



News from Livingston County, NY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PR-COVID19-402-01

Contact: Julie Barry, Grants and Public
Information Coordinator

Phone: 585-243-7051

Email: jbarry@co.livingston.ny.us

Access VA Care from Home to Protect Yourself from COVID-19 *Livingston County Encourages Buddy Checks to Support Mental Health*

Mount Morris, NY, April 2, 2020 — Michael J. Swartz, Executive Director of VA Western New York Healthcare System, said in a recent statement, “Due to COVID-19 precautionary measures and out of concern for our Veterans, we are honoring current social isolation and distancing guidelines.” He continued, “Through VA’s virtual care tools, we are able to leverage available technology to make sure that our patients and staff are as safe as possible during this time.”

In order to help VA Western New York Healthcare System address its most urgent needs first, Veterans are asked to use its online tools for routine or non-urgent questions. Some examples include:

- **Telephone or Video Appointments** – Veterans can receive care at home — either over the phone or via video using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones, or tablets. To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their provider a secure message on My HealtheVet by visiting myhealth.va.gov. Veterans may also call, but VA is requesting that Veterans only call with urgent needs at this time. To learn more about VA Video Connect, visit mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect.
- **Prescription Refills** – Veterans can request prescription refills and order and ship medications to their homes using My HealtheVet or the Rx Refill mobile app. Download the app at mobile.va.gov/app/rx-refill.
- **Text Message Reminders** – Veterans can use Annie’s Coronavirus Precautions protocol to send automated text messages with information about COVID-19. This application helps Veterans monitor for symptoms and can assist if they need to contact their VA facility for care. Enroll at mobile.va.gov/annie.

- **Secure Messaging** – With My HealtheVet, VA’s online patient portal, Veterans can send online secure messages to your VA health care team to ask them non-urgent health questions. Register at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Jason Skinner, Director of Livingston County Veteran Services, stated, “We encourage our Veterans to use ‘buddy checks’ with each other to ensure that no one feels alone as we adjust to the realities of social distancing. The term ‘buddy check’ is commonly used in the military for a simple checkup or a friendly ‘how are you’. I would urge Veterans and others to call people they haven’t seen in a while or normally wouldn’t call.”

Skinner also reminds Veterans who are alone or feeling down that New York State Office of Mental Health has set up an Emotional Support Line of mental health professionals who are there to help us through this trying time. All calls to the Emotional Support Line at 1-844-863-9314 are free and confidential.

For more information about VA’s Connected Care technologies, visit connectedcare.va.gov or buffalo.va.gov.

Source: WNY VA

###