

## VA News Release: Enhanced VA Health Care Enrollment

### Enhanced VA Health Care Enrollment Opportunity Closing for Certain Combat Veterans

WASHINGTON (**Jan. 10, 2011**) - Certain combat Veterans who were discharged from active duty service before Jan. 28, 2003 have until Jan. 27, 2011 to take advantage of their enhanced health care enrollment opportunity through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"While there is no time limit for Veterans to apply for the VA health care they earned with their service, I highly encourage this group of combat Veterans to take advantage of the enhanced enrollment window to use their health care benefits through this simplified process," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "VA has health care eligibility specialists online and at every medical center eager to help Veterans take advantage of this opportunity."

The enhanced enrollment window was provided for in Public Law 110-181, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. That law gave combat Veterans who served after Nov. 11, 1998 but separated from service before Jan. 28, 2003, and did not enroll before Jan. 28, 2008, three years, beginning on Jan. 28, 2008, to apply for the enhanced enrollment opportunity.

These Veterans will still be able to apply for health benefits with VA after Jan. 27, but will have their status for receiving VA health care determined under normal VA procedures that base health care priority status on the severity of a service-connected disability or other eligibility factors. This would mean some Veterans could face income or asset-based restrictions, as well as delays in establishing their VA health care eligibility while their disability status is determined.

Since the inception of the enhanced enrollment opportunity, VA has sent more than 750,000 personal letters to eligible Veterans and hosted thousands of outreach efforts through OIF/OEF and enrollment coordinators stationed at every VA medical center.

Since June 2010, VA sent another 194,000 personal letters to give every eligible Veteran a chance to take advantage of this opportunity, but to date only 13,000 of these Veterans have enrolled.

The law does continue to provide the enhanced health care enrollment window to combat Veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after January 28, 2003. For these Veterans, the five-year enrollment period begins on the discharge or separation date of the service member from active duty military service, or in the case of multiple call-ups, the most recent discharge date.

Veterans can apply for enrollment online at [www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez](http://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez) <<https://www.1010ez.med.va.gov/sec/vha/1010ez/>> , by contacting VA at 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or with the help of a VA health care eligibility specialist at any VA medical center. Go to [www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp](http://www2.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp) for locations. For more information regarding enrollment, visit VA's eligibility site at [www.va.gov/healtheligibility](http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility).