services Department

As we move further into the world of technology and instant access to information, Isanti County's Veterans Services Department found it necessary to provide the community with a regularly published source of information regarding Veterans in our community.

Summer 2020

DEAR READERS:

Many folks are swept up with the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, and still we're facing natural disasters as well as the human tragedies of riots in place peaceful protests. Regardless of personal political stances, we are one nation and stand stronger than ever as long as we're united. Help your neighbors, remember we're one community, and we'll make it through this turmoil together.

COMMUNITY CARE - PRIMARY CARE & SPECIALTY CARE

In regards to receiving community care, eligible care under the Veterans Choice Program ended on June 6th, 2020. Now, under the MISSION Act, Veterans are still eligible for community care with a referral from their VA provider. Veterans only need to meet one of the 6 criteria to be eligible:

1. Veteran needs a service not available at a VA medical facility.
2. Veteran lives in a U.S. state or territory without a full-service VA medical facility.
3. Veteran qualifies under the "Grandfather" provision related to distance eligibility for Veterans Choice Program. (Was eligible before June 6th, 2018, continues to reside in a location that would qualify under that criterion, and required care before June 6th, 2020)
4. VA cannot provide care within certain designated access standards. For average drive times: 30-minute drive time for primary care, mental health, and non-institutional extended care services including adult health care; 60-minute average drive time for specialty care. For appointment wait times: 20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider; 28 days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider.
5. A Veteran may be referred to a community provider when the Veteran and the referring clinician agree that it is in the best medical interest to see a community provider.
6. If a VA service line does not meet VA standards for quality based on specific conditions. May be limits on when where and what is available under this criterion.

The VA's standards for "average drive times" and "appointment wait times" are subject to change due to legislation, alteration of program guidelines and other variables. The average drive times are calculated by VA using a geo-mapping software that uses inputs such as traffic to calculate the average driving time.

Isanti County Government Center
555 18th Ave SW - 2nd Floor
Cambridge, MN 55008
<https://www.co.isanti.mn.us/>

Isanti County Veterans Services Department
Dan Meyer, Director
Phone: (763) 689-3591
Fax: (763) 689-8307



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President Abraham Lincoln’s 2nd Inaugural Address, March 4th, 1865

SUMMER 2020

MINNESOTA VETERANS COVID-19 NEWS:

Those Veterans or surviving spouses (who have not remarried) that are financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for a one-time COVID-19 disaster relief grant of \$1000 from MDVA. A closing date for applications has yet to be determined and will depend on the length of the peacetime emergency as well as the availability of funding. Please contact your County Veterans Service Officer for assistance with your application or check out <https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/familyassistance/disasterrelief.jsp> for more information on criteria and supporting documentation. Be advised that applications are taking about 45 to 60 days for the state to process.

AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVE LIST NEWS:

A bill called the Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act of 2020, which would force the VA to provide disability benefits to Veterans with hypertension, hypothyroidism, Parkinson's-like symptoms and bladder cancer connected to Agent Orange exposure during military service, was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on 1/15/2020 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs on the same day. Then S.3444 with the same name, was introduced in the U.S. Senate on 3/11/2020 and referred to the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. On May 11th, 2020, the Bloomington, IL Pantagraph reported that VA Secretary Wilkie testified at a Senate hearing that the decisions of adding additional presumptive conditions should be made within the next 60 days. The maladies being considered are hypothyroidism, hypertension, bladder cancer, and Parkinson’s-like symptoms. The full article can be found at: https://www.pantagraph.com/news/local/veterans-corner-vets-still-wait-for-agent-orange-presumptives/article_3340f4f4-beba-52df-a7f6-fc77ef3b35fd.html

BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS:

Public Law 116-23, (**Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act 2019**) was signed on June 25th, 2019 and took effect on January 1st, 2020. Blue Water Navy Veterans, or those who were stationed on a ship within 12 nautical miles who served in the **Republic of Vietnam** between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975, or who had service in the **Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)** between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971, may be entitled to disability compensation for conditions related to herbicide exposure. The law also provides benefits for children born with spina bifida whose parent was a Veteran with herbicide exposure in **Thailand**. If you, or someone you know may qualify, please contact your County Veteran Service Officer to learn more.

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ISANTI COUNTY VETERAN NEWS:

As the county begins to re-open the Government Center offices, please call ahead of any planned trip as many offices are by appointment only. Also, many of the services may also be completed by mail, email, or over the phone to keep face-to-face interactions to a minimum.

MINNESOTA VETERAN NEWS:

Many Veterans are still getting outdoors to enjoy the gorgeous weather while hitting up the state parks and maintaining their social distancing. All military personnel and their dependents of the Armed Forces, Veterans with service-connected disabilities, and Purple Heart recipients are eligible for a free year-round vehicle permit. Apply at the DNR’s central office in St. Paul, at any staffed state park office, or by emailing gooseberryfalls.statepark@state.mn.us with “Military Discount” in the subject line and attach the following documents as is appropriate for your circumstance:

- Current military orders, plus military ID
- Federal government Access Pass to federal recreational sites, plus military ID
- Copy of your determination letter, benefits summary letter, or VA Health Care ID indicating Service-Connected disability

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Please check with the organization beforehand as many have postponed meetings due to COVID-19, or are holding virtual meetings.

All MAC-V Legal Clinics have been cancelled for July, 2020

LOCAL VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS & MEETING TIMES:

American Legion Post 290 - Cambridge, MN	6pm, 2nd Tuesday of the month
Isanti County Beyond the Yellow Ribbon - Cambridge, MN	7pm, 3rd Thursday of the month
Military Order of the Cootie Pup Tent 99 - Isanti, MN	7pm, 1st Thursday of the month
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1731 - Braham, MN	7pm, 2nd Thursday of the month
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2735 - Isanti, MN	7pm, 3rd Monday of the month
Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 684 - Isanti, MN	7pm, 1st Wednesday of the month

Addresses for these meetings can be found at the following Isanti County website:

<https://www.co.isanti.mn.us/BusinessDirectoryII.aspx?IngBusinessCategoryID=28>