

Retiree Update 26 Nov 2014

Past Newsletter Issues and Interim Updates Posted at:

BaseNolaRetiree.org

Get us at D8Retiree@gmail.com

D8 NOLA Help Desk: **504-201-7587**

D8 St. Louis Help Desk: **314-269-2407**

Veterans Choice Program

Many Veterans will now have the option to receive non-VA health care rather than waiting for a VA appointment or traveling to a VA facility. Beginning November 5, 2014, the new Choice Program will begin to cover non-VA care for eligible Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare.

Veterans are eligible if any of these situations apply to you:

- *You have been told by your local VA medical facility that you will need to wait more than 30 days from your preferred date or the date medically determined by your physician
- *Your current residence is more than 40 miles from the closest VA health care facility
- *You need to travel by plane or boat to the VA medical facility closest to your home
- *You face a geographic challenge, such as extensive distances around water or other geologic formations, such as mountains, which presents a significant travel hardship

Every Veteran will receive a letter and a Choice Card in the mail with details about the program. Veterans will be eligible for the program and receive cards in three phases:

1. Veterans who may live more than 40 miles from a VA facility.
2. Veterans who are currently waiting for an appointment longer than 30 days from their preferred date or the date determined to be medically necessary by their physician.
3. All remaining Veterans enrolled for VA healthcare who may be eligible for the Choice Program in the future.

To set up an appointment with a non-VA provider, call the VA at 866-606-8198 and we will work with you to ensure you are approved for care in your community.

How to Get Started: http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/how_to_get_started.asp

TRICARE and Military OneSource are co-hosting a **webinar** to educate TRICARE beneficiaries about the resources available to them to **quit using tobacco products**. The webinar, scheduled from Noon – 1:00pm EST, will take place on Thursday, Nov. 20, also known as the **Great American Smoke Out**. To sign up, go to:

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/296946266>

Registration is first-come, first-served and is limited due to system capacity. Participants must avoid sharing personal health information when asking a question.

Yes, I plan to live forever, too. In case I don't, attached is a Casualty Assistance Check List of what your survivors need to know and what they need to do. Or, you do for another. The PDF is fillable to make it easier to save and update. (Courtesy of Robert Hinds, the CGHQ based guru of all things retiree)

For the fifth consecutive year, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Consolidated Mail **Outpatient Pharmacy** (CMOP) has scored the **highest in overall satisfaction** in the J.D. Power National Pharmacy Study, Mail-Order segment.

When blood glucose levels rise and remain outside of the normal range, you can develop a disease called **diabetes**. Diabetes is a serious disease that can lead to other serious health risks. It is important for beneficiaries with diabetes to understand these additional risks and to highlight steps to preventive diabetes for those who don't. Read the entire article at www.tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HLArticles/Archives/11_07_14_DiabetesAwareness.aspx

We are getting older and those we care for are getting older. There is an organization that helps cope with this reality called **CARING for MILITARY FAMILIES**. Check it out at: <http://elizabethdolefoundation.org/why-we-help/#sthash.txRmmRaA.dpbs>

Good news for military retirees: the **2015 Cost of Living Adjustment** for military retirement pay was just announced. There will be a **1.7% Increase** in your retirement pay, starting in January 2015. (This is up from a 1.5% increase last year). This only applies to military retirees who retired under the Final Pay or High-3 retirement plans and have been retired for more than one year. Those who retired under the REDUX retirement plan will receive a 0.7% COLA increase in January.

The **IRS Forms 1099R for the 2014 tax year** will become available online in mid-December 2014. You will be able to access yours on myPay. DFAS will also mail hard copy versions of the 1099R to those of you who have chosen that option. Please keep in mind that hard copy versions of the 1099R are issued later and will take a while to reach you. If you have elected hard copy, you may not receive it until mid-January 2015. **Note that 1099R's are not automatically issued for deceased members.** If you want to receive a 1099R on the behalf of a member who passed away, a certificate of death must be on file, and you must request that a 1099R be issued. There are various ways to contact them if you would like to make this request, or have questions regarding a 1099R for a deceased member:

<http://www.dfas.mil/dfas/retiredmilitary/about/aboutus/customer-service.html>

I'm not into ships, I'm a smallboat kind of guy. I'm not into ice and believe you should not live where it gets colder than your age. So, a video clip on the Polar Star didn't grab my attention at first, but it has some interesting points. If you have a moment, watch it at:

<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/video/10429600-coast-guard-icebreaker-ship-docks-in-san-francisco-bay-for-maintenance/>

Military Retiree Service Organizations are moving towards electronic communication. Many of them use the **email address** you maintain in your DFAS *myPay* account as your most current electronic address. Thus, keeping your email address current ensures continued receipt of the newsletters. Additionally DFAS uses your *myPay* email address to send you their newsletters, breaking news, and to notify you when your Retiree DFAS Account Statement and 1099R tax statements are available. (Continue next page)

If you have not entered or updated your email address in *myPay*, you can do so by following the below steps:

1. Go to the *myPay* web site <https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>, and log into your account using the “Log In” box at the top left-hand side of your screen.
2. After entering your Login ID and Password, click “I agree to the terms of the User Agreement”
3. On the Main Menu page, click on the Email Address link.
4. Address where you want to receive pay statement notifications and other important correspondence.
5. Save your changes by selecting Accept/Submit then confirm your changes are correct.
6. From the top of the page in the gray bar, you may select Main to return to the Main Menu or Exit to close out your session.

Do you know the **new Commandant**? Most call him Admiral Z rather than take a chance of messing up his last name. An operator and people person, Admiral Paul Zukunft assumed the duties of the 25th Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard on May 30, 2014. He leads the largest component of the Department of Homeland Security, composed of 88,000 personnel including active duty, reserve, civilian and volunteer Auxiliarists.

Prior to this, Admiral Zukunft served as Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, where he was operational commander for all U.S. Coast Guard missions in an area encompassing more than 74 million square miles and provided mission support to the Department of Defense and Combatant Commanders. Other Flag assignments include Commander of the Eleventh Coast Guard District and Director, Joint Interagency Task Force West, where he served as executive agent to United States Pacific Command for combating Transnational Criminal Organizations in the Asia-Pacific Region. In 2010, Admiral Zukunft served as the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for the Deepwater Horizon Spill of National Significance where he directed more than 47,000 responders, 6,500 vessels and 120 aircraft during the largest oil spill in U.S. history. Admiral Zukunft has commanded six units and served extensively in the cutter fleet where he commanded the cutters CAPE UPRIGHT, HARRIET LANE, and RUSH.

If you have a question, comment, or some snippet of information that other retirees would enjoy, please feel free to contact Jim Montgomery at D8Retiree@gmail.com.