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In This Issue:

- 1. Congress Passes Mental Health Care and Services Bill**
- 2. New National Native American Veterans Memorial Opened**
- 3. Volunteer for COVID-19 Research Studies**
- 4. Free Entrance to National Parks for Veterans and Survivors**
- 5. TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee to Start Jan. 1**
- 6. MIA Update**

1. Congress Passes Mental Health Care and Services Bill: This week, the Senate passed VFW-supported [H.R. 8247](#), the *Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care and Treatment (COMPACT) Act*, which passed the House in September and now heads to the president for signature. This legislation seeks to enhance a wide variety of services related to improving transition, suicide prevention, and care and services for women veterans. [Read more.](#)

2. New National Native American Veterans Memorial Opened: On Veterans Day, the new [National Native American Veterans Memorial](#) to honor the military service of Native Americans opened on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The memorial, *Warriors' Circle of Honor*, consists of an elevated stainless-steel circle balanced on an intricately carved stone drum. The artist who designed the memorial, Harvey Pratt of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, served in Vietnam from 1962 to 1965. The museum has a complementary new online exhibition, [Why We Serve: Native Americans in the United States Armed Forces.](#) [Learn more.](#)

3. Volunteer for COVID-19 Research Studies: VA is conducting studies to test new COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and to better understand how the virus affects people. Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, but do not have to be veterans or be enrolled in VA health care. Participants will not be required to pay for care related to the study and will possibly be compensated for their travel and time. [Learn more.](#)

4. Free Entrance to National Parks for Veterans and Survivors: Starting Veterans Day 2020, all veterans and Gold Star Families became eligible for free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. In addition to receiving access to National Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have indefinitely waived entrance or standard amenity fees for veterans and Gold Star Families. Please visit the [National Parks Service website](#) for more information about how to access this new benefit.

5. TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee to Start Jan. 1: DOD announced that TRICARE Select Group A retirees will be required to pay an enrollment fee beginning on Jan. 1, 2021. Congress directed the Defense Health Agency in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 to implement TRICARE Select retiree enrollment fees, but delayed the implementation. Group A is comprised of retirees and their family members if the sponsor's initial enlistment or appointment occurred before Jan. 1, 2018. The enrollment fee is waived for medically retired individuals and their family members, and for survivors of active-duty deaths. During [TRICARE Open Season](#), running now to Dec. 14, beneficiaries must set up an allotment with their regional contractors for the enrollment fee to begin on Jan. 1, 2021. Beneficiaries who do not set up their allotment by the deadline will be unenrolled due to nonpayment. These individuals would have previously had 90 days from the termination date to request reinstatement. However, recently the Defense Health Agency has agreed to extend the reinstatement period to 180 days. [Learn more.](#)

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced no new identifications or burial updates for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for.

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