



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 22, 2019

Media Contact: Liz Harmon-Craig, Veterans Specialist
Phone: (360) 778-6050
E-mail address: eharmonc@whatcomcounty.us

Whatcom County Health Department Helping Vietnam Vets Get Benefits

BELLINGHAM, WA — Whatcom County Health Department's (WCHD) Veterans Program is hosting a benefit sign-up event on Saturday, August 31 for Vietnam-era veterans who are eligible for new or expanded disability benefits as a result of the Blue Water Navy Veterans Act. The event is a partnership with the [Whatcom County Veteran Navigator Program](#).

"We are pleased to partner with the Veteran Navigator Program to help Blue Water Navy veterans access the benefits they deserve," says Liz Harmon-Craig, Veterans Specialist with WCHD. "We're also grateful for the donation of space from Lairmont Manor. It's great to see these partners come together to support our local veterans."

Veterans will be able to meet one-on-one with a veteran navigator who will assist them to apply for benefits. The event is open to military personnel who served during the period beginning January 9, 1962 and ending on May 7, 1975 on any vessel during the Vietnam War that came within 12 nautical miles of the coastline of Vietnam. Vietnam-era veterans who were previously denied benefits, or who never applied for their earned benefits, are encouraged to attend and to bring their DD214 or military discharge papers if possible.

The act also extends benefits to spouses of veterans whose death was the result of a service-connected disability and children of veterans of covered service in Thailand who suffer from spina bifida.

The [Blue Water Navy Veterans Act](#) was signed into law in June 2019. It extends Veterans Administration (VA) health care, disability, and other benefits to veterans who may have been exposed to chemical defoliants that were used on land while participating in or supporting combat operations on Navy ships off the coast of Vietnam.

Veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 were presumed to have been exposed to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange if they were diagnosed with a medical condition associated with the chemical. Conditions associated with it include some cancers, diabetes, and Parkinson's disease. The Blue Water Navy Veterans Act extends the presumptive exposure to veterans who served on vessels that came within 12 nautical miles of the coast of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Event Details

Date: Saturday, August 31, 2019
Time: 10:00am-2:00pm
Location: Lairmont Manor, 405 Fieldston Rd, Bellingham, WA

###

