



by Freddy Groves

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VETERANS POST

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Applying for VA health care

I ran into a guy recently, a fellow veteran, who I hadn't talked to in years. And he was limping, badly. When I asked, he said he needed knee surgery and couldn't afford it.

I asked if he'd looked into VA health care, and he replied that he'd applied years ago and got nowhere with the VA, so he gave up.

Before we even left the store, I had my phone out and placed a call to the local VSO (veteran service officer). I got the two of them hooked up with an appointment and the VSO is going to walk my friend through all the paperwork.

It should not be this hard for a veteran to get health care.

A big problem is that many veterans tried to deal with the VA years ago, became frustrated and gave up, not realizing that things have changed.

If you were turned down for VA health care, apply again. The PACT Act has changed many things, including expanded locations for exposure to Agent Orange and two dozen new presumptive conditions. If you got hung up trying to get Community Care, try again. The rules are different now.

Or if you never had VA health care, sign up now. Go to the website (www.va.gov) and search for VA Form 10-10EZ. Check whether you're eligible for VA health care. Have your DD-214 handy and any other military paperwork you have. The online process takes about a half hour.

If you don't think you can handle the online application process yourself, look for a local VSO. See www.va.gov/get-help-from-accredited-representative. Or call the MyVA411 information line at 800-698-2411. They're open 24/7. You can also contact the American Legion near you or the DAV.

A VSO can do a lot of things for you: tell you about the benefits you're supposed to get, assemble documents, help with appeals and so much more.

Or call the benefits hotline at 877-222-8387 to ask about enrolling in VA health care by phone.

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