

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1101

March 23, 2020

Dear Veterans and Veterans Organizations:

I am writing to update you on my recent efforts to respond to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic as it relates to our veterans.

First off, I want to say that my office is still open for business. Although my staff and I are unable to accommodate in-person meetings due to social distancing efforts, we are ready to assist you and your family, friends and coworkers.

My office has maintained very close contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its efforts to keep our veterans and their families safe. According to the VA, the Honolulu Regional Office that processes VA benefits is not accepting appointments in-person, but it is still working on claims and can arrange tele-meetings with veterans. Veterans can continue to get information about benefits or file a claim for benefits by visiting www.va.gov. Veterans with specific claims or other questions may request information via the VA Inquiry Routing and Information System (<https://iris.custhelp.va.gov>) or by telephone at 1-800-827-1000.

In addition, the VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS), Tripler Army Medical Center and VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinics have instituted the following policies:

- (1) Temperatures check for everyone entering a clinical area.
- (2) No visitors under the age of 18.
- (3) No non-essential visitors over the age of 18 to VA facilities.
- (4) No visitors allowed at VA nursing homes.
- (5) Encouraging the use of telehealth as much as possible.

Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of COVID-19, flu, or cold should contact the VAPIHCS Call Center at (808) 433-0600 before coming to a VA facility. Veterans are also encouraged to make use of telehealth and virtual care by calling the Telephone Advice Nurse at 1-800-214-1306. For more VA COVID-19 updates, please visit www.va.gov/coronavirus.

In addition to these changes at the VA, the State Office of Veterans Services has informed me that its offices are closed to the public. It will assist veterans via telephone at (808) 433-0420.

I am also working to help ensure the continuation of GI Bill benefits for those going to colleges and universities. Due to COVID-19 concerns, many colleges and universities across the country are switching to online classes, which could have an impact on housing allowances. To my knowledge, veterans attending the University of Hawai'i and other universities in our state won't

be impacted, but to protect other veterans across the country, the House passed and the President signed into law the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act. This new law will make sure these benefits are not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you or a veteran you know is having any issues accessing health care or other veteran services, please do not hesitate to contact Chad Wolke in my district office at chad.wolke@mail.house.gov. Also, please visit my COVID-19 website at <https://case.house.gov/coronavirus> for the latest updates of my efforts to help our state and to read an automatically updated fact sheet about COVID-19 prepared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This site includes a summary of resources available to those already feeling the economic impact of COVID-19, which you can download directly at https://case.house.gov/uploadedfiles/coronavirus_handout.pdf.

Please continue to let me know of your views. Please also sign up for regular updates from me and my office through my e-newsletter and social media outreach at <https://case.house.gov/contact>.

With aloha,

Ed Case

Congressman Ed Case
Hawai'i-First District