

Vets Views 23 Aug 07

VIETNAM VETS!! Important! Keep reading! I've been told by the Fargo VA Medical Center business office, that if you were an "in-country" Vietnam vet, and you did not sign up for VA health benefits before that magic date in Jan '03, you can enroll **now** and they don't care how much money you make each year--you will be accepted for VA care--though you may have co-pays if your income is over the limit. This is great news for those of you who think you may have too much income/assets and who thought about signing up after Jan of 2003, but didn't. Please, pass this on to any Vietnam vet you run into!

Speaking of health care, the new clinic in Bemidji has over 1200 new patient openings left, so get in while the gettin' in is good! I've got the forms if you want to transfer from Fargo or Grafton. Call me.

To make it easier to find services and to facilitate crisis intervention, the state has implemented the **Veterans Linkage Line**: 1-888-LINKVET or 1-888-546-5838. **LinkVet** is a toll free, one-stop customer service line for all Minnesota veterans. Minnesota's Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) staff, along with the Crisis Connection, will provide information, referral and immediate crisis intervention and psychological counseling 24 hours a day, seven days a week. MDVA staff will manage the general lines Monday through Friday from 8:00 am—4:30 pm. Crisis Connection, a crisis support line with masters-level trained social workers, will field all crisis calls during business hours, after business hours, on weekends and holidays. So, if you're a veteran with a problem, help is a phone call away.

The **Minnesota GI Bill** program was recently established to provide postsecondary educational assistance to eligible Minnesota veterans and to the children and spouses of deceased and severely disabled Minnesota veterans. The Minnesota GI Bill program is a "last dollar in" program which means the amount of educational assistance in any semester or term is determined by subtracting the amount it takes to attend the school from the monies received from the federal Pell Grant program, the state grant program, or any federal military or veterans educational benefits.

For more information regarding the Minnesota GI bill, call the Office of Higher Education at 651-642-0567 or download an application from www.ohe.state.mn.us/military. Note: Before applying for the Minnesota GI Bill, veterans and eligible service/family members must **first apply** for state and federal aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov, or by contacting the financial aid office at their college. If the veteran's income is too high to qualify for FAFSA aid, the MN GI Bill will still come in handy!

I'll say this about Minnesota, this state has come a long, long way and we are now way out front of the others when it comes to supporting veterans. That's a good news story and we can all be proud of it.

My office hours have change a bit, so you might want to cut this out and put it on the fridge.

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 8:30-4:30
Wednesday: 8:30-4:30 (Greenbush Library/Badger City Hall by appointment-call day prior)
Thursday: 8:30-12:30
Friday: 8:30-12:00 (1:00 PM-Warroad Legion-please call for appointment)
Nights/weekends/holidays: By appointment, as needed.

Over and Out