

# MOAA REPORTER

MOAA Greater Dallas & North Texas Chapter

Volume 47 Number 3

March 2021



## COVID-19 Vaccinations



The availability of COVID-19 vaccine is really starting to ramp up. The experts recommend that persons eligible for the vaccine register with as many providers as possible. There are now 3 vaccines available; all have been thoroughly tested and are safe. The two Federally run hubs, Fair Park and Globe Life Field, are scheduled to get 12,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week. The federal government also announced this week that it will distribute 1 million doses directly to pharmacies this week. Which pharmacy locations to receive the vaccines has not been announced. A good place to find locations where the vaccine is available is the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) website. The site contains a map of pharmacies and other locations where vaccinations will be available. Unfortunately, the map currently has many more red-dots than blue indicating the vaccine is not available. Hopefully that will change in the coming weeks. You can find a link to the TDEM website on the chapter's website [www.moanorthtexas.org](http://www.moanorthtexas.org).

## COVID-19 and Storm Assistance



The Chapter has partnered with the Veterans Center of North Texas to provide assistance to North Texas Veterans and their families impacted by the COVID pandemic and the recent winter storm. We are providing food, clothing and direct financial assistance to Veterans, Veteran families and Surviving Spouses. The impact of these two events has been unprecedented. If you know of anyone who needs help, encourage them to contact the Veterans Center at 214-600-2966 or email them at [veterans@vcont.org](mailto:veterans@vcont.org). Their services are free and all inquiries will be handled with strict confidence. One final note – if you would like to help fellow Veterans and can spare 4 hours per week please consider volunteering at the Veterans Center of North Texas. You won't get a paycheck, but the coffee is free and the rewards are immeasurable. Contact Dave Schafer at 214-577-4107 if you are interested in volunteering.

## 2021 Veterans Center of North Texas Veterans Scramble Golf Tournament



It is time to dust off your golf clubs and register to play in the Veterans Center of North Texas 2021 Veterans Golf Scramble on Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. The format for this year's tournament will be the same as that in previous years. The cost is \$500 per foursome or \$150 per individual player. The price includes greens fees, cart, lunch, dinner, raffle tickets, hole-in-prizes, putting contest and a whole lot of fun. The tournament will again be held at the Heritage Ranch Golf and Country Club in Fairview. Registration starts at 11:00AM, lunch will be served at 11:45 and golf will kick off at 1PM with a shotgun start. Trophy and raffle prize winners will be announced the dinner following the round of golf. The tournament provides the opportunity for veterans to meet and network with North Texas business and civic leaders. Several of our members have participated in previous years; I hope we will be able to support this worthy cause again this year. Use the link on our website [www.moanorthtexas.org](http://www.moanorthtexas.org) or go directly to the Veterans Center of North Texas website [www.vcont.org](http://www.vcont.org) and click on the golf ball to sign up. Contact Dave Schafer at 214-577-4107 for more information.



### **MOAA's 2021 Advocacy in Action Campaign**

MOAA National Advocacy in Action Spring Campaign will take place in May this year. The campaign will again be conducted virtually due to the ongoing pandemic. MOAA National will provide additional information on how members can help support the advocacy campaign in the coming weeks. The Chapter will provide updates in next month's newsletter and on the chapter's website [www.moaanorthtexas.org](http://www.moaanorthtexas.org). Members are also encouraged to subscribe to the *MOAA Newsletter* and visit MOAA's [Advocacy News page](#) for updates.

#### **Topic 1: Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform**

This focus on comprehensive toxic exposure reform highlights those currently serving, veterans, those recently retired from active duty, and the Guard and Reserves. When most people hear about toxic exposure, they think of Agent Orange and Vietnam, and we work that, too. However, there is a significant lack of awareness of the current toxic exposures for those in uniform today and since 9/11. Among one of the more notable and impactful exposures are from the burn pits and other fires during the Gulf War in Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, there are exposure risks from firefighting chemicals and contaminated drinking water, to name a few. We seek the basics: expanded health care for those who were exposed, the creation of an advisory council, and to reauthorize the Agent Orange authorities which expired in 2015. This issue hits more than the service members — it is a direct impact to the families who are or will be the caregivers.

#### **Topic 2: TRICARE Young Adult Parity**

There is a glaring disparity between commercial health care plans that cover adult children to age 26 and TRICARE, which requires a separate premium for young adult coverage. In 2013, TYA monthly premiums were \$152 for Standard and \$176 for Prime; today, those monthly fees are \$257 and \$459 respectively, which is an unsustainable curve, charting a course for TYA plan failure. The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021 ([H.R. 475](#)), sponsored by Reps. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) and Michael Waltz (R-Fla.), expand TRICARE eligibility to young adult dependents up to age 26. Learn more about the legislation [at this link](#). Military kids face unique challenges — the average military kid will move six to nine times during their school years and experience repeated family separations. Yet, current law leaves military kids transitioning to adulthood without the same health care protections afforded to families with commercial plans. Ensuring health care access and affordability is particularly important during the current pandemic. As COVID-19 impacts higher education pathways and makes it more difficult for young adults to find jobs, we must ensure military families who have sacrificed so much in support of our nation have the same health care protections for their young adult children as their civilian counterparts covered by commercial plans.

#### **Topic 3: Basic Needs Allowance**

This proposed allowance would address our service members and their families who are most vulnerable to food insecurity and are finding it difficult to make ends meet. The subsistence allowance would be provided automatically to service members whose gross household income (not including their Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH) is below 130% of the federal poverty line. This recurring struggle was exacerbated by COVID-19 layoffs. While a small number of service members qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), many do not because their BAH is considered income. These families turn to food pantries instead: The Armed Services YMCA reported a 400% increase in grocery demand at their food pantries on and near military installations during the pandemic.

## Planning Ahead



Planning ahead for what happens after one's death is difficult. People don't like to talk about death and, as a result, often don't gather the information their families need to cope with the myriad of issues that must be handled after the death of a loved one. MOAA has put together several excellent guides to help members prepare for the loss of a loved one. MOAA Life and Premium members can download the above guides and many other documents on the MOAA National website. Sign in at [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org) and search "MOAA Publications" to see the entire list of available publications. Chapter members can also view the above guides on the Chapter website [www.moaanorthtexas.org](http://www.moaanorthtexas.org).

## Chapter News



A few quick notes about Chapter activities:

- The Chapter has completed its 2021 membership renewal campaign – our official headcount is 320 members
- The Chapter has awarded six \$1,000 scholarships to JROTC cadets who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and academic qualities
- The Chapter will hold a hybrid general membership meeting on Saturday, 17 April to honor the scholarship recipients – meeting details will be published in the April newsletter
- The publication of the 2021 Membership Directory has been delayed and will be available by mid-April