

ACROSS THE ISLANDS

VETERANS HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST-04

Each year on August 4, we celebrate the birthday of the United States Coast Guard, honoring the courage, dedication, and sacrifice of those who have protected our nation's waters for over two centuries. Established in 1790, the Coast Guard continues its mission of maritime safety, search and rescue, law enforcement, and emergency response. We recognize Coast Guard members, past and present, whose commitment keeps our nation and communities safe.



NATIONAL
**PURPLE
HEART DAY**
AUGUST-07

Each year on August 7th, our nation pauses to honor the courageous men and women who were wounded or made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Purple Heart Day is a time for reflection, gratitude, and remembrance—a day to recognize the extraordinary courage, resilience, and selflessness of those who have borne the physical and emotional costs of defending our nation.

The origins of the Purple Heart date back to August 7, 1782, when General George Washington established the Badge of Military Merit to recognize exceptional acts of bravery and faithful service. Revived in 1932 as the Purple Heart Medal, it has become one of the nation's oldest and most revered military decorations. Awarded to service members who are wounded or killed as a result of enemy action, the Purple Heart stands as a lasting symbol of sacrifice, valor, and unwavering dedication to duty. Each Purple Heart represents a personal story of courage, service, and sacrifice that deserves to be remembered and honored.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Pacific Islands Health Care System

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON VA HEALTH CARE, CALL
1-800-214-1306

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AUGUST

2026

CREATIVITY, HEALING AND COMMUNITY

Honolulu Veterans and visitors are invited to join us for the local Veteran Creative Arts Festival on August 13, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the lobby of the Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic. This annual event highlights the powerful connection between creativity and healing, reinforcing the VA's commitment to whole health, recovery-oriented care, and Veteran-centered services.

As part of our ongoing dedication to fostering creative opportunities, selected local entries from this event will be submitted for consideration in the 2027 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF). Co-presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary, NVCAF empowers Veterans nationwide to improve their mental and physical wellness through meaningful engagement in the arts. The 2027 competition theme, "Growth," reflects the festival's focus on healing, transformation, and the shared journey of all Veterans who participate.

We encourage Veterans to learn more about artistic categories, submission opportunities, and national festival events by visiting www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov.

THE POWER OF PREVENTION

It's important to stay up to date on your screening tests and immunizations—they play a big role in preventing certain illnesses. The right preventive services for you depend on your age, sex, overall health, and family history, so recommendations aren't the same for everyone. Talk with your VA health care team about which screening tests and immunizations best support your health.



Preventing Flu Begins with You

“

Thanks for all the medical support for my fellow Veterans.

*Veteran at the
American Samoa VA Clinic*

”

*Creative Arts
Festival*

Thursday
August 13, 2026

10:00AM - 12:00PM

91-1051 FRANKLIN D.
ROOSEVELT AVE
KAPOLEI, HI 96707

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ISLANDS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)



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AUGUST

2026

“ I am very grateful that you have provided our Veterans with such a competent and capable staff.

Veteran at
Spark M. Matsunaga
Ambulatory Care Clinic

”

PARTNERS IN VETERAN CARE

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: RADIOLOGY

The Radiology Department at VA Pacific Islands Health Care System provides high-quality diagnostic imaging services at two locations—the Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic and the Spark Matsunaga VA Medical Center. Together, these dedicated teams support Veterans across the Pacific by delivering timely imaging services that help providers diagnose, monitor, and treat a wide range of medical conditions. From routine X-rays and ultrasounds to advanced CT, MRI, mammography, and specialized imaging studies, the department plays a vital role in ensuring Veterans receive accurate diagnoses and the highest standard of care.

VAPIHCS continues to expand access to advanced imaging through innovation and collaboration. Recent milestones include the introduction of VAPIHCS's first Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) service and the deployment of FibroScan technology to Oahu, Kona, Hilo, and Maui, giving Veterans greater access to liver disease assessment and cancer screening closer to home. Radiology has also modernized its services by incorporating artificial intelligence to assist with fracture detection, pulmonary nodule identification, and intracranial hemorrhage detection. In addition, new workflow technology has improved efficiency, communication, and exam management throughout the imaging process.

Beyond technological advancements, the Radiology team continues to strengthen partnerships across the VA and Department of War. These collaborations have expanded image-sharing capabilities, enhanced resident training opportunities, and improved access to specialty imaging services throughout the Pacific Region. By combining advanced technology, skilled professionals, and a commitment to excellence, the VAPIHCS Radiology Department remains focused on delivering safe, efficient, and exceptional care to every Veteran.



Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic



Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center

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“Thank you for being here and
doing your best to take care of
the CNMI's Veteran's.”

Veteran at the Saipan
VA Clinic

Bringing Transportation Support Closer to Home for Guam Veterans

Three years ago, the Guam Veterans Transportation Program began with a simple but important question: “What if we could provide our Veterans in Guam the same level of transportation support available in Hawaii?”

The goal was clear: create a transportation program that would make it easier for Veterans in Guam to receive assistance with travel arrangements, reimbursement, and transportation to their healthcare appointments—helping remove barriers and improving access to care.

Through collaboration, planning, and the dedication of employees committed to serving Veterans, the program steadily took shape. Each step brought Guam closer to establishing a fully operational Veterans Transportation Program designed around the needs of the Veterans and communities in the region.

As of July 2026, the Guam Veterans Transportation Program is fully established and ready to serve Veterans across the island. Stationed in Guam, we now have two travel clerks ready to assist Veterans with travel arrangements and reimbursements, two drivers who are dedicated to providing safe, reliable transportation to VA appointments, and one transportation coordinator; ensuring every ride scheduled gets Veterans to their appointments on time.

Together, they form a program that strengthens healthcare access in Guam—supporting our Guam Annex and expanding services for Veterans across the island and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



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“

I've been a patient at the Lihue VA Clinic since it opened thirty-odd years ago. Thank you for keeping me healthy.

”

*Veteran at
Kauai VA Clinic*

Every patient's
experience counts.
Complete the SHEP survey
and tell us about yours!



STEP 1:

Visit a VA Hospital or Clinic



STEP 2:

Receive the SHEP Survey



STEP 3:

Complete the Survey



STEP 4:

Submit Survey Online or by Mail



STEP 5:

VA Evaluates Survey Data to
Improve Care

ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP/EBT?

Get FREE Fruits & Vegetables with
the Pono Produce Prescription Program
Research Project

Opportunity for Women Veterans!

Are you eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)?

Apply today for the Pono Produce Prescription Program and Research Project to get over \$600 in fresh, local produce.

By participating in this research project, you'll also receive:

- Virtual hands-on cooking demonstrations
- Check payment for completing pre- and post- program survey
- Check payment for cooking equipment and ingredients
- Provided scale

Scan the QR code and complete
the eligibility form to get started.

Questions? Email Kristen Salles at Kristen.Salles@va.gov



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“The Audiology team at Akaka VA Clinic is very knowledgeable and caring. I'm glad I can use their services.”

Veteran at the
Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic



Thomas A. Steinbrunner, FACHE
VISN 5 - Health Service Area 5.5 Director

I'm honored to share that I have been selected to serve as the Executive Director of the Health Service Area (HSA) 5.5, which oversees VA care throughout the Pacific from the Hawaiian Islands, to American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, as well as the Manila VA Outpatient Clinic in the Philippines.

Having previously served in an interim role, I'm truly grateful for the chance to continue working alongside an incredible team that shows up every day with one purpose: to serve you and your families with the care, respect, and dedication you deserve.

My goal is to ensure our work reflects the VA's ICARE values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence—in everything we do. These values guide how we serve, how we communicate, and how we continue to improve.

Looking ahead, we're focused on making real progress by strengthening access to care, improving communication, and working more closely with our community partners, local leaders, and Veteran organizations. Strong partnerships make a real difference—they allow us to expand services, reach more Veterans, and build a system that's easier to navigate and more responsive to your needs.

I'm thankful for the trust you've placed in us and for the responsibility to move our healthcare system forward. We've made meaningful strides, but we know there's more work to do. And we're committed to doing that work through action, collaboration, and a shared commitment to serving those who served.

On behalf of our entire team, thank you for your service and for allowing us the privilege of caring for you. I look forward to continuing this journey together and building an even stronger future for Veterans, families, caregivers, and survivors across the Pacific.