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Misawa AB Retiree Activities Office Newsletter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Articles appearing in this newsletter are compiled from local sources, newsletters received by the RAO, and from other military sources. Information has been edited and reprinted for the benefit of our retiree population. Absolutely no commercial gain is derived from this publication. Our appreciation is extended to those agencies and newsletter sources. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of any agency of the U.S. Government.

Getting Started with Medicare

Medicare is health insurance for people 65 or older. You're first eligible to sign up for Medicare 3 months before you turn 65. You may be eligible to get Medicare earlier if you have a disability, End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), or ALS (also called Lou Gehrig's disease).

Remember, Medicare does not pay for care if you are outside the U.S. Most of what you read below only applies if you are in the states. However, after age 65 your Tricare converts to Tricare for Life but you cannot use it without Medicare Part B.

Medicare basics

Medicare offers different options for you to get health care coverage. Start here to get the basics and find out how Medicare works before you look at your coverage options.

Generally, you only need to sign up for Part A and Part B once. Each year, you can choose which way you get your health coverage during the Open Season (usually mid Oct to early Dec). You can also add/switch drug coverage with Medicare Part D.

Medicare is different from private insurance — it doesn't offer plans for couples or families. You don't have to make the same choice as your spouse.

2 steps to set up your Medicare coverage:

Sign up for Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) You can sign up at certain times. Go to <https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get->

[started-with-medicare/sign-up](#) to learn about how to do this.

Choose which way you want to get your Medicare health coverage.

You can choose either Original Medicare or Medicare Advantage (Part C) for your health coverage. If you choose Original Medicare, you'll also decide if you want drug coverage (Part D) and supplemental coverage, like Medigap

You'll have Original Medicare unless you join a Medicare Advantage Plan (more about this below).

How does Original Medicare work?

Original Medicare covers most, but not all of the costs for approved health care services and supplies. After you meet your deductible, you pay your share of costs for services and supplies as you get them. There's no limit on what you'll pay out-of-pocket in a year unless you have other coverage (like Medigap, Medicaid, or employee or union coverage). Get details on cost saving programs at <https://www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/get-help-paying-costs/medicare-savings-programs>

Services covered by Medicare must be medically necessary. Medicare also covers many preventive services, like shots and screenings

If you go to a doctor or other health care provider that accepts the Medicare-approved amount, your share of costs may be less. If you get a service that Medicare doesn't cover, you pay the full cost.

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VA Proposes VA Disability Rating Changes

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities specifically pertaining to the respiratory, auditory and mental disorders body systems.

The proposed updates to the rating schedule for these conditions will enable VA to incorporate modern medical data and terminology to provide Veterans with more accurate and consistent decisions.

Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated. Updating the rating schedule allows Veterans to receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge relating to their condition.

Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation, but no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the Veteran's disability is shown to have occurred

Courtesy of www.va.gov



Get Started with Medicare

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With Original Medicare, you can:

- Go to any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare, anywhere in the U.S. Go to <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare>; to find providers.
- Join a separate Medicare drug plan (Part D) to get drug coverage.
- Buy a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy to help lower your share of costs for services you get.

If you have other insurance, learn how Original Medicare works with your other coverage at <https://www.medicare.gov/supplements-other-insurance/how-medicare-works-with-other-insurance>. If you're not lawfully present in the U.S., Medicare won't pay for your Part A and Part B claims, and you can't enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Medicare drug plan.

How does Medicare Advantage work?

(Medicare Advantage is not an option for those living overseas.) It bundles your Part A, Part B, and usually Part D coverage into one plan. Plans may offer some extra benefits that Original Medicare doesn't cover — like vision, hearing, and dental services.

You join a plan offered by Medicare-approved private companies that follow rules set by Medicare. Each plan can have different rules for how you get services, like needing referrals to see a specialist. Costs for monthly premiums and services you get vary depending on which plan you join.

Plans must cover all emergency and urgent care, and almost all medically necessary services Original Medicare covers. Some plans tailor their benefit packages to offer additional benefits to treat specific conditions.

With Medicare Advantage, you:

- Need to use doctors who are in the plan's network (for non-emergency or non-urgent care).
- May pay a premium for the plan in addition to the monthly Part B pre-

mium. Plans may have a \$0 premium or may help pay all or part of your Part B premiums.

- Can't buy or use separate supplemental coverage (like Medigap).

You must have both Part A and Part B to join a Medicare Advantage Plan.

How does Medicare work with other insurance?

When you have Medicare and other health insurance (like from your job), one will pay first (called a "primary payer") and the other second (called a "secondary payer").

If you have other insurance, who pays first depends on a number of items, like if you're still working, the type of insurance you have, and if you have a special situation, like End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).

Get details if you are working past age 65 or getting ready to retire at <https://www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare/medicare-basics/working-past-65>

Find out who pays first in your situation at <https://www.medicare.gov/supplements-other-insurance/how-medicare-works-with-other-insurance>

Parts of Medicare

Part A (Hospital Insurance): Helps cover inpatient care in hospitals, skilled nursing facility care, hospice care, and home health care.

Part B (Medical Insurance): Helps cover:

- Services from doctors and other health care providers
- Outpatient care
- Home health care
- Durable medical equipment (like wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, and other equipment)
- Many preventive services (like screenings, shots or vaccines, and yearly "Wellness" visits)

Part C is Medicare Advantage.

Part D (Drug coverage): Helps cover the cost of prescription drugs (including

many recommended shots or vaccines). You join a Medicare drug plan in addition to Original Medicare, or you get it by joining a Medicare Advantage Plan with drug coverage. Plans that offer Medicare drug coverage are run by private insurance companies that follow rules set by Medicare.

Medicare Supplemental Insurance (Medigap) Medigap is extra insurance you can buy from a private company that helps pay your share of costs in Original Medicare. Policies are standardized, and in most states named by letters, like Plan G or Plan K. The benefits in each lettered plan are the same, no matter which insurance company sells it.

Your Medicare Options with Original Medicare

- Original Medicare includes Part A and Part B.
- A separate Medicare drug plan to get Medicare drug coverage (Part D).
- You can use any doctor or hospital that takes Medicare, anywhere in the U.S.

To help pay your out-of-pocket costs in Original Medicare (like your 20% coinsurance), you can also buy supplemental coverage, like Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap), or have coverage from a former employer or union, or Medicaid.

More on Medicare Part B? Part B is the most important part of Medicare for those of us living outside the United States.

Medicare Part B is optional for those in the U.S. who can use Part C instead. Part B helps pay for covered medical services and items when they are medically necessary.

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Get Started with Medicare

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Costs: If you have Part B, you pay a Part B premium each month. Most people will pay the standard premium amount. Social Security will contact some people who have to pay more depending on their income. If you don't sign up for Part B when you are first eligible, you may have to pay a late enrollment penalty.

For more information about enrolling in Medicare, look in your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook (<https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf>), call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213, or visit your local Social Security office. If you get benefits from the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB), call your local RRB office or 1-800-808-0772.

As you know, you can only use Medicare insurance in the states. We cannot use it here in Japan. But you need Part B to get Tricare for Life.

After age 65 and after you obtain Medicare Part B coverage. After you have acquired Part B you are automatically enrolled in Tricare for Life. This give you coverage in Japan.

Costs for Part A (Hospital Insurance)

Part A premiums are \$0 for most people (because they paid Medicare taxes long enough while working - generally at least 10 years). This is sometimes called "premium-free Part A."

You usually don't pay a monthly premium for Part A if you (or another qualifying person, like your current or former spouse) paid Medicare taxes while working for a certain amount of time. (If you're 65 or older, usually this is 10 years of work. If you get Medicare earlier than age 65, you won't pay a Part A premium.)

If you're not sure, you can:

- Log into (or create) your secure *my* Social Security account

at <https://secure.ssa.gov/RIL/SiView.action> to find out if you paid Medicare taxes long enough.

- Check your W2s from when you filed your taxes.
- Ask your employer.
- If you or your spouse worked for a railroad, you can call the Railroad Retirement Board at 1-877-772-5772.

If you don't qualify for a premium-free Part A, you might be able to buy it. In 2022 the premium will be either \$274 or \$499 each month depending on how long you or your spouse worked and aid Medicare taxes.

You also have to sign up for Part B to buy Part A. If you don't buy Part A when you're first eligible for Medicare (usually when you turn 65), you might pay a penalty. The Part A penalty is 10% more than the monthly premiums. You will pay the higher premium amount each month for twice the number of years you could have signed up for Part A, but didn't.

The deductible is \$1,556 in 2022 for each time you are admitted to the hospital per benefit period before Original Medicare starts to pay.

The way that Original Medicare measures your use of hospital and skilled nursing facility (SNF) services. A benefit period begins the day you're admitted as an inpatient in a hospital or SNF. The benefit period ends when you haven't gotten any inpatient hospital care (or up to 100 days of skilled care in a SNF) for 60 days in a row.

If you go into a hospital or a SNF after one benefit period has ended, a new benefit period begins. You must pay the inpatient hospital deductible for each benefit period. There's no limit to the number of benefit periods you can have.

For Inpatient Stays you pay:

- Days 1-60: \$0 after you pay your Part A deductible

- Days 61-90: A co-insurance amount of \$389 each day (in 2022)
- Days 91-150: A co-insurance amount per "lifetime reserve day" of \$778 each day while using your 60 lifetime reserve days (in 2022)
- After day 150: You pay all costs after you use all the lifetime reserve days.
- For more information go to <https://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050-medicare-and-you.pdf>

What does Medicare Part B cost?

Generally, you pay a monthly premium for Medicare coverage and part of the costs each time you get a covered service. There's no yearly limit on what you pay out-of-pocket, unless you have supplemental coverage, like a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy, or you join a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Monthly premiums for Part B are \$170.10 in 2022 (or higher depending on your income). The amount can change each year. You'll pay the premium each month, even if you don't get any Part B-covered services.

How do I pay my Part B premiums? Usually, the Part B premium is deducted from your monthly benefits from Social Security (or the Railroad Retirement Board). If you don't get benefits or if your monthly benefit is too low, you'll get a bill from Medicare to pay your Part B premium.

You might pay a penalty if you don't sign up for Part B when you're first eligible for Medicare (usually when you turn 65).

How much is the Part B late enrollment penalty?

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Get Started with Medicare

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You'll pay an extra 10% for each year you could have signed up for Part B,

This penalty is added to your monthly Part B premium. (You may also pay a higher premium depending on your income.)

It's not a one-time late fee — you'll pay the penalty for as long as you have Part B. Generally, you **won't** have to pay a penalty if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period. To qualify, you (or your spouse) must still be working and you must have health coverage based on that job.

Example of the Part B penalty.

If you waited 2 full years (24 months) to sign up for Part B and didn't qualify for a Special Enrollment Period, you'll have to pay a 20% late enrollment penalty (10% for each full 12-month period that you could have signed up), plus the standard Part B monthly premium (\$170.10 in 2022).

\$170.10 plus \$34.00 (20% [of \$170.10] late enrollment penalty). \$204.10 will be your Part B monthly premium for 2022. This amount is rounded to the nearest \$.10 and includes the late enrollment penalty.

Deductible - You'll pay \$233 in 2022, before Original Medicare starts to pay. You pay this deductible once each year.

Costs for Services - You'll usually pay 20% of the cost for each Medicare-covered service or item after you've paid your deductible.

Get help with Part A & Part B costs

If you have limited income and resources, you may be able to get help from your state to pay your premiums and other costs, like deductibles, coinsurance, and copays. Learn more about help with Medicare costs at <https://www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/get-help-paying-costs>

Drug coverage (Part D) costs:

Part D premiums are based on which plan you join. The amount can change each year. You may also have to pay an extra amount each month based on your income. You'll pay the extra amount if your modified adjusted gross income, as reported on your IRS tax return from 2 years ago, is more than:

- \$91,000 in 2022, if you file an individual tax return or are married and file separately
- \$182,000 in 2022, if you are married

and file a joint tax return

Social Security will tell you if you have to pay an extra amount because of your income. You'll pay this amount each month to Medicare (or the Railroad Retirement Board), not your plan. The extra amount is adjusted each year based on your most recent IRS tax return.

You must pay the extra amount each month to keep your Part D coverage (or your Medicare Advantage Plan, if it includes drug coverage).

You might pay a penalty if you:

- Don't join a Medicare drug plan when you first get Medicare, **and**
- Go 63 days or more without creditable drug coverage (coverage that's similar in value to Part D).

How much is the Part D penalty?

You'll pay an extra 1% for each month (that's 12% a year) you could have signed up for Part D, but didn't. The penalty is added to your monthly premium. It's not a one-time late fee — you'll pay the penalty each month for as long as you have Part D coverage (even if you change plans).

If you have creditable drug coverage or if you qualify for Extra Help (A Medicare program for people with limited income and resources that helps lower Medicare drug plan costs like premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance), you **won't** have to pay a penalty.

Example of the Part D penalty.

If you waited 14 months to join a Medicare drug plan, and you didn't have creditable drug coverage, you'll have to pay a 14% late enrollment penalty in addition to your monthly plan premium.

- The penalty amount comes from the "national base beneficiary premium" (\$33.37 in 2022).
- The national base beneficiary premium changes each year, so your penalty amount may also change each year. This monthly penalty is added for as long as you have Medicare drug coverage, even if you switch plans.
- \$33.37 X \$.14 (%14 penalty) comes to \$4.67 (rounded to the nearest the cents = \$4.70. This will be your penalty for 2022. The amount is added to your plan's monthly premium for 2022.

When you get prescription drugs - Most plans charge a deductible, an amount you pay before the plan starts to pay, for prescriptions you fill. The deductible amount

varies based on which plan you join. Your actual costs vary depending on the medicines you take, if they are on your plan's list of covered drugs, and which pharmacy you use.

Get help with drug costs

If you have limited income and resources, you may be able to get Extra Help to pay your plan premiums and other drug costs (like deductibles, coinsurance, and copays). If you qualify, you won't have to pay the Part D late enrollment penalty. Learn more about help with costs at <https://www.medicare.gov/your-medicare-costs/get-help-paying-costs/find-your-level-of-extra-help-part-d>

Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C):

(briefly because it is not an option for us in Japan.)

Monthly premiums vary based on which plan you join. The amount can change each year. You must keep paying your Part B premium to stay in your plan. Deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments vary based on which plan you join.

Plans also have a yearly limit on what you pay out-of-pocket. Once you pay the plan's limit, the plan pays 100% for covered health services for the rest of the year.

Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap):

Monthly premiums vary based on which policy you buy, where you live, and other factors. The amount can change each year.

You must keep paying your Part B premium to keep your supplement insurance. It helps lower your share of costs for Part A and Part B services in Original Medicare.

Some Medigap policies include extra benefits to lower your costs, like coverage when you travel out of the country.

So, once again, for those of us living overseas, the primary reason for having Medicare Parts A and B (and its premium requirements) is so you can have Tricare for Life. However, if you are visiting the states and need medical care, you may be happy you have Medicare coverage.

For more information go to: www.medicare.gov/basics/get-started-with-medicare.

Courtesy of www.medicare.gov



Veterans Administration

Veterans Technology Education Courses

If you want to gain computer experience to start or advance your career in the high-technology industry, find out if you're eligible for our Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) program that matches you with a leading training provider to help you develop high-tech skills.

Am I eligible for this program? You may be eligible for VET TEC if you meet all of the requirements listed below.

They are expanding the VET TEC program.

As part of the Isakson and Roe Act of 2020, we're expanding the VET TEC program to help more people get high-tech training from experts.

Here's what's changing:

We're expanding access to include service members who are close to their separation date. If you're a service member, you can apply if you're within 180 days of separating from the military.

We're making it easier for you to find expert instructors.

You can now choose eligible training providers who have been in operation for 2 years or less. Instructors must be experts in their field to be approved for the program.

We're increasing funding.

We'll be able to offer the program to more Veterans and service members because we're increasing funding from \$15 million each year to \$45 million.

We'll update you here to let you know when you can apply.

If you have any questions, you can contact us at 888-442-4551. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET.

All of these must be true. You:

- Aren't on active duty or are within 180 days of separating from active duty, **and**
- Qualify for VA education assistance under the GI Bill, **and**
- Have at least one day of unexpired GI Bill entitlement, **and**
- Are accepted into a program by a VA-approved training provider

Note: Your VET TEC training

won't count against your GI Bill entitlement, and you need only one day of unexpired GI Bill benefits to participate.

What types of training does VET TEC cover?

You can get training in one of these high-demand training areas:

- Computer software
- Computer programming
- Data processing
- Information science
- Media applications

With VET TEC, you can get:

- Tuition for a full-time high-tech training program
- Money for housing during your training

Note: If you're on active duty, you're not eligible to receive a housing allowance.

If you attend your training program in person, your housing stipend will be equal to the monthly military Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for an E-5 with dependents. This is based on the zip code where you attend your training.

If you participate in an online program, your stipend will be half of the BAH national average for an E-5 with dependents.

Note: If you don't attend a training for a full month, we'll prorate your housing payment for the days you train.

How do I apply?

You can apply for the VET TEC program online at: <https://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/vettec-high-tech-program/apply-for-vettec-form-22-0994/introduction>.

If we determine that you're eligible for VET TEC, you'll then apply to the VA-approved training provider of your choice. Your training provider may review your qualifica-

tions to assess whether they think you'll be able to successfully complete their training program and find meaningful, relevant employment.

VET TEC is a five-year pilot program. You can participate as long as the funding is available.

Note: If you haven't already applied for VA education benefits, you'll also need to fill out an Application for VA Education Benefits (VA Form 22-1990) or apply online at <https://www.va.gov/education/apply-for-education-benefits/application/1990/introduction/>

How can I show that I've completed the program?

After you complete your training, you'll receive a certification of your new skills.

VET TEC training providers

For Veterans: Browse the list of VA-approved VET TEC training providers at:

<https://www.benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/FGIB/VetTecTrainingProviders.asp>.

A provider is considered "preferred" if the training facility agrees to refund tuition and fees if a student doesn't find meaningful employment within 180 days of completing the program.

For training providers: If you're a training provider interested in participating in the VET TEC program, you can learn more and apply at the training provider website. URL is same as above. Get more information if you have questions about the program or how to apply:

Call us at 888-442-4551. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET. If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 711.

Or email us at VETTEC.VBABUF@va.gov.

Courtesy of <https://www.va.gov>



Veterans' Affairs

VA Survivors Pension

A VA Survivors Pension offers monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans who meet certain income and net worth limits set by Congress. Find out if you qualify and how to apply.

You can still file a claim and apply for benefits during the coronavirus pandemic

Get the latest information about in-person services, claim exams, extensions, paperwork, decision reviews and appeals, and how best to contact us during this time. Go to <https://www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions/#claims-and-applications>

Am I eligible for a VA Survivors Pension as a surviving spouse?

You may be eligible for this benefit if you haven't remarried after the Veteran's death, and if the deceased Veteran didn't receive a dishonorable discharge and their service meets at least one of these requirements.

At least one of these must be true:

- The Veteran entered active duty on or before September 7, 1980, and served at least 90 days on active military service, with at least 1 day during a covered wartime period, **or**
- The Veteran entered active duty after September 7, 1980, and served at least 24 months or the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty (with some exceptions), with at least 1 day during a covered wartime period **or**
- The Veteran was an officer and started on active duty after October 16, 1981, and hadn't previously served on active duty for at least 24 months

And this must be true for you:

Your yearly family income and net worth meet certain limits set by Congress. Your net worth equals the value of everything you own (except your house, your car, and most home furnishings), minus any debt you owe.

What wartime periods do you recognize for pension benefits?

Under current law, we recognize these wartime periods to decide eligibility for pension benefits:

- Mexican Border period (May 9, 1916, to April 5, 1917, for Veterans who served in Mexico, on its borders, or in adjacent waters)
- World War I (April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918)
- World War II (December 7, 1941, to December 31, 1946)
- Korean conflict (June 27, 1950, to January 31, 1955)
- Vietnam War era (November 1, 1955, to May 7, 1975, for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period. August 5, 1964, to May 7, 1975, for Veterans who served outside of the Republic of Vietnam.)
- Gulf War (August 2, 1990, through a future date to be set by law or presidential proclamation)

You can apply in any of these ways:

- With the help of a trained professional
- You can work with a trained professional called an accredited representative to get help applying for VA survivors pension benefits.
- Get help filing your claim at <https://www.va.gov/disability/get-help-filing-claim/>
- Online

Use the direct upload tool through AccessVA to upload your form on

line. Go to AccessVA at <https://eauth.va.gov/accessva/?cspSelectFor=dmhs> to use direct upload

By mail

Fill out an Application for DIC, Death Pension, and/or Accrued Benefits (VA Form 21P-534EZ). Download VA Form 21P-534EZ (PDF) at <https://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21P-534EZ-ARE.pdf>

Mail your completed application to this address:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Pension Intake Center
PO Box 5365
Janesville, WI 53547-5365

If you happen to be going back to the States, you can bring your application to a VA regional office near you. Find a VA regional office near you <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/?facilityType=benefits>

You may want to submit an intent to file form before you apply for VA Survivors Pension benefits. This can give you the time you need to gather your evidence while avoiding a later potential start date (also called an effective date). When you notify us of your intent to file, you may be able to get retroactive payments (payments that start at a point in the past).

Find out how to submit an intent to file form

How long does it take VA to make a decision?

It depends. We process VA Survivors Pension claims in the order we receive them, unless a claim requires priority processing.

Children of a deceased wartime veteran man also be eligible for this pension.

For more detailed information on this topic, please go to <https://www.va.gov/pension/survivors-pension/>

Courtesy of www.health.mil

Access to retiree publications of each service:

Army Echoes: www.armygl.army.mil/rso/echoes.asp **Navy Shift Colors:** www.shiftcolors.navy.mil
Air Force Afterburner: www.retirees.af.mil/afterburner
Marine Corps Semper Fidelis: www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MM/SR/RET_ACT/SemperFidelis **Coast Guard Evening Colors:** <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras>



Health

MHS GENESIS Patient Portal

The following information is extracted from Health.mil's "Ask the Doc" website with some information from the 35Medical Group.

Per Ask the Doc.....

"Let me start with MHS GENESIS.

That will help the Patient Portal make more sense.

MHS GENESIS is the new electronic health record for the Military Health System and the Department of Defense. The rollout started in 2017 in the Pacific Northwest, and it's been working its way, more or less, west to east across the country since then.

MHS GENESIS will replace the existing outpatient and inpatient electronic health record systems - what we call "legacy" systems - so that, eventually, all outpatient and inpatient documentation will take place within MHS GENESIS.

You are probably familiar with TRICARE Online. Your local military medical treatment facility will eventually transition from TRICARE Online to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, if it hasn't already.

So...what does this mean to you, the beneficiary?

The secure communication with your primary care team, appointment scheduling and ability to review information about your appointments and medical records will still be there, but there are a variety of improvements that will come along with the new system.

The secure messaging piece of the Patient Portal allows for what we call "asynchronous communication" with your providers. Beneficiaries can upload attachments of up to 25 MB, which is about 30 seconds of high-quality video and most pictures. In addition, patients are not limited to communicating just with their primary care team. They can communicate with specialty clinics as well.

You can log in to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal and look up, print out or download clinical notes from a visit you've had with health care providers

within the MHS. You can share that information with a civilian provider if needed. You can also view lab results and radiology reports. There's a health library that's available, too, so you can look up conditions and medications.

Once MHS GENESIS comes online at your MTF, you should also be able to make appointments online shortly thereafter.

Additionally, we've recently made changes to COVID-19 test results. They're available immediately and readily accessible in the Patient Portal. We also have the option to complete an e-visit if a patient suspects they have COVID-19. Once complete, a secure message is sent to their primary care manager so that team or that person can take appropriate action.

Another nice thing about this is that the DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs are using similar systems. They're essentially speaking the same language when it comes to electronic health records.

If you're an active duty service member, or in the guard or reserve, this is going to help facilitate the transition from active duty status to veteran status. We spend a lot of time working with our VA colleagues. The interfaces of both patient portals should look and function about the same. Once we have this product up at all of our basic training facilities, an individual's medical documentation will happen on the same electronic health record system from in-processing to separation or retirement and beyond.

And don't worry about losing TRICARE Online immediately. It's not going anywhere for a while. You and your provider will still be able to go into TRICARE Online and retrieve any information that's there. Once we're completely transitioned to MHS GENESIS, then we'll start to phase out the old system.

We hope to have MHS GENESIS, and along with it the Patient Portal, "live" at all MTFs by the end of 2023 or beginning of 2024.

PPP, There you have it. It sounds to me like MHS GENESIS and the Pa-

tient Portal are designed to revolve around you, the patient. It looks like Misawa will be getting this system up and running in early 2024. I for one, would encourage you to use it to its fullest capacity if you can.

Courtesy of www.health.mil

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Holiday blues, seasonal depression, and other terms have been used to describe what is now known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and more often than not, many factors play a role on an individual's ability to be affected by this disorder each year around the holidays.

In most cases, SAD symptoms appear during late fall or early winter and go away during the sunnier days of spring and summer. More serious and can affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities.

"Too many may suffer with SAD and do not get the appropriate treatment and so it's often overlooked or simply viewed as the winter blues, or not so bad," says Dr. Mark Long, a Public Health Educator at the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. "Additionally there may be stigma associated with SAD and getting help," he adds.

While anyone can be affected by SAD, but there are millions of Americans who may be more vulnerable due to additional factors.

"The exact causes of SAD are unknown. To be on the safe side, it is worth good consideration to look into talking with a professional and discussing what options are available as opposed to when it may be too late.

"The proven treatments for SAD include the use of light therapy, antidepressant medications and counseling," Long says. "Also outside activities, exposure to sunlight, being active and exercising, getting sufficient sleep and eating healthy are helpful."

*Courtesy of
devidshub.net/news/410710/talking-
seasonal-affective-disorder*



RECURRING INFORMATION

Retiree Survivor's Guide

A Retiree Survivor's Guide to Benefits is available on the Library page of the Air Force Retiree Services website.

This guide provides general information about most federal benefits and entitlements available to eligible family members of deceased retired airmen, and it explains various application processes. People can direct specific questions to the government agency administering the benefits or discuss these matters with an Air Force casualty assistance representative.

Government agencies outside the Air Force administer most of the benefits discussed in this guide.

This guide is designed to provide general information on most federal benefits and privileges people may be entitled to as survivors of a deceased Air Force retiree. In addition, it contains a list of important necessary documents (see Section H), and a Benefits/Entitlements Checklist (see Section I).

myPay on YouTube

There is an excellent tutorial on YouTube on how to open and use your myPay account. Go to

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhx_8nsfXqVjnv_WuYeXc84lmlHBMYe6a

Courtesy of myPay.dfas.mil

myPay Support on DFAS

For problems using myPay, or with your myPay password, contact the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit toll-free at 1-888-332-7411 or commercial at (216)552-5096. You can also call DSN to 580-5096. This support line is available Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm, Eastern Time.

The Centralized Customer Support Unit can provide assistance on how to use the options available to you in myPay. The support unit will also provide support for establishing and changing your password.

For all other payroll information, please contact your servicing pay office or your customer service representative.

Questions concerning specific pay account information should contact the

servicing payroll office or the appropriate Customer Service rep as follows:

Military Retirees:

1-800-321-1080

Annuity: 1-800-321-1080

Former Military Spouses:

1-888-332-7411

Military retirees who are in a non-pay status due to a VA Waiver or Combat Pay can still access myPay but will have limited options available. Questions should be referred to the customer service section listed above.

You can also access your pay statement from the Main Menu of the myPay website by clicking on the Payment Information option.

Courtesy of myPay.dfas.mil

Where to Send Your TRICARE Claim

Non-active duty, TRICARE Pacific; send to TRICARE Overseas Program, P.O. Box 7985, Madison, WI 53707-7985 USA

TRICARE For Life (TFL) claims in the United States and U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) send to WPS TFL, P.O. Box 7890 Madison, WI 53707-7890 USA.

Source: *The 2011 Publication for TRICARE Standard Overseas Beneficiaries*

For TRICARE Overseas Program information, forms and assistance you can contact the Misawa Air Base TRICARE Office at 226-6000 (from off base 0176-77-6000) or visit the office at the base hospital.

Courtesy of www.TRICARE-overseas.com

International Direct Deposit

International Direct Deposit (IDD) is available to U.S. military retirees and survivors living in eligible locations overseas. IDD electronically deposits funds on the first business day of the month to your foreign bank in the currency of the country of the receiving

bank.

See previous editions of the Misawa RAO Newsletter (go to misa-wa.rao.org and search archived newsletters (April-June 2016 is most recent) for specific details and instructions to use the new DD1199-I for international direct deposit. *JJR*

ID Card Appointments

For ID card appointments, go to: <https://rapids-appointments.dmdc.osd.mil/>

Click "Make an Appointment"

Lee Martin

Call My VA

You have questions for the VA? Dial 1-800-MyVA411. This is the number to call when you don't know who to call.

Lee Martin

A Reminder!

If you want to retain your TRICARE benefit, when you turn age 65, you must join and pay for Medicare Part B. If you live overseas, while you will not have access to Medicare unless you go stateside, but without Medicare Part B coverage you will not be able to submit a TRICARE claim. You will still have access to the Military Treatment Facility, space available.

About six months before you turn 65, you will receive a notice from the SSA giving you the option to decline. If you decline Part B, you will need other insurance and cannot claim any out-of-pocket expenses.

Joe Roginski

Birthdates of our Military Services

US Army—June 14, 1775

US Navy – October 13, 1775

US Marines—November 10, 1775

US Coast Guard—August 4, 1790

US Air Force—Sept 18, 1947



アメリカの所得税を申告しなければならないですか？

米国の収入納税申告最終期限は、今年、4月18日です。海外に住んでいる人は2カ月の延長を得るができます。しかし、支払われるべき税があるならば、利息は請求されるかもしれません。

Q. 私は、アメリカの所得税を申告しなければならないですか？

A. 2021年では65歳以上の方は総収入が14,250ドル以下であるならば、所得税を申告が必要はありません。

Q. 私のアメリカの社会保障金は、収入とされますか？

A. 収入はアメリカの社会保障金だけであれば、総収入にはなりません。

Q. 私は、社会保障金以外に他の収入があります。私は、所得税を申告をしなければならないですか？

A. その社会保障金のほかの収入が14,250ドル以下であれば、申告をしなくていいです。

Q. 私は、収入を日本税務署にも申告をしなければなりませんか？

A. 日本とアメリカの租税条約により、1つの国の年金は、その他の国によって課税されません。

Q. 私が2021年に受領した経済的影響支払い(\$1400 Economic Impact Payment) は、課税所得ですか？

A. 2021年の経済的影響支払いは、課税所得ではありません。

この記事についてご相談したい方は、我々のオフィスに電話をしてください。

By Joe Roginski

我々事務所のRetiree Activities Office(リタイアリーアクチヴィティオフィス)はどんな問い合わせに答えてお手伝いします。ご遠慮なく連絡ください。

Tel: 0176-77-4428 (月～金、0900-1500)(日本語の受付は月曜日のみ)

メール: misawa.rao@us.af.mil (日本語のメールはOKです)

Retiree Activities Officeの住所:

(English)

〒033-0012 Aomori-ken, Misawa-shi, Hirahata 64,
Misawa Beigun Kichi-nai, 35FW/CVR—Retiree Activities Office

(日本語)

〒033-0012 青森県三沢市平畑64番地
三沢米軍基地内 35FW/CVR—Retiree Activities Office

東京のアメリカ大使館に年金の局があります。アメリカの年金の相談は直接大使館の年金局にお電話して下さい。

Federal Benefits Unit フェデラル ベネフィット ユニット

(アメリカ大使館連邦年金部): 03-3224-5055



Still Serving!



Hello fellow retirees and fellow RAOs staff. Here is the fourth quarter 2021 edition of the Misawa Air Base Retiree Activities Office Newsletter.

We at the RAO are charged with getting information to you, our retired military community. Compiling a newsletter is one of the best ways to keep you informed but, it's a lot of work. Lee Martin and I ask for your help. We serve the retired community of northern Japan, which includes Misawa, and the six prefectures of Tohoku and prefecture of Hokkaido, representing all services and all the wars since WWII. You are a treasure of information and history. Don't let it all pass with you without sharing. Anyone can provide information, opinion, history, or even a good story. We also solicit your feedback. What do you want to see covered in these newsletters? How can we improve? We will gladly consider your feedback and include your contributions in your newsletter.

Send your contribution to:

misawa.rao@us.af.mil

Managing Editor: CMSgt (Ret) Dave Barton

MMRA Notes:

1. Membership dues are \$20 a year. If you have not paid your dues for 2022, please call the RAO or e-mail the RAO and talk to Dave Barton, the MMRA Treasurer. The Treasurer will arrange to collect your dues and record it in the financial report.
2. Donations to the Misawa Military Retirees' Association are greatly appreciated. Dues and donations are used for the operations of the organization, charitable activities, community activities, assistance grants, and assistance in the case of death in the family. All funds go to the community except for the snacks served at the bi-monthly meeting.

The Misawa Military Retirees Association (MMRA) meets bi-monthly on the first Tuesday of even months, at 1700 hours, in the Tohoku Enlisted Club's Gray Room. All military retirees regardless of service affiliation are welcome as members. These meetings are your forum to voice your opinions, concerns, questions and suggestions, and get information about retiree and survivor issues and support on Misawa Air Base. We are your voice to the active duty community and help to support the many retiree programs on the base. We also provide assistance in emergencies to retirees and surviving spouses in times of need. Come out and join our group, share your experiences and skills, contribute to the community. The time you give to your fellow retirees and their families may someday come back as assistance to you or your survivors.



MMRA Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held the first Tuesday of even-numbered months at the Tohoku Enlisted Club, Gray Room at 1700 hours.

1 February 2022

5 April 2022

7 June 2022

2 August 2022

4 October 2022

6 December 2022

NEXT MEETING—TUESDAY, 7 June 2022

SERVING THE RETIRED MILITARY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN JAPAN



USEFUL NUMBERS

Exchange: 0176-77-8255-7 plus last 4 digits (*)
 HRO: 7460 (*), Manager: 7401(*), Gas Station:
 7428 (*), Express (main base): 7433 (*),
 Express (North Area): 7435 (*)
 Base Operator: 226-1110 / (0176) 77-1110
 Chapel: 226-4630 / (0176) 77-4630
 Command Post: 226-9880/9881 / (0176) 77-9880
 Commissary Officer: 226-3482/ (0176) 77-3482
 Community Bank: 226-4070 / (0176) 77-4070
 Credit Union Navy Federal: 1-617-938-5097
 US HQ: 1-888-842-6328
 Emergency Room:
 Non-Urgent: 226-6647/ (0176) 77-6647
 Emergency- 911 / Off Base (0176) 53-1911
 Fitness Center: 226-3982 (*)
 Golf Course: 1-281-657-1563 (*)
 Law Enforcement: 226-3600/ (0176) 77-3600
 Library: 226-3068 / (0176) 77-3068
 Medical/Dental Appointments
 Medical: 226-6111 / (0176) 77-6111
 Dental: 226-6700 / (0176) 77-6700
 Misawa Clubs
 Admin: 1-281-675-1560 (*)
 Catering: 1-281-657-1560 (*)
 Misawa Inn (Air Force Lodging) (*)
 Front: 222-0282/ (0176) 66-0282
 Reservations: 222-0284/ (0176) 66-0284
 Navy Gateway Lodging: (*)
 Front Desk: 226-3131 / (0176) 77-3131
 Reservations: 226-4483/ (0176) 77-4483
 Navy HRO: 226-4674 / (0176) 77-4674
 Pass and Registration: 226-3995 / (0176) 77-3995
 Red Cross: 226-3016 / (0176) 77-3016
 FSS Auto Center "Pit Stop": 226-9486 /
 (0176) 77-9486
 FSS HRO: 226-3108/9275 (*)
 Taxi: Official: 226-3328 / (0176) 77-3328 (*)
 Base Commercial (Kichi Cab): 1-469-375-7479 (*)
 Fm Off Base—(0176) 53-6481 (*)
 Theater: 1-469-375-7450 (*)
 Veterinarian 226-4502 / (0176) 77-4502
 Weather Forecast: 226-3065 (*)
 Numbers that begin with "1" require special dialing.
 When dialing from a cell, 03-4580-0135, wait for
 voice, then dial the number. For 226-222 numbers
 dial 0176-66 (for 222) or 77 (for 226) then the last
 four. (*) means use the Phone Tree

RAO mailing address in Japan

〒033-0012 Aomori-ken, Misawa-shi, Hirahata 64,
 Misawa Beigun Kichi-nai,
 35FW/CVR—Retiree Activities Office

The Misawa Air Base **Retiree Activities Office** is an official activity organized in accordance with AFI 36-3106.



The office is here to assist retirees from all military services in the Tohoku and Hokkaido regions of Japan. We can provide assistance in pay, taxes, social security, and personal/casualty affairs as well as other matters the retiree may need help with. We provide a focal point for retirees and/or their survivors

with questions/concerns and work closely with the active duty community. Through the office and the activities of the Misawa Military Retirees Association we are able to provide assistance to indigent widows in the area with fuel, food and living expenses. The office is supplied and equipped through organizational funding, while being staffed entirely by volunteers.

The RAO is open Monday through Friday from 0900 through 1500 hours however, volunteers sometimes have to be out of the office. We are located in Room 210, Bldg. 653. Please call or e-mail before visiting to make sure a staff member is available when you come to the office. If you are unable to contact the RAO in an emergency, you may contact the Casualty Assistance Representative in the Airman & Family Readiness Center, 226-4735 or from off base, 0176-77-4735. Japanese Nationals requiring assistance, and who have limited English language skills, may contact us and talk with MSgt (Ret) Joseph Roginski, who is bi-lingual. In an emergency, he may be reached at 09040450149 after hours.



**35th FW/CVR (RAO)
 Unit 5009
 APO AP 96319-5009**

**Phone: 011-81-176-77-
 4428/5675
 DSN: (315) 226-4428/5675
 Email: misawa.rao@us.af.mil**

This publication is written, edited and published by the Misawa Air Base Retiree Activities Office for the retired community in northern Japan. The information or comments herein do not necessarily represent the position or opinion of the DOD, USAF or the 35 FW. While every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the information herein, no absolute guarantee of accuracy or currency can be given nor should be assumed.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
<http://www.misawarao.org>