

ACROSS THE ISLANDS

VETERANS HEALTH NEWSLETTER

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HAPPY 251ST BIRTHDAY UNITED STATES ARMY

On June 14, 2026, the United States Army celebrated 251 years of service. Its story began in 1775 when the Continental Congress formed the Continental Army, uniting the colonies under a single, organized fighting force. Among its earliest units were the Continental riflemen—frontier marksmen whose skill and discipline signaled the shift from scattered militias to a truly professional Army that helped shape the nation's future and enduring legacy.



This 4th of July is more than fireworks and festivities—this year marks the 250th birthday of the United States of America.

On July 4, 1776, 56 leaders signed the Declaration of Independence, declaring that all people are created equal and have the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. Their courage set the foundation for the nation we know today. As we celebrate America 250, we recognize the long journey of our country—its growth, its challenges, and its continued effort to live up to those founding ideals. We also pause to honor the men and women who have carried those ideals forward. To our Veterans, we salute you.

Your service and sacrifice have protected the freedoms first claimed 250 years ago. Because of you, the spirit of independence remains strong. Happy Independence Day, and may this milestone remind us all of how far we've come and the strength we carry forward together.

—★★★★HAPPY★★★★—
4TH OF JULY
INDEPENDENCE DAY

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HEART CARE MADE EASIER

The Cardiology Clinic at the Akaka VA Clinic is excited to share that we're now using a new tool to help keep a closer watch on our Veterans' heart health. Remote heart-monitoring devices called the Body Guardian work by collecting important heart information — like heart rate and rhythm — while Veterans go about their daily lives. This information is sent securely to your care team, who can review it in real time.

What does that mean for Veterans?

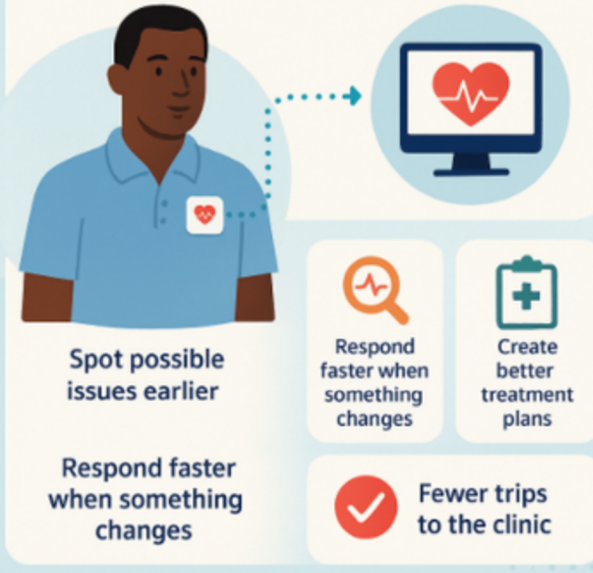
It means we can spot possible issues earlier, respond faster when something changes, and create treatment plans that better fit each person. It also means fewer trips to the clinic and more peace of mind, knowing your heart is being monitored even when you're not here in person.

Bringing this new technology into our clinic is part of our ongoing effort to make care easier, safer, and more convenient for Hawaii's Veterans. We're always looking for tools that help us improve the way we support Veterans living with heart conditions, and this step strengthens our commitment to providing high-quality care close to home.

“The VA clinic in Kapolei is very convenient for me since I work in the area. Also, getting an appointment there is no problem.”

Veteran at the
Daniel K. Akaka VA Clinic

What does that mean for Veterans?



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF LIFE



At just 17 years old, Mr. Nishioka joined the U.S. Army to help support his family and went on to serve honorably in the Military Intelligence Service. Throughout his life, he has remained committed to serving others through his faith, community involvement, and unwavering kindness.

Happy 100th Birthday, Mr. Nishioka, and thank you for your service and the example you continue to set for future generations

In recognition of this remarkable milestone, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Doug Collins sent Mr. Nishioka a personalized letter and a commemorative Secretary of Veterans Affairs challenge coin honoring his service and 100 years of life.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

[SUBSCRIBE TO VA PACIFIC ISLANDS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)



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“ I trust the VA for my
healthcare needs. They are
courteous and respectful.

Veteran at
Spark M. Matsunaga
Ambulatory Care Clinic

”

IMPROVING YOUR CARE PHARMACY RENOVATIONS

The pharmacy at the Spark Matsunaga VA Medical Center is currently undergoing renovation. We sincerely thank our Veterans for their patience and understanding during this temporary construction period, as we recognize this may cause some inconvenience.

The pharmacy is installing a new automated system to modernize prescription processing. This technology uses robotics and updated software to assist with tasks such as counting, sorting, and organizing medications. By managing these repetitive functions, the system supports staff and streamlines the medication-filling process.

What this means for Veterans after completion:

- Faster and more accurate prescription filling
- Shorter wait times
- Improved safety with reduced risk of human error
- More time for pharmacists to consult with Veterans
- Enhanced tools for medication tracking and management

We expect construction to be completed in August and will continue to provide updates as the project progresses. This renovation reflects our ongoing commitment to improving and modernizing the Veteran experience. Once complete, the upgraded facility will allow us to deliver pharmacy services more efficiently and comfortably for all Veterans we serve.



WHOLE HEALTH COACHING: FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

Whole Health Coaching helps Veterans focus on what matters most and take meaningful steps toward the life they want. Through a whole-person approach—mind, body, and spirit—coaches help identify strengths, set goals, and build practical plans for success. Coaching complements, not replaces, clinical care.

Veterans may experience improved quality of life, better stress and anxiety management, enhanced pain self-management, and improved weight, blood sugar, and blood pressure outcomes. Coaching is available both virtually and in person across the Pacific Islands, with individual and group sessions offered depending on location and availability.

Ready to Get Started?



808-835-1750



Secure Message: “Whole Health”



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“I can't say enough just how much of an impact the VA has had on my life.

Thank you.

Veteran at
Maui VA Clinic

”

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT HOW VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS EMPOWER VETERANS

Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) are one of the most valuable support resources available to veterans. They provide free, accredited assistance to help veterans navigate the VA benefits system—from filing initial claims to handling appeals—ensuring paperwork is accurate and veterans have strong representation throughout the process. This guidance often leads to better outcomes and takes the stress out of dealing with complex forms and regulations.

Beyond benefits, VSOs help Veterans stay connected through local events, workshops, and peer-support programs that build community and offer practical help like transportation, emergency assistance, or specialized support for disabilities. They also advocate nationally for policies that improve VA services and expand Veteran benefits, giving veterans a powerful collective voice.

Many VSOs also serve as a bridge between veterans and other important resources. They can help connect Veterans with employment opportunities, education programs, housing assistance, caregiver support, and community services tailored to their individual needs. Because VSO representatives work closely with veterans every day, they often have firsthand knowledge of available programs and can help identify solutions that Veterans may not have known existed. Their experience and commitment can be especially valuable for veterans who are new to the VA system or who are facing unique challenges related to their military service.

For any Veteran seeking clarity, support, or community, reaching out to a VSO is one of the best steps they can take. Their services are free, trusted, and focused entirely on helping veterans succeed while ensuring they receive the benefits, resources, and support they have earned through their service.



SCAN TO CONNECT WITH A
VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION

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“

*I have a complete team
dedicated to comprehensive
healthcare!*Veteran at the Guam
VA Clinic

”

HURRICANE
SEASON IS HERE

BE PREPARED BEFORE THE STORM

Hurricane season in the Central Pacific
runs from June 1 – November 30.Even storms far from the islands can bring
heavy rain, flooding, strong winds, and
dangerous surf.

TAKE THESE STEPS TODAY

**BUILD AN
EMERGENCY KIT**
with at least 7 days
of supplies
including water
and non-perishable
food.**STOCK
PRESCRIPTION
MEDICATIONS**
and medical
equipment
batteries.**KEEP IMPORTANT
DOCUMENTS**
in a waterproof
container.**CHARGE
PHONES, POWER
BANKS, AND
MEDICAL DEVICES.****FUEL YOUR
VEHICLE**
and know
evacuation
routes.**SIGN UP FOR
LOCAL EMERGENCY
ALERTS**
and weather
updates.**HAVE A
COMMUNICATION
PLAN**
for family and
caregivers.

PREPARE NOW. STAY INFORMED. STAY SAFE.

VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans AffairsVA Pacific Islands
Health Care SystemWHEN A HURRICANE THREATENS,
TAKE ACTIONYour safety is the priority
during severe weather.**STAY INDOORS**
and away
from windows.**MONITOR OFFICIAL
WEATHER AND
EMERGENCY ALERTS.**
Stay informed.**AVOID FLOODED
ROADS AND
COASTAL AREAS.**
Turn Around,
Don't Drown.**KEEP EMERGENCY
SUPPLIES**
within reach.**USE FLASHLIGHTS**
instead of
candles when
possible.**CHECK ON
NEIGHBORS,
KUPUNA,**
and those
needing assistance.**WAIT FOR LOCAL
OFFICIALS**
to announce it is safe
before going outside.

For questions or assistance, call 1-800-214-1306.



For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.

Veterans in crisis, call 988 then press 1,
text 838255, or chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net).U.S. Department
of Veterans AffairsVA Pacific Islands
Health Care System

SAVE THE DATE

VA'S DIABETES
PROGRAM COMING
SOON TO:

GUAM

JULY 16-17, 2026

JULY 20-24, 2026

SAIPAN

JULY 14-15, 2026

Specially trained diabetes
educators will be on island
to help you gain confidence in
managing diabetes with
healthy meal planning and
setting personal goals.For more information call
1-800-214-1306 and press 9.

For Veterans across our islands, the message this year is simple: "It's not if, it's when." Hurricane season has arrived, and with forecasters expecting a busier-than-normal year, now is the perfect time to make sure you and your loved ones are ready.

NOAA's National Weather Service expects 5 to 13 tropical cyclones in the central Pacific between June 1st and November 30th—nearly three times the activity of a typical season. This increase is linked to expected El Niño conditions, which often bring more storms into our region. While the forecast cannot predict where or when a storm may form, we do know this: conditions can shift quickly, and preparedness makes all the difference.

Storms will happen, but with a little planning now, our Veteran community can face the season with confidence and peace of mind.

How to Get Ready Today

- Create or update your family emergency plan (visit www.ready.gov for guidance)
- Build or refresh your evacuation kit
- Maintain at least 14 days of food, water, and medications
- Know the shelter locations in your county or territory.

For more about this year's hurricane outlook, visit NOAA's Climate Prediction Center:
https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/Epac_hurr/

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“ I really appreciate the
care I received, the
respect and the
hospitality. Mahalo. ”

Veteran at Lihue
VA Clinic



For eighty years, the Veterans Health Administration has adapted to meet the changing needs of Veterans. Here in the Pacific Islands, we carry that same commitment as we work to bring care closer to you.

In recent months, we opened new laboratory services in American Samoa and the Guam Annex Clinic. We are also planning for major improvements at the Spark M. Matsunaga VA Medical Center, including a renovation of our pharmacy that will improve service for Veterans across the region.

In the past few weeks, many of you joined us at listening sessions, town halls, and community events throughout the Pacific. Your feedback, questions, and ideas help us understand what matters most to you. Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences. Your voice guides our decisions and shapes the care we provide. Your experience sets our priorities and guides our decisions. Listening to the voice of the Veterans we serve is one of the most important responsibilities we have, and we remain committed to strengthening those connections throughout our healthcare system.

We also appreciate the support of our community partners, elected leaders, and military colleagues who help us expand services and improve access for Veterans.

As we celebrate both VHA80 and America250, we are reminded that service, sacrifice, and community remain central to our mission. Together, we honor the past while building a stronger future for the next generation of Veterans.

Thank you for your service and for trusting the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System. It is our honor to serve you.

Thomas A. Steinbrunner, FACHE
Interim Executive Director