



# American Legion Post 5

## Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation

Newsletter (Oct-Nov 2015)



### MyVA Advisory Committee visit Tampa, Fl

The MyVA Advisory Committee arrived at James A Haley VA Primary Care Annex on 14-15 Oct 2015 for its fourth meeting this year. My VA



Figure 1 Secretary Robert McDonald at MyVA Advisory Committee meeting held at Primary Care Annex, Tampa Florida

Community Initiative is one of Secretary McDonald's reforms that leverages outside expertise to develop a more inclusive culture that embraces outside agencies that can complement the services offered by the VA.

Program Directors outside of the VA inner circles to ensure. Secretary McDonald stated that the VA culture of exclusive must change. He stated on a CSPAN broadcast that "the VA should not view outside agencies as competitors but as complementary services".

To accomplish this culture shift Secretary McDonald appointed military veterans who excelled in the private and public to the MyVA

### Post 5 will provide Suicide Prevention



Figure 2 ASIST Trainers at St Pete U.S Coast Guard Station

Post 5's Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA & R) Chair/ Post Service Officer (PSO) Ellsworth "Tony" Williams, attended the two day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) workshop on suicide prevention held at the St Petersburg U.S Coast Guard Station.

ASIST is a DoD required training for every service member responsible for suicide prevention in their unit.

Tony wants the Post to play a more active role in preventing the 22 a day suicides by our veterans. Veteran Service Organizations represent veterans in the local community. VSO members can be the "Boots on the Ground" needed to help identify veterans who are at risk for suicide.

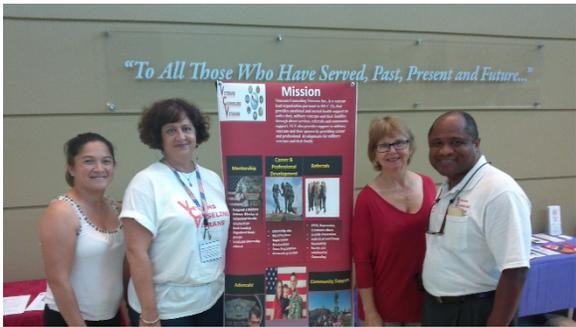
VA&R is asking for volunteers to train on ASIST and be a point of contact for someone who either suspects someone is at risk or may be at

risk themselves. The volunteer will receive a training on ASIST, use ASIST approved techniques and follow up with contacting their local VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator or their Post Service Officer.

from American Legion can use their local County VSO. The one exception is with AMVETS. Currently, local VSO are not accredited with AMVET and don't have visibility on their actions. Contact your local Post Service Officer to get in touch with the VSO that serves your area.

**Veterans Counseling Veterans at  
VA's Primary Care Annex for  
Domestic Violence Awareness Display**

**Meet Post 5  
VA&R and PSOs**



Post 5's Veterans Counseling Veteran INC set up a booth in James A Haley VA's Primary Care Annex's for Domestic Violence Awareness on 30 Oct 2015. VCV provided materials on Women Veterans and domestic violence as well as offered counseling services for victims of domestic violence.

Post 5's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Chair is Ellsworth "Tony" Williams. He serves as one of the two PSOs. Elizabeth Smith is the second PSO for Post 5. Tony is a retired Army Combat Veteran who served for over 24 years in the Army. Tony is also the president/CEO for Veterans Counseling Veterans INC (VCV). Post 5 members voted to support VCV in its mission to provide mental health services to veterans and their family. The difference between a PSO and VSO is important. PSO are not nationally accredited benefit and cannot represent nor fill out claims form.

**Post 5 VSOs**



American Legion veterans use their local Veteran

Service Office from either the county or other Veteran Service Organizations (VSO). Frank Strom, Hillsborough County Veteran Service officer managing director stated that members

# Post' 5 VA& R

## Information Sheet

### How to Qualify for Veterans Benefits

Each time Congress passes a new veterans benefit law, it establishes specific eligibility criteria for that benefit. For the purpose of benefits, being a veteran is not enough. Whether you qualify for benefits, or certain types of benefits, depends on several factors:

- Your length of service
- Where and when you served
- Your discharge characterization

### Veteran benefits and length of service

Eligibility for most veterans benefits requires a minimum length of military service. Take a gander this table. As you can see, to qualify for full Montgomery GI Bill education benefits, you have to serve for a minimum of 36 months.

On the other hand, you could qualify for VA disability compensation or VA medical care with only one day of active duty. Don't get too excited, because for disability or medical care, you have to meet a slew of other qualification requirements.

### VA Launches Hepatitis C–Advanced Liver Disease Disparities Dashboard

*Dashboard Bolsters VA Efforts to Identify and Treat Veterans With Hep C and Liver Disease*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is stepping up its efforts to accelerate treatment for Veterans with hepatitis C and advanced liver disease (ALD) through the creation of a Hepatitis C–ALD dashboard. The dashboard works by using a set of criteria, including age, gender, geography, service era along with race and ethnicity, to distinguish Veteran groups at highest risk for ALD as a result of hepatitis C.

“The dashboard is a powerful data tool to help VA identify Veteran groups disproportionately affected by Advanced Liver Disease and to ensure they receive the appropriate health care,” said Dr. David Shulkin, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “VA will provide data directly to facilities for any of the vulnerable groups identified by the dashboard and support outreach efforts to Veteran populations disparately impacted and not currently served by VA health care. This is an important step in assuring all Veterans with ALD receive timely, appropriate care.”

VA’s Veterans Health Administration’s Office of Health Equity developed the dashboard as part of its efforts to target and accelerate care of Veterans with this serious disease. The new resource promotes equitable diagnosis and treatment of underserved Veterans with hepatitis C and ALD nationally and compliments existing clinical hepatitis and liver disease dashboards available in some Veterans Integrated Service Networks or VISNs.

Chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common blood-borne infection in the world. Complications that result from untreated HCV infection include progressive liver damage leading to cirrhosis, primary cancer of the liver, liver failure and death. Although many of these complications are treatable or even preventable, three-quarters of the individuals with HCV infection in the U.S. are unaware they are infected. VA leads the country in [hepatitis](#) screening, testing, treatment, research and prevention.

**Ask the PSO:**