



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 19, 2016

Release: 16-011

Veterans healthcare sharing agreement increases access to services statewide

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A unique agreement in place that allows Alaskan veterans to receive medical services in more than 100 communities across the state is making it easier for the state’s veterans to get the care they need closer to home.

However, there are still veterans who have not enrolled in the federal Veterans Health Administration and are not able to take advantage of the benefits. The State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs is available to help enroll anyone who needs assistance and wants all Alaskan veterans to receive the care they have earned.

In 2012, the Alaska VA Healthcare System and the Alaska Native Health Programs signed a monumental health sharing agreement that increased access to care for veterans residing in rural areas who did not live close to the state’s five VA healthcare facilities (located in Anchorage, Wasilla, Kenai, Juneau and Fairbanks). The agreement allows Alaska’s veterans, both Alaska Native and non-Native, to receive healthcare services in 122 additional medical facilities statewide. Alaska was the first in the United States to have an agreement such as this.

Additionally, the sharing agreement states:

- All direct services provided by an Alaska Native Health Programs facility to eligible veterans for services in which the veteran is also eligible will be reimbursed by the VA.
- The care all Alaska Native veterans receive at an Alaska Native Health Programs facility is preauthorized and not subject to co-payments.
- In remote locations, expedited annual preauthorization for services to non-Alaska Native veterans is for 10 primary care and behavioral health visits in a 12-month period. Co-payments will be assessed for those who are required to pay co-payments. If more visits are required, then a care plan will be requested with approval from the VA.

“This agreement has directly reduced travel costs for veterans and has infused millions of dollars into the tribal programs, which in turn translates into money into local clinics and economies,” said Verdie Bowen, director of the State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs. “The VA is the payer of first resort for those treated in the Alaska Native Health Programs. It is a model program that can and has been easily transported to other states.”

For more information regarding the sharing agreement or to enroll into the VA Healthcare System, contact Bowen or Jeff Slaikeu at the State of Alaska Office of Veterans Affairs at (907) 334-0874.

###