



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

★ ★ ★ ANNUAL REPORT 2013 ★ ★ ★

"Veterans Helping Veterans"

Letter of Transmittal: November, 2013

The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Nancy Navarro, President, Montgomery County Council
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

The Commission on Veterans Affairs is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the estimated 50,000 veterans, and their families, who live in the County. Under your leadership and with your support, the Commission is mandated to research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans and their families. The Commissioners bring knowledge and expertise to the County by providing valuable input and advice on issues affecting our veterans.

We have focused on identifying veterans and their family members, on recognition of active military and veterans and particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our great nation. We thank you for your leadership to recognize and honor those at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event 2013 where Max Cleland, Secretary, Monuments and Battlefield Commission was our featured speaker.

We were delighted that Brian Hawkins, MHA, Medical Center Director, District of Columbia Veterans Administration Medical Center announced at our May meeting that they will be establishing a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in the County. The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, under Secretary Ed Chow has hired a full time Veterans Benefits Specialist for the County in October, 2013. We are working to end homelessness amongst veterans and thank you and Congressman Chris Van Hollen for your efforts to obtain 15 Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers bringing the total to 65. These vouchers are worth \$13,122 per voucher or \$852,930 per year in housing subsidies for the County's homeless, now housed, veterans and their families. The new hiring preference for disabled veterans and veterans has led to the hiring of 45 veterans including one disabled veteran. We were pleased on November 6, 2012 with the voters 80% support of Question A which will allow for a special hiring authority, like the federal government has for persons with severe disabilities/disabled veterans.

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, the many community members, and the agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication. We would like to acknowledge DHHS Director Uma Ahluwalia for her role in meeting with the Boards, Commissions and Committees to keep us informed of important health and human services issues, Dr. Jay Kenney, Chief, Aging and Disability Service, Betsy Luecking, Program Manager II, and Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist, for their outstanding support in providing the Commission with the resources needed to carry out our mission. This report is the result of our combined efforts.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and members of the Commission during our term of service. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission's efforts to enhance the lives of our veterans. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us for any meeting.

Sincerely,

Jerry Godwin
Chair



Dan Bullis
Vice-Chair

MEMBERSHIP LIST 2012 - 2013

VETERANS REPRESENTATIVES

Daniel Bullis, Disabled American Veterans
 Rich Fales, Veterans of Foreign Wars
 Bill Gray, Vietnam Veterans of America
 Roland R. Kauffman, Vietnam Veterans of America
 Vinod Kris Kumaroo, American Legion/Veterans of Foreign Wars
 Elizabeth (Jane) McCarthy, American Legion
 Wayne Miller, Disabled American Veterans
 Randy Stone, American Legion

GENERAL PUBLIC MEMBERS

Sharon Hodge
 Lorrie Knight-Major
 Lisa Stern
 Marie Wood

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Jerry S. Godwin, Dept. of Economic Development
 Michael L. Subin, Office of the County Executive

NON-VOTING CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Ann Humphrey, Office of Congressman Chris Van Hollen

STAFF

Betsy Luecking, *Staff Liaison, Program Manager II*
 Carly Clem, *Administrative Specialist I*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

November 2013 Proclaimed "Veterans Month"	3
Montgomery County, MD Employment Initiatives for People with Disabilities, Veterans and Disabled Veterans	4
Launch of Veterans Education and Benefits Partnership	5
Senator Max Cleland Addresses Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans 4th Annual Reunion	6
HUD & VA Team Up To Provide Permanent Homes to 120 Homeless Vets in Maryland	7
Veterans Administration Supported Housing (VASH) Request	8
Understanding the Veteran Administration's (VA) Aide & Attendance Program	9
The Trade Off Between VA Benefits & Medicaid	10
VA Family Caregivers Program	11
Apply for VA Health Benefits Online	11
VA Offers Dental Insurance Program	12
U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Opens New Silver Spring Vet Center	13
Key Contact For The VA & Other Resources	14
Projected Number of Veterans in Montgomery County, Maryland	15
Veterans Claim Backlog	16
Top Two Policy Issues for Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14)	17 - 18
Talking Points for Meeting with County Executive Leggett	19 - 20
About the Commission	21
Connect with the Commission	22
Commission Presentations for 2012 - 2013	22
How to Contact Your County Elected Officials	23

NOVEMBER 2013 PROCLAIMED "VETERANS MONTH"



SALUTING VETERANS . . . The Montgomery County Council and County Executive Ike Leggett on Nov. 12 declared November "Veterans Month" in the County, saying that one day—the traditional Nov. 11—was not enough to thank the County's veterans for all they have done. At the ceremonies in Rockville were, left to right: Councilmembers Craig Rice, Phil Andrews and Hans Riemer; County Executive Leggett; Councilmember Nancy Floreen; Jerry Godwin, chair of the County's Commission on Veteran's Affairs; Council President Nancy Navarro; Councilmembers Valerie Ervin and George Leventhal; Robert Frost Middle School Principal Joey Jones; and Councilmembers Roger Berliner and Marc Elrich.

NOVEMBER 2013: MONTGOMERY COUNTY CELEBRATES OUR VETERANS MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, approximately 54,000 of our fellow County residents have served with courage and distinction in the United States Armed Forces in every major military conflict since our Nation's founding in 1776; and

WHEREAS, the Nation will recognize the 95th anniversary of Veterans Day on November 11, 2013 and will honor those brave men and women who have proudly served our Nation during the past 237 years; and

WHEREAS, we pay special tribute to the demonstrated commitment and tremendous sacrifice of the families of our County's veterans as our families continue to embrace their loved ones during battles long after the din of war has quieted; and

WHEREAS, our veterans and their families have stood shoulder to shoulder for us through the years, and we must now stand shoulder to shoulder for them to ensure their service is recognized and they receive the support they need; and

WHEREAS, we applaud the ongoing efforts to strengthen our veterans and their families through targeted education and outreach to County residents by organizations such as Serving Together and the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, our County's veterans continue to endure despite carrying the heaviest of burdens caused by war and must be celebrated for their dedication, patriotism and willingness to serve for the common good when our Nation calls;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ISIAH LEGGETT, COUNTY EXECUTIVE and, I, NANCY NAVARRO, COUNTY COUNCIL PRESIDENT do hereby proclaim **THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2013** as **MONTGOMERY COUNTY CELEBRATES OUR VETERANS MONTH**. We urge Montgomery County residents to thank veterans and their families for their timeless and tireless service and to participate in the many activities planned for observing this month. We further call upon our fellow County residents to mark this month with proud displays of the flag of the United States as a reaffirmation of our national unity.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, VETERANS AND DISABLED VETERANS

NON-COMPETITIVE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

The Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities had been working with the County Government to have a special hiring authority to promote the hiring of qualified people with disabilities similar to the federal government (Schedule A) for over 20 years. The County voters overwhelmingly supported the special hiring authority initiative during the November 6, 2012 Presidential Election, by casting over 80% of their votes in favor of this initiative listed as Question A on the ballot. Over the past several years we have been fortunate to have County Executive Ike Leggett's support as well as that of the entire County Council to have a question put on the November 6, 2012 ballot so that voters could allow for a change in the merit system to allow for this special hiring authority. The Commission on Veterans Affairs joined in this effort after it was created in 2008, Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews who introduced the bill to have it on the ballot along with Joe Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources, have both been instrumental in having this initiative come to fruition because of their strong support of people with severe disabilities, including disabled veterans who could benefit from this opportunity. The County seeks to be a model for local jurisdictions in the increased hiring of people with disabilities and will work to assist other counties in implementing and promoting this effort as well as with private employers to increase hiring of qualified people with disabilities. Montgomery County's interest in hiring people with disabilities is especially strong given that the gateway for so many injured veterans returning to the United States from foreign wars is Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda. Those veterans, and others with serious disabilities who are qualified to do the job, deserve a fair shot at local employment if they seek it.

Outcomes: Nine persons with severe disabilities to date have been hired using the special hiring non-competitive process. An additional 4 persons have been hired under contract.

HIRING PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS, DISABLED VETERANS, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Montgomery County Government provides priority consideration known as the [Hiring Preference](#) for initial appointment to a County Merit System position for veterans with a disability, veterans without a disability and for persons with a disability. For more information and to claim a hiring preference, please refer to the Careers webpage on Hiring Preference: Phil Andrews and the Executive introduced and supported [Bill 46-09, Personnel – Regulations-Person with Disabilities – Hiring Preference](#). Here is the link to the signed bill that is effective May 18, 2010. It was implemented with [Executive Regulation 3-10, Hiring Preference for Persons with Disabilities](#).

Outcomes: Since the hiring preference was implemented in 2010, the following have been hired into merit positions, 7 individuals with disabilities, 1 disabled veteran and 44 veterans.

LAUNCH OF VETERANS EDUCATION AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP



Photo courtesy of Trey Savitz, Universities of Shady Grove

Universities of Shady Grove Press Release - November 12, 2013

The Universities at Shady Grove hosted today's launch of Montgomery County's new Veterans Education and Benefits Partnership. County Executive Ike Leggett, a US Army Captain and combat veteran of Vietnam, joined Dr. Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director of USG, Dr. DeRionne Pollard, President of Montgomery College, and others in announcing improvements to education, social services, career development, benefits support, and counseling to US armed forces' veterans enrolled at Montgomery College campuses, the Universities at Shady Grove, and Montgomery County's John Hopkins campus. USG student and US Marine Corps Reserve Sgt. Walter A. Ramirez spoke at the event, as well, along with Jerry Godwin, Chair, Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs. USG has launched its own Office of Veterans Resources to serve its students who are military veterans.

Montgomery County, Maryland News Release - November 20th, 2013

As a result of the Commission on Veterans Affairs initiative, County Executive Isiah Leggett announced the launch of the Montgomery County Veterans Education and Benefits Partnership. The new initiative will provide improvements to education, social services, career development, benefits support and counseling to U.S. armed forces' veterans enrolled at Montgomery College campuses, the Universities at Shady Grove and Montgomery County's Johns Hopkins campus. Mr. Leggett said that there are more than 54,000 veterans who call Montgomery County home", said Leggett and we owe them, and their families, the tools to successfully transition to and succeed in the country they have served and whose freedoms they have helped us to preserve. The Veterans Education and Benefits Partnership is an outreach program which will bring access to those individuals who need benefits and services at higher education campuses in Montgomery County. In addition, the Universities at Shady Grove recently created the Office of Veterans Resources as a resource for veterans and their families. USG joins Montgomery College's very successful Combat2College program off a wide array of services to veterans attending it. The initiative will be a piece in allowing veterans to seamlessly integrate into academics and use their VA education benefits to do so. The partnership will give additional tools for veterans to meet that goal, complete their mission to gain a degree. Other partners include the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, the Mental Health Association's Serving Together program, the Silver Spring Vet Center, and commission members Lisa Stern and Wayne Miller.

SENATOR MAX CLELAND ADDRESSES WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS 4TH ANNUAL REUNION

Gazette Article - Tuesday, April 23, 2013

Montgomery honors Vietnam veterans at Welcome Home event

By Kara Rose Staff Writer

When former Georgia Sen. Max Cleland took the stage at the Silver Spring Civic Building in Silver Spring Monday night for the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Reunion, he received a standing ovation.

The triple amputee — who was awarded the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star for meritorious service and the Silver Star for gallantry in action — was among about 35 Vietnam veterans who were recognized at the event. He shared with them stories of how he struggled to adapt to the civilian world after returning home from war.

“The keynote is that we made it back,” Cleland told the crowd of about 100 people. “I have had the opportunity to try to figure out what the hell to do now. It’s not easy for any of us.”

Jerry Godwin, chairman of the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs, said the event was established to ensure Vietnam veterans are given proper credit for their service and sacrifice. County Executive Isiah Leggett (D), an Army infantry captain during Vietnam, brought the event to the county four years ago, Godwin said.

Leggett said Monday he was honored to be in Cleland’s presence, whom he called an “extraordinary American.” Cleland, who led the U.S. Veterans Administration, awarded a challenge coin to both Leggett and Rep. Christopher Van Hollen Jr. (D-Dist. 8) of Kensington at the event for their support. Challenge coins and medallions are collected by service members and are exchanged for visits or achievements.

Van Hollen said the event was a special salute to Vietnam veterans, honoring them beyond words and through deeds. “I think this country learned a very painful lesson in Vietnam, a war in which too many of our returning soldiers did not greet at home with the respect and dignity they deserved,” he said. “You can disagree with a decision to go to war, but you need to always support the warrior.”

Hugh Eagleton, 68, of Bethesda came to the event last year where he met members of a local American Legion Post, which he then joined. Eagleton, a retired captain in the Navy reserves, said he served nine months in Vietnam. He said the attendees really appreciate the comradeship.

Murray Hall, 62, of Accokeek attended the event with members of Rolling Thunder. Hall — the assistant state director for Rolling Thunder in Maryland — Virginia and West Virginia, said he attended the event last year and found it “uplifting.” Hall, a 20-year veteran of the Air Force who served during the Vietnam era, said he was happy to return.

“For these guys, it’s kind of like a reunion for them because they don’t see each other until these type of events,” he said. “It means a lot for me to come and see them and see how happy they are considering the circumstances of their health and all they’ve been through.”



Former Georgia Sen. Max Cleland (right), a triple amputee as a result of injuries sustained in the Vietnam War, is greeted by Valerie Palacios, public affairs officer for the Vietnam War Commemoration, Monday during the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Reunion at the Silver Spring Civic Building. Cleland, who is currently the secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, gave the event’s keynote presentation.



HUD & VA TEAM UP TO PROVIDE PERMANENT HOMES TO 120 HOMELESS VETS IN MARYLAND

HUD-VASH vouchers to build on 17 percent decline in veteran homelessness since 2009

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Press Release - May 28, 2013

Approximately 120 homeless veterans living on the streets and in shelters in Maryland will soon find a permanent place to call home. U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced today that HUD will provide \$60 million to local public housing agencies across the country to provide permanent supportive housing to homeless veterans, many of whom are living with chronic disabling conditions. Maryland will receive \$1,242,603 to assist its homeless veterans.

The supportive housing assistance announced today is provided through the [*HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing \(HUD-VASH\) Program*](#) which combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by VA. Since 2008, a total of 48,385 vouchers have been awarded and 42,557 formerly homeless veterans are currently in homes because of HUD-VASH.

"Our veterans have answered the call of duty. That's why our nation has its own duty - to help homeless servicemen and women rejoin the very communities they have given so much to protect," said Donovan. "These grants make it possible to help more veterans obtain housing, bringing us steps closer to our goal of ending veteran homelessness by 2015."

"These HUD-VASH vouchers are a critical resource to accomplish our shared goal of ending Veterans' homelessness in 2015," Shinseki said. "With the continued support of President Obama, Congress, and our community partners, we will end homelessness among Veterans and provide these brave men and women with the earned care and benefits that help them live productive, meaningful lives."

"With programs like HUD-VASH, we will end veteran homelessness by 2015 in Maryland one veteran at a time," said Jane C.W. Vincent, HUD's Regional Administrator of the Mid-Atlantic region.

HUD-VASH is a critical part of the Obama Administration's commitment to end Veteran and long-term chronic homelessness by 2015. [*Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*](#) serves as a roadmap for how the federal government will work with state and local communities to confront the root causes of homelessness, especially among former servicemen and women. HUD's annual "point in time" estimate of the number of homeless persons and families for 2012 found that veteran homelessness fell by 7.2 percent (or 4,876 people) since January 2011 and by 17.2 percent since January 2009. On a single night in January 2012, 62,619 veterans were homeless.

The grants announced today are part of \$75 million appropriated this year to support the housing needs of homeless veterans. Local public housing authorities provide rental assistance to homeless veterans while nearby VA Medical Centers (VAMC) offer supportive services and case management. This is the first round of the 2013 HUD-VASH funding. HUD expects to announce more HUD-VASH funding this summer.

VAMCs work closely with homeless veterans then refer them to public housing agencies for these vouchers, based upon a variety of factors, most importantly the duration of the homelessness and the need for longer term more intensive support to obtain and maintain permanent housing. The HUD-VASH program includes both the rental assistance the voucher provides and the comprehensive case management that VAMC staff provides.

Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. VA offers eligible homeless veterans clinical and supportive services through its medical centers across the U.S., Guam and Puerto Rico.

Recipient	Partnering VA Medical Facility	# of Vouchers Awarded	1 Year Budget Authority for Vouchers Awarded
Housing Authority of Baltimore City	VA MD HCS (Baltimore)	80	\$744,586
Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County	Washington, DC VAMC	15	\$196,835
Housing Authority of Prince Georges County	Washington, DC VAMC	25	\$301,182

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED HOUSING (VASH) REQUEST

COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

January 28, 2013

Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD

Dear Mr. Leggett,

On behalf of the Commission on Veterans Affairs, I am writing to request your assistance to have the County request from the Veterans Administration Supported Housing Program (VASH), the national program for providing Section 8 permanent housing assistance to veterans, to give at least 25 vouchers directly to the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission. For each of the last three years, we have been pleased that your requests for vouchers have been fulfilled totaling 65 vouchers. At this time 97 veterans, with some including families, are being housed using HUD vouchers in the County.

The HUD-VASH program combines a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher with case management and clinical services provided by the VA. Evaluation of the HUD-VASH program has found that recipients increase days housed, employment, income, and social networks. The HUD-VASH program has demonstrated decreases in the number of days recipients spend homeless or in institutions and reductions in the use of alcohol.

The VA Medical Center has over 30 names of veterans, some having families, in need of housing in the County today but estimates that there are over 50 in need of housing.. The VA Medical Center locates and prepares the needed documentation for a homeless veteran to enter the VASH program. They then notify the appropriate area HOC/ Housing Authority which arranges an interview/intake with the veteran. In the past three years, through the County's HOC's streamlined system of assigning a key point person, from the time of application to issuing a voucher, the total elapsed time was as little as two days and averaged less than one week. We have heard nothing but superlatives in the way everyone at HOC has assisted these veterans and your professionalism and kindness in working with this special population is remembered and not forgotten.

If Montgomery County is going to get some directly, this request needs to be made right away. Most homeless veterans are staying in County provided shelters, rehab programs, transitional housing or local hotels in the case of homeless families.

We appreciate any support that you can provide to this effort. Please contact me if you have any questions at 301-408-8265.

Sincerely,



Jerry Godwin, Chair

UNDERSTANDING THE VETERAN ADMINISTRATION'S (VA) AIDE AND ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

Presentation by Cheryl Chapman Henderson, Elder Law Attorney, The Law Office of Cheryl Chapman Henderson, LLC

The [VA Aide and Attendance Program](#) is a pension benefit for veterans and surviving spouses who require regular attendant care by another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing and undressing or self care assistance. It also includes individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisting living facility also qualifies. The benefit can be used for in-home care, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes.

To be eligible for the benefit a veteran must meet several qualification requirements. The veteran must be over the age of 65 and must have served 90 consecutive days on active military duty with at least one day served of active duty during a war period. After September 7th, 1980, the period of active duty must be at least 24 months. Combat zone service is not required. The veteran must also have received a better than dishonorable discharge. The surviving spouse must have been married to the veteran for at least 12 months or had a child, have been married to the veteran at the time of the veteran's death, and not have remarried. The veteran or surviving spouse must be certified by a doctor as needing assistance with daily living activities – and if under the age of 65, the claimant must be totally and permanently disabled. The disability does not have to be service-connected. The adjusted household income (gross income less unreimbursed, recurring medical and care expenses) must be less than the Aide and Attendance benefit. For example, a surviving spouse has a monthly income of \$2,500 and is considered to be over the income requirements, yet she is allowed to deduct the cost of care from her income. If the spouse is paying \$3,000 a month for care, they can deduct that amount from their monthly income and the VA will consider them to be making \$0 a month and now eligible for the benefit. The claimant must also have substantially less than \$80,000 in countable assets (house and vehicle are not counted). Minors or disabled children are also considered a dependent and their income is considered. The VA does not have rules which restrict the shifting of assets to reduce the Claimant's net worth before qualifying for the benefits. The claimant may also qualify for prescriptions, medical supplies and treatment from the VA.

There is no waiting list for services as the Aid and Attendance Program does not provide direct services. The benefit is a cash amount. The maximum Aid and Attendance benefit for a married veteran or veteran with one dependent is \$24,652 per year. The maximum benefit for an unmarried or widowed veteran is \$20,795. The maximum benefit for a surviving spouse is \$13,362. The benefit is not taxable.

The veteran or surviving spouse is evaluated and can use their own physician. The benefit is paid retroactively to the month after the application was filed. Ms. Henderson noted that there are over 27,000,000 World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans and their surviving spouses. As of November, 2012, only 313 veterans and 195 surviving spouses were using the Aid and Attendance Program with an average yearly benefit of \$4,000.

Veterans and surviving spouses can begin the process by contacting Phil Munley, Director of Program Services, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) - 410-230-4444 x6457, pmunley@mdva.state.md.us. The MDVA is currently in the process of hiring a full-time Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for Montgomery County. This person will work out of Montgomery College in Rockville.

The application approval time varies with some applications taking up to eight months, although Ms. Henderson noted that approval times have improved with some applications being approved within thirty days.

[VA Form 21-526: Veteran's Application for Compensation and/or Pension](#)

[VA Form 21-534 – Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child](#)

View informational sheet "[Ten Essentials of Veteran's Pension Benefits](#)" for more specifics about the program

The Law Office of Cheryl Chapman Henderson, LLC, offers monthly workshops and is available to speak to the public by appointment at churches, civic groups, support groups, veteran's clubs, senior living communities and senior centers. To schedule, call 301-220-4463 (V).

THE TRADE OFF BETWEEN VA BENEFITS AND MEDICAID

Presentation by Ron Landsman, Fellow, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

Medicaid provides payment for medical services for low-income citizens. People qualify for Medicaid by meeting federal income and asset standards and by fitting into a specified eligibility. Medicaid began as a program to pay for health care for poor people who were unable to work. It covered the aged, the blind, the disabled, and single parent families. Over the years, Medicaid has expanded to cover more people. Effective January 1, 2014, the Affordable Care Act will expand the Medicaid program for people under age 65 with income below 133 percent of the federal poverty level. This reform is expected to provide insurance coverage for 16 million more people by 2019.

“The Maryland Medical Assistance Program pays for nursing facility services only when it is “medically necessary”, that is when a person’s health condition is such that the individual requires care under the full-time supervision of a licensed nurse. The need for intermittent, part-time services (for example, home health nursing) does not qualify one as medically eligible for nursing facility services, nor does the need for unlicensed care (e.g., personal care).” (Source: Maryland – Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)

Medicaid is based on your income and resources (assets). Income includes but is not limited to: wages, Social Security benefits, pension, and Veteran’s benefits. If your monthly income is less than the monthly cost of nursing home services, you will meet the income eligibility criteria for Maryland Medicaid services in a nursing home. Resources include but are not limited to: bank accounts, stocks, bonds, trusts, annuities, property, and life insurance. Resources cannot exceed more than \$2,500. A few options for spending down resources over the \$2,500 limit are to pay for the cost of care in the nursing home, pay other bills that you may have, or prepay your funeral expenses. Medicaid will also “look-back” and review your financial transactions from five years ago to present.

The State of Maryland has issued a [new set of regulations](#) effective March 1st, 2013, regarding new policies and procedures for identifying allowable transfers within the look-back period of five years. In the past, you were penalized for giving money away. For example, giving \$10,000 towards a grandchild’s wedding. In the new regulations, “[a]n individual may not be determined ineligible for Medical Assistance by reason of the transfer of any asset, excluded or nonexcluded, if... [t]he individual furnishes convincing evidence that the asset was transferred exclusively for a purpose other than to qualify for Medical Assistance[.]”

Mr. Landsman advised against deeding a house to a child as a primary residence is considered an exempt asset. He also advised that one should only give a power of attorney to someone that they really trust. Mr. Landsman encouraged Veterans to review both the Aid and Attendance Program payout and the Medicaid payout to see which program would benefit them the most.

VA FAMILY CAREGIVERS PROGRAM

Presentation by Kenneth Owens, Director, Business Office, DCVAMC

The VA Family Caregivers Program was signed into law in May, 2010. The program provides certain medical, travel, training, and financial benefits to caregivers of certain veterans and service members who were seriously injured during service on or after September 11, 2001. Eligible primary Family Caregivers can receive a stipend, training, mental health services, travel and lodging reimbursement, access to health insurance if they are not already under a health care plan, and respite care. Applications can be filed online: www.va.gov/healthbenefits/resources/Caregiver_Eligibility_Check.asp.

Caregiver Support Coordinators are available at every VA Medical Center to assist Veterans and their Family Caregivers with the application process. Within three business days of receipt of the initial application, the Caregiver Support Coordinator at the Veteran's preferred VA Medical Center will contact the Veteran and primary Family Caregiver to arrange for the Family Caregiver to complete the application and schedule required training. A clinical team from VA will coordinate arrangements with the Veteran to complete a clinical eligibility assessment. This will include evaluating what assistance the Veteran needs with activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, grooming, and/or need for supervision or protection. A VA clinician will visit the Veteran's home to make sure that the Family Caregiver and Veteran have everything they need to be safe and successful in the home setting. After the home visit is completed, the Family Caregiver will begin receiving a monthly stipend based on the Veteran's level need and required assistance. The Family Caregiver may also receive health insurance benefits through CHAMPVA if the Family Caregiver does not have existing health insurance. The stipend and health insurance benefits will be retroactive to the date of initial application. The stipend (minimum of approximately \$400 per month, maximum of approximately \$2,000 per month) is determined based on the amount of time and level of care provided by the caregiver. There are no income restrictions for the caregiver. The VA will periodically visit the caregiver and veteran to monitor the care provided. For more information, call the 1-855-260-3274 (Toll Free).

It was asked if the VA has a standard way of rating veterans and families to ensure they are all receiving the same type of care and services across the board. It was also asked if these rating rules are available to the public.

APPLY FOR VA HEALTH BENEFITS ONLINE

The VA has asked for the County's assistance with increasing the enrollment of our 54,000 veterans in the VA health care system. Our plan is to partner with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in this effort. We ask for your assistance in getting the word out to the 70% of veterans who never use any veteran benefits including VA medical benefits for which almost all veterans qualify. By answering a few questions about yourself, the [VA Health Benefits Explorer](#) will help you to learn about the VA health care benefits you could receive as an enrolled Veteran. After taking the short survey you can apply online. You can also apply for enrollment of your benefits or update your information by phone by calling **1-877-222-VETS (8387)**, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time). A VA representative will have your completed form sent to you for verification and signature.

Have questions as to how the Affordable Care Act affects your VA health benefits? The Affordable Care Act, also known as the health care law, was created to expand access to coverage, control health care costs and improve health care quality and care coordination. The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans' out-of-pocket costs. Visit the VA's informational website on the [Affordable Care Act and VA Health Benefits](#) to learn more.

The VA has free preventive tools available ranging from its [HealthVet](#) system to its suicide helplines. Enrolling in the VA's health care system ensures that the veteran has same coverage as the standards in the Affordable Health Care Act. We also need to get the word out about the National Library of Medicine website that provides free access to the public on everything from drug identification and side effects to paid protocol studies for all manner [\[LS1\]](#) of health care problems. The website is found at: www.nlm.nih.gov.

**NEW!**

VA OFFERS DENTAL INSURANCE PROGRAM

*VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs News Release
November 15, 2013*

WASHINGTON – VA is partnering with Delta Dental and MetLife to allow eligible Veterans, plus family members receiving care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program (CHAMPVA), to purchase affordable dental insurance beginning Nov. 15, VA officials announced today.

“VA continues to explore innovative ways to help Veterans get access to the care and services they have earned and deserve,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This new dental program is another example of VA creating partnerships with the private sector to deliver a range of high-quality care at an affordable cost, for our Nation’s Veterans.”

More than 8 million Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care can choose to purchase one of the offered dental plans. This three-year pilot has been designed for Veterans with no dental coverage, or those eligible for VA dental care who would like to purchase additional coverage. Participation will not affect entitlement to VA dental services and treatment.

There are no eligibility limitations based on service-connected disability rating or enrollment priority assignment. People interested in participating may complete an application online through either Delta Dental, www.deltadentalvadip.org, or MetLife, www.metlife.com/vadip beginning Nov. 15. Coverage for this new dental insurance will begin Jan. 1, 2014, and will be available throughout the United States and its territories.

Also eligible for the new benefits are nearly 400,000 spouses and dependent children who are reimbursed for most medical expenses under VA’s CHAMPVA program. Generally, CHAMPVA participants are spouses, survivors or dependent children of Veterans officially rated as “permanently and totally” disabled by a service-connected condition.

Dental services under the new program vary by plan and include diagnostic, preventive, surgical, emergency and endodontic/restorative treatment. Enrollment in the VA Dental Insurance Plan (VADIP) is voluntary. Participants are responsible for all premiums, which range from \$8.65 to \$52.90 per month for individual plans. Copayments and other charges may apply.

Historically VA’s free dental services have gone to Veterans with dental problems connected to a medical condition that’s officially certified as “service connected.” Free dental services will continue for those Veterans.

For more information on VADIP, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vadip, or contact Delta Dental at 1-855-370-3303 or MetLife at 1-888-310-1681.

Veterans who are not enrolled in the VA health care system can apply at any time by visiting www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll, calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visiting their local VA health care facility.

U.S. DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OPENS NEW SILVER SPRING VET CENTER

SILVER SPRING VET CENTER

Address: 2900 Linden Lane, Suite 100, Silver Spring, MD 20910

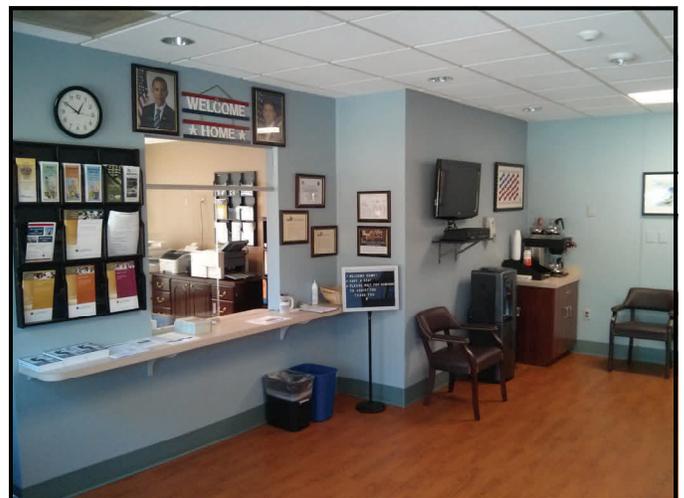
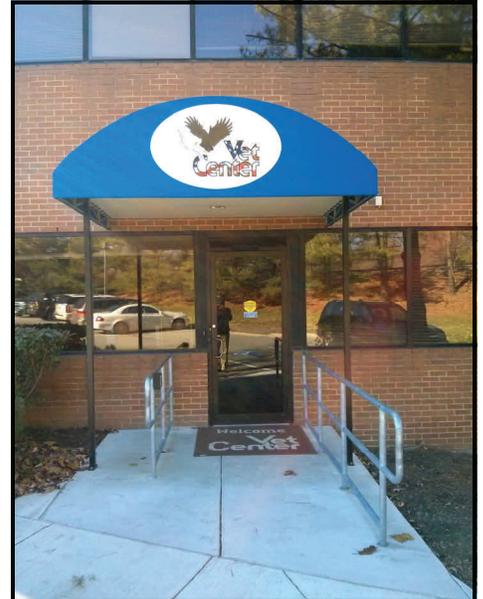
Telephone: (301) 589-1073

Directions: The Silver Spring Vet Center is located near the intersection of Seminary Road/Capitol View Avenue. You can also take the #5 Ride On Bus from either the Silver Spring Metro Station or the Twinbrook Metro Station and be dropped off at the Capitol View Avenue stop.

Hours: Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Non-traditional hours by appointment

Services Available:

- Individual Counseling
- Marital and Family Counseling
- VA benefits assistance and referral
- Substance abuse counseling and referrals
- Primary health care for basic medical needs
- Pre-employment assistance and employment counseling
- Discharge upgrade information
- Community, social service and medical referrals
- Sexual trauma/harassment counseling
(veterans of both genders, all eras)



Commission on Veterans Affairs Worked to Have Bus Stop More Accessible to Vet Center

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs opened up the new Silver Spring Vet Center in Montgomery County, MD on June 3, 2013. The Commission on Veterans Affairs collaborated with the new Vet Center location at 2900 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, is at the intersection of Seminary Road and Forest Glen Road to make the bus stop more accessible. In order to reach the Vet Center via this bus stop, veterans have to cross the railroad tracks. There is only a twenty-second window for pedestrians to cross over the tracks before a train crosses making it difficult for a disabled veteran in a wheelchair to cross in time. It was suggested that CSX, which operates and maintains the railroad tracks, be contacted about making their crossing more accessible. The Commission sent a formal request to County Executive Leggett about approaching CSX to make the railroad crossing more accessible so that disabled veterans can safely access the new Vet Center. Lorrie Knight-Major, Commissioner, contacted CSX to request the tracks be made accessible as she has a contact there. The Commission worked with CSX to improve the accessibility of the new Silver Spring Vet Center Building (2900 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD). The Montgomery County Department of Transportation installed a safe crossing to the building on Linden Lane to the facility. As a part of that project DOT will also connect the two sections of sidewalk from the intersection of Linden Lane and Seminary Road across the railroad tracks. That work began after CSX has completed their track work. We also worked with Comcast to bring internet service to the building in which the Vet Center is housed.

KEY CONTACTS FOR THE VA AND OTHER RESOURCES

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA)

Phil Munley, Director of Program Services
E-mail: pmunley@mdva.state.md.us
www.mdva.state.md.us

Phone: 410-230-4444 x 6457 (V)

The MDVA Service and Benefits Program provides assistance to the men and women who served in the Uniformed Services of the United States, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, State of Maryland and other programs for veterans and their families. The MDVA has hired a full-time Veterans Benefits Specialist (VBS) for Montgomery County. This person will work out of Montgomery College in Rockville.

Silver Spring Vet Center

Wayne Miller, Team Leader/Director
2900 Linden Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910
E-mail: wayne.miller3@va.gov
www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp?id=499

301-589-1073 (V)
202-273-9116 (Bereavement Counseling)

Open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Walk-ins are permitted during these hours, but appointments are requested. After hours appointments as needed. Veterans must show proof of service. The center provides benefits counseling and assistance with navigating the VA and paperwork, as well as employment counseling, counseling on PTSD and sub-PTSD, substance abuse counseling, family and marital counseling, psychological counseling related to readjustment, coordination and referral with doctors, employment related issues, assistance with basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing, medical and legal referrals, homeless assistance and will work with Montgomery County to find shelter placement, sexual trauma counseling, community outreach, bereavement counseling, and more. All services are provided at no cost to the veteran and their family. **Directions:** The Silver Spring Vet Center is located near the intersection of Seminary Road/Capitol View Avenue. You can also take the #5 Ride On Bus from either the Silver Spring Metro Station or the Twinbrook Metro Station and be dropped off at the Capitol View Avenue stop.

VA Aide & Attendance Program

http://benefits.va.gov/PENSIONANDFIDUCIARY/pension/aid_attendance_housebound.asp

1-800-827-1000 (Toll Free)

Provides benefits for veterans and surviving spouses who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing and undressing or taking care of the needs of nature. It also includes individuals who are blind or a patient in a nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity. Assisted care in an assisting living facility also qualifies.

VA Caregivers Program

<http://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

1-855-260-3274 (Toll Free)

If you are the Family Caregiver of a Veteran who was injured post-9/11, you may be eligible for additional services through VA, including a stipend, comprehensive training and medical coverage through VA if you are not already covered by a plan.



Serving Together is the County's place to find all programs and services for veterans. They are working to connect the Montgomery County community with veteran events and we ask that you help them to advertise in the libraries their website and information. You can check out the calendar and more at www.ServingTogetherProject.org. You can always send calendar events to their Project Coordinator, Rob Welty, at rwelty@mhmc.org. Serving Together also has a weekly newsletter that goes out every Friday morning that includes all the posts they have shared throughout the week. Interested parties can sign up very simply online (at the top of the page).

PROJECTED NUMBER OF VETERANS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, estimates that there are approximately **48,571 veterans living in Montgomery County, Maryland**. According to a 2012 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 8.8% of Americans self-reported as being a veteran. The Census Bureau defines as veteran as men and women who have served (even for a short time), but are not currently serving, on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or the Coast Guard, or who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or Reserves are classified as veterans only if they were ever called or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4 to 6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps. All other civilians are classified as nonveterans.

Veteran Population of Montgomery County, MD - 2012

Subject	Veterans	Total
Civilian Population 18 years and over	48,571 (6.3%)	765,530
Period of Service	Veterans	% of 48,571
Gulf War II (9/2001 or later) veterans	8,305	17.1%
Gulf War I (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans	8,159	16.8%
Vietnam era veterans	14,862	30.6%
Korean War veterans	5,828	12.0%
World War II veterans	5,682	11.7%
Gender	Veterans	% of 48,571
Male	43,131	88.8%
Female	5,439	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012

Veteran Population of Maryland - 9/30/2012

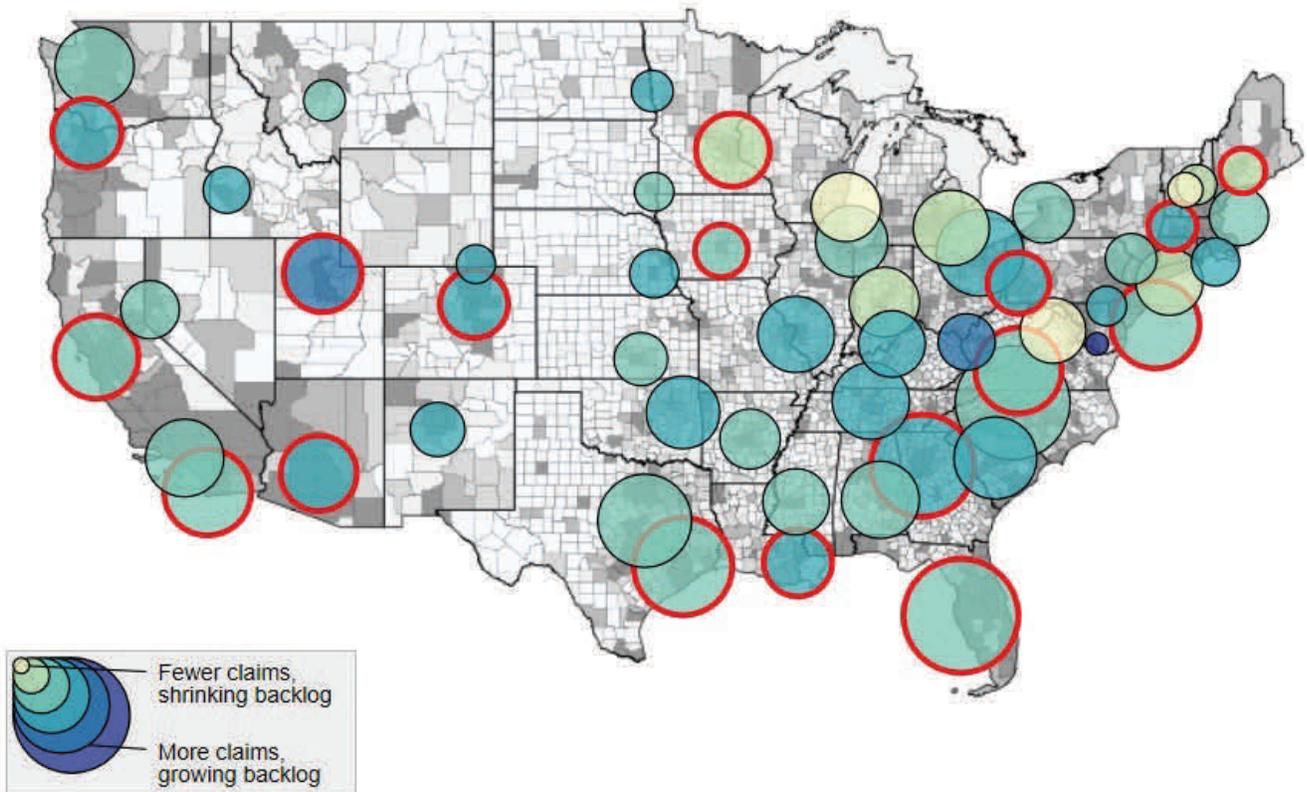
	Total # of Veterans	
	450,401	
Type of Service	Veterans	% of 450,401
Wartime veterans	338,295	75.1%
Peacetime veterans	112,106	24.9%
Period of Service	Veterans	% of 450,401
Gulf War (8/1990 and later)	153,902	34.1%
Vietnam era veterans	136,296	30.2%
Korean War veterans	37,388	8.3%
World War II veterans	24,903	5.5%
Gender	Veterans	% of 450,401
Male	387,027	85.9%
Female	63,373	14.1%

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

VETERANS CLAIMS BACKLOG

A national analysis by the Center for Investigative Reporting has found that approximately 651,222 veterans nationwide are still stymied by a bureaucratic backlog that has delayed payments for war-related disabilities. A map of where in the country the backlogs are greatest is on the [Center for Investigative Reporting website](#). The website is updated on a weekly basis. As of 11/4/2013, the **VA Baltimore Regional Office is the worst ranked VA Regional Office out of 58 offices** throughout the country based on the average number of days a veteran waits for a response to his or her claims.

- **9,508 veterans await a response to claims** of a disease, injury or illness suffered in the military (as of 11/4/2013).
- **224 days** is the average number of days that a veteran waits for the government to respond to his or her claims. This number has **decreased by -58.8%** in the prior 3.3 years (as of 11/4/2013).
- **10,851 veterans** have been **waiting more than one year** for their claim to be approved. This is an **increase of 96%** (as of 12/2012).
- **1,413 days** is the average wait time for veterans who appeal a claim (as of 5/2012).
- **6,568 veterans** are **waiting 125 days or more** for a response from the VA (as of 11/4/2013).
- **1,023 claims** are **received per month** on average (12/2012).
- **880 claims** are **completed per month** on average (3/2013).



Source: Center for Investigative Reporting

TOP TWO POLICY ISSUES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014 (FY14)

MEETING WITH THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, COUNTY COUNCIL

Jerry Godwin, Chair - Dan Bullis, Vice-Chair

October 17, 2013

On behalf of the Commission on Veterans Affairs, we want to thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of the County's almost 54,000 veterans. Since becoming a commission four years ago, we have achieved much. A few highlights of particular pride include our work to have the Rockville Library renamed to the Rockville Memorial Library and our advocacy to obtain 65 HUD Veterans Affairs Supported Housing (VASH) Vouchers. These vouchers are worth \$13,122 per voucher or \$852,951 per year in housing subsidies for the County's homeless, now housed, veterans. We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to highlight our top two policy issues for FY14: (1) finalizing a federal Community-Based Outpatient Clinic and a state full-time Veteran Benefits Officer; and (2) creating an education and outreach campaign to enroll veterans in the VA health care system and other benefits for which they qualify.

- 1. We ask for your continued support on behalf of our efforts to finalize both a Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and a full-time Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Benefits Specialist (VBS) in the County to provide medical services and assistance in accessing VA benefits/services for our veterans and their families.** We asked for your help last year in these two endeavors, and you stepped up to the plate. We are pleased to inform you that at our Commission's May 2013 meeting, Mr. Brian Hawkins, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, announced plans to establish a CBOC in Montgomery County in October 2014. The VA will research sites in Rockville over the next few months to find an appropriate location that will have at least 5,000 square feet of space with the potential for expansion and will be accessible by public transportation. The CBOC will offer a range of critical services including, but not limited to, primary care, mental health care, cardiology, dermatology, audiology, care coordination, and telehealth services.
- 2. We ask for your help in creating an education and outreach campaign focused on the general public and County veterans and their families to enroll them in the VA health care system and other benefits. This campaign will increase awareness of the benefits and services available to veterans as well as highlight their service to our Nation.** What are some steps in FY14 that you can take to help us improve awareness?
 - The VA has asked for the County's assistance with increasing the enrollment of our 54,000 veterans in the VA health care system. Our plan is to partner with the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in this effort. We ask for your assistance in getting the word out to the 70% of veterans who never use any veteran benefits including VA medical benefits for which almost all veterans qualify. The VA has free preventive tools available ranging from its HealtheVet system to its suicide helplines. Enrolling in the VA's health care system ensures that the veteran has same coverage as the standards in the Affordable Health Care Act. We also need to get the word out about the National Library of Medicine website that provides free access to the public on everything from drug identification and side effects to paid protocol studies for all manner of health care problems. The website is found at: www.nlm.nih.gov/https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?nfpb=true&nfto=false&pageLabel=mvHome
 - Through your constituent efforts, you can help us spread the word about the CBOC and VBS to ensure veterans throughout the County know where they are located and when their doors are open. Outreach efforts to places like senior centers, Leisure World and Riderwood can provide opportunities to make personal contact with veterans and ensure they know that the VA health care system is there to help.

(continued on page 18)

TOP TWO POLICY ISSUES FOR FY14 CONTINUED

- We ask that information be provided on County Ride On buses as to how to enroll in the VA healthcare system.
- All County departments and contractors should strive to identify veterans and encourage them to apply for needed benefits and services available from the Department of Veterans Affairs. One way to do this is to ask those seeking benefits: **Have you or an immediate family member ever served in the U. S. Armed Forces, Uniformed Services, National Guard or Reserve?** There is a need to educate County employees, especially first responders, about veteran issues to help them better understand how and where to refer veterans for immediate and on-going help. The County should provide services and benefits until they obtain any VA benefits. The Council should ask all departments to not only ensure their intake workers routinely ask this question, but also train their intake workers on the benefits available and how to refer veterans to our full-time State VBS for help applying for benefits.
- *Serving Together* is the County's place to find all programs and services for veterans. They are working to connect the Montgomery County community with veteran events and we ask that you help them to advertise in the libraries their website and information. You can check out the calendar and more at www.ServingTogetherProject.org. You can always send calendar events to their Project Coordinator, Rob Welty, at rwelty@mhamc.org.

We will regularly update you on our efforts to achieve these FY14 priorities. The Commission can't do it alone, and we ask for your help in spreading the word about the CBOC, VBS and our outreach efforts. We appreciate any ideas you have. Focusing on this priority next year will be crucial. It will allow us to increase awareness through effective outreach and will lay the groundwork for 2015, the year we will ask the County Executive to designate as "The Year of Montgomery County Veterans and their Families." If there is one thing that military service teaches you, it's the importance of teamwork – standing shoulder to shoulder with the Soldier, Marine, Airman, Sailor or Coast Guardsman next to you. Our veterans and their families stood shoulder to shoulder for us; we must now stand shoulder to shoulder for them. They deserve no less.

Thank you for your time.

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEGGETT

COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS April 3, 2013

Jerry Godwin, Chair
Dan Bullis, Vice Chair

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

We thank you for your support and advocacy in working with us to obtain 65 Veterans Administration Supported Housing Program (VASH) vouchers over the past three years for the County's homeless veterans and their families. The voucher is based on the family size of the recipient. A one bedroom voucher is around \$1310, a three bedroom goes up to around \$1750. If the age of the recipient is around 35 and he/she lives another 40 years always using the voucher, it adds up to a lot of money. A 50 year old single male who lives for another 20 years in a one bedroom are probably closest to 'average' for those who have gotten housed to date. That would be around \$315,000 of value assuming the veteran has no co-pay (he pays 30% of his income which the average co-pay is around \$200/month). If the same calculation was done for families using age 50 for the veteran, the average worth is \$450K+ over a lifetime assuming a 2-3 bedroom unit. In reality, the families are also younger, the veteran is younger, so the voucher would extend over more years, resulting in a number greater than \$450K. We thank you and Congressman Van Hollen for your advocacy in working with us to obtain these valuable and needed vouchers and intend to advocate for additional vouchers until the day we end homelessness amongst our fellow veterans.

Our Commissioners worked with the District of Columbia Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (DCVAMC) to provide outreach services to veterans Monday through Wednesday. DCVAMC Homeless Outreach Staff and Veteran's Justice Outreach Staff are available to assist veterans by making referrals and connect veterans who are eligible for VA services with the VA healthcare system.

Our Commissioners will continue to work with CSX to improve the accessibility of the new Silver Spring Vet Center Building (2900 Linden Lane, Silver Spring, MD). There is currently a railroad crossing nearby the building that will make it impossible for veterans with wheelchairs to cross the tracks and gain access to the building. That work has already begun and is expected to be completed in early May. We worked with your Department of Transportation to install a safe crossing to the building on Linden Lane to the facility. That work will begin after CSX has completed their work. As a part of that project DOT will also connect the two sections of sidewalk from the intersection of Linden Lane and Seminary Road across the railroad tracks. That work, also will begin after CSX has completed their track work. We are also working with Comcast to bring internet service to the building in which the Vet Center will be housed.

PRIORITIES

Our April 2013 Commission meeting (April 16, 2013) will develop a strategic plan for 2013 and beyond that will design strategic communications to widely distribute our information and message and provide a proactive approach to engage and assist Montgomery County veterans and families.

The Commission will continue to press the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs for a full-time Veterans Benefits Officer (VBO) as the Maryland Legislature has mandated and will encourage the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the VA Medical Center to provide more outreach and funding for services to Montgomery County veterans and their families.

Due to the advocacy of the Commission and Congressman Van Hollen's Office DCVAMC is currently considering a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in the County that would provide Primary and Mental Health Care for veterans. They are in the planning stages of finding a site for the CBOC that would best serve the veterans population in the county.

(continued on page 20)

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEGGETT CONT.

We will consider different means of communication including improvements to our website, use of social media such as Facebook, and opinion/editorial pieces approved by the Commission to local newspapers. We will increase awareness of the Commission and the needs of veterans through satellite meetings whereby the Commission gathers for its monthly meetings at different locations in the County to generate broader interest in the Commission's activities and available resources and information.

We will work with the County to increase its outreach to veterans regarding programs and services that they are eligible for. Our county's veterans are local citizens as well, and can/should be using the services afforded to *all* residents. We ask that you ensure that all intake forms ask if the person has ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces so that staff can also refer them to a Veterans Benefits Officer.

We will continue to be your partner with the Veterans Education and Benefits Collaborative which includes Montgomery College, Washington Adventist University, Universities at Shady Grove/UMD and Johns Hopkins University. We hope to involve the Wounded Warrior Project to provide some of the programs for the student veterans. We look forward to implementing the program once the current working group completes its work.

One of the Commission's duties is to assist in planning appropriate public acknowledgement of the contributions made by veterans and assist in planning commemoration activities recognizing the contributions of veterans. We continue to plan and hold recognition events such as Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Thank you for your involvement in these events that honor our veterans.

We look forward to the dedication of the POW/MIA flag that will take place on September 12, 2013. We are most grateful that you have agreed to fly the POW/MIA flag in the lobby of your office and at certain county Facilities, including the future Veterans' Plaza at the Executive Office building.

We would respectfully remind you of our next Welcome Home event on April 22, in which you have presented every year since its inception. This year you are scheduled to introduce Senator Max Cleland, our guest speaker.

We ask that you install a flat screen TV (or another form of equal recognition) in the Rockville Memorial Library and Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza that lists the names of our fellow Montgomery County residents killed in action after giving the full measure of service and devotion to our Nation.

ADVOCACY AGENDA

The Commission will take active measures to connect with the largest Veteran Service Organizations in the nation by contacting the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts in Montgomery County to broaden our outreach efforts to connect with our veterans in the County. We have begun this effort and we will be conducting our April meeting at a local Post.

Commissioners will seek out other organizations and non-profits that are in a position to assist our veterans and their families. We will work to develop partnerships that are crucial to create an interlocking web of support for our veterans.

Our Commissioners continue to work with the Commission on People with Disabilities to advocate for more employment opportunities for veterans. We sincerely thank you for your support in establishing the Hiring Preference for initial appointment to a County Merit System position for veterans with a disability, veterans without a disability, and for persons with a disability.

Your Commission is available to advise the County Executive and County Council on issues of importance to veterans. We can testify before hearings, meet with the County Executive and staff, and provide written analysis of proposed rules, regulations or legislation. There is a vast wealth of experience on the Commission of the priorities, fears and needs of veterans and their families from World War II to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As Commissioners, we continually educate ourselves on cutting edge, innovative services for veterans. We have a responsibility to share that knowledge with our fellow veterans and our County's leadership.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

HISTORY

The Commission on Veterans Affairs was established by County legislation in 2008 to advise the County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of the County's policies affecting veterans and their families.

MISSION

The Commission's responsibilities are to research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information and educational materials relating to activities and programs that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans and their families; institute and conduct educational and other programs, meetings, and conferences to promote the rights and opportunities for veterans; advise the Executive and the Council on the status of programs and services in the State and County related to the needs of veterans and their families; and assist in planning appropriate public acknowledgement of the contributions made by veterans, and assist in planning.

MEMBERSHIP

The Commission on Veterans Affairs is composed of sixteen voting members and one non-voting who serve in a volunteer capacity. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Commission includes:

- ▶ 8 Veterans
- ▶ 4 General Public
- ▶ 4 Ex-Officio Members
- ▶ 1 Non-Voting Congressional Representative

MEETINGS

All Commission and Committee meetings are open to the public. The Commission welcomes visitors to join us as we serve the County and its residents. Meetings are subject to change without advance notice. Please call to confirm day and time of meetings and to request any special accommodations. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. You can view the Commission meeting agendas and meeting summary minutes online at:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2013 - 2014

Full Commission Meeting

3rd Tuesday of the month, September to June
Summer recess during July and August

401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

1st Floor Tan Conference Room

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Workgroups meet, as needed, at differing locations.



CONNECT WITH THE COMMISSION



Visit us on the web! Read Commission Agendas, Meeting Summary Minutes, testimony, and more! www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva



Like us on Facebook! [facebook.com/MCGCVA](https://www.facebook.com/MCGCVA)



Sign up for eSubscribe to receive emails about Veterans information and resources. www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/esubscribe.html



Sign up for emergency alerts from Alert Montgomery! Alert Montgomery can deliver important alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis, emergency, or severe weather event. Notifications and updates can be sent to you on all of your devices at once: email account, cell phone, text page, Blackberry, wireless PDA, or XM Radio Channel 214, Twitter: Add "Montgomery County MD" in find people, Facebook: Add "Montgomery County MD Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security" in friends, or text MONTGOMERY to 411911. Sign up at <https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov>.

COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS FOR 2012 - 2013

November, 2012: "Operation Ladies In Boots" – Kathy Hoppe, Captain, Army Nurse Corps

December, 2012: Update – Working to Establish Bus Route for the New Vet Center – Wayne Miller

January, 2013: Update on the ALL Veterans Garden Project – Katharine Bloeser, William Stewart, Deon Shackelford and Juanita Bailey

Lockheed Martin (via NRPA) Grant for \$10K – Charlie Butler, Montgomery County Department of Recreation

February, 2013: United in Flying the POW/MIA Flag – Candice Quinn Kelly, President, Charles County Board of Commissioners, and Delegate Peter Murphy

Presentation of POW/MIA Flag to the County

March, 2013: NeuroRestorative: Serving Veterans – Jerry Villemain, Maryland State Director, and Diane Triplett, Program Director

April, 2013: Strategic Planning for Upcoming Year – Jerry Godwin, Chair, and Dan Bullis, Vice Chair

May, 2013: "Commitment to Caring: Outreach Mission of the Washington, DC VA Medical Center in Montgomery County" – Brian A. Hawkins, Medical Center Director, DCVAMC

Mid-Atlantic Championship Golf Tournament – Teo Sodeman, Tournament Director

June, 2013: Understanding the Veteran Administration's (VA) Aide and Attendance Program – Cheryl Chapman Henderson, Elder Law Attorney

The Trade Off Between VA Benefits and Medicaid – Ron Landsman, Fellow, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

Remarks – Kenneth Owens, Director, Business Office, DCVAMC

September, 2013: Update - Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) – Ed Chow, Secretary, MDVA

October, 2013: Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs – Veteran Service Program Plan and Timeline for Montgomery County – Phillip Munley, Director, Veteran Service Program; and Introducing Marlon Brown, Veteran Benefits Specialist for Montgomery County

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



**County Executive
Isiah Leggett**

The **County Executive** can be reached at:

Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-0311 (V)
240-773-3556 (TTY)
ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov



Montgomery County Council

The **County Council** can be reached at:

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-7900 (V)
240-777-7914 (TTY)
240-777-7888 (FAX)
county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

Seated, left to right: Roger Berliner, Valerie Ervin, Nancy Floreen and George Leventhal. *Standing:* Hans Riemer, Vice-President Craig Rice, Marc Elrich, President Nancy Navarro and Phil Andrews.

**Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
401 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850
240-777-1246 (V) or via MD Relay 711**

**Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request.
For additional information on the Commission, please call the telephone numbers or write to the
address listed above or e-mail via the contact information listed below.**

*Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in
employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.*

2012 - 2013 Annual Report Prepared By:

Betsy Luecking, *Staff Liaison*
betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov

Carly Clem, *Administrative Specialist I*
carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov

