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TIMELY TOPICS

Capitol Area Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
Chapter Website: www.cacmoaa.org

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April Program

Patrick Forystek, MSU Student Veteran’s Resource Center Coordinator, is our featured speaker this month. He will address the demographics of the student veteran, activities and assistance available to the veteran and special projects and events engaging the veteran. He will also have details of significant renovations to the MSU Veteran’s Memorial Grove.

April 2024 CAC MOAA DINNER Meeting

When: Thursday, 11 April 2024

Our dinner meeting will take place at Coral Gables, located at 2838 East Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, MI, Thursday, 11 April. Social hour begins at 5:30 and dinner begins at 6:30. The meal is buffet style which includes: Baked Meat Lasagna, Pasta Bar, Tossed Salad with Assorted Dressings, Dinner Rolls, and Ice Cream with Chocolate Sauce. Cost is \$28. Please RSVP by Monday, 8 April to www.cacmoaa.org or contact: Tony Kruckeberg at (517) 575-9386, or email at armyblkhawk@yahoo.com



What Does the Largest VA Budget Request Ever REALLY Mean for Veterans?

The **largest VA budget request ever** – \$369 billion for FY 2025, 10% higher than the FY 2024 estimate – came March 11, five weeks after the often-neglected deadline for the White House to submit its annual budget proposal. It dwarfs the \$48 billion appropriated in FY 2001, before two decades of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it reflects the growing responsibilities of the department – \$134 billion in discretionary funding (mostly for medical care) and \$235 billion in mandatory spending, including the Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund mandated by the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The proposed budget would allow the VA to deliver “the very best health care and benefits that this country has to offer,” VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a press release announcing the request. But the proposal itself is far from enough: MOAA and fellow veterans service organizations (VSOs) will work with Congress and the administration to get this budget passed in a timely fashion and avoid the months of wasteful continuing resolutions that plagued this year’s budget cycle. (MOAA also will continue its efforts to ensure Congress passes a package of stalled veterans’ legislation; read more about these efforts in a [recap of recent testimony](#) before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees).

Here’s a breakdown of some of the funding priorities included in the FY 2025 request, as well as how those priorities line up with MOAA’s advocacy work on behalf of those who serve and have served, and their families and survivors. (cont. on next page)

(Cont. from previous page)

Toxic Exposure Budget: The \$24.5 billion proposed for the Toxic Exposures Fund reflects VA's commitment to supporting [the 2022 PACT Act](#), which represents long-needed, cross-generation reform in VA's provision of health care and benefits to veterans exposed to environmental hazards in military service. We are closely monitoring how the VA implements the PACT Act, including decision-making for new presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures. The department has done an exceptional job making veterans aware of the expansion of care and benefits. We are closely monitoring how the VA implements the PACT Act, including decision-making for new presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures. The department has done an exceptional job making veterans aware of the expansion of care and benefits.

Women Veterans Budget: The VA expects to spend over \$13 billion on caring for women veterans and a little over a billion dollars for women's gender-specific care. About 775,000 women are enrolled in VA health care and are the fastest growing veteran population accessing VA care and benefits – 30% of the increase in VHA care in the last five years have been women. The budget targets specialty care and surgical services, reproductive services, maternal health care, and child care programs. We will continue our work with Congress to eliminate disparities in health care delivery and advance research programs for women, minority, and underserved veterans. Data collection on underserved populations must improve. MOAA also will urge Congress to establish an official joint House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee task force to represent the efforts of women, minority, underserved, and other vulnerable veteran populations, and urge the VA to expand health care and benefits for survivors of military sexual trauma.

Health Care Delivery Budget: \$112 billion of the FY 2025 request would fund inpatient, outpatient, VHA's [Whole Health initiative](#), mental health, and long-term care services, along with facility maintenance and infrastructure improvements. Along with supporting these efforts, MOAA will work with Congress to modernize VHA's workforce and facility infrastructure – critical components of improving veterans' access to high-quality care. The Whole Health initiative – which provides a personalized health plan based on a veteran's individual needs, to include associated programs like mental health and dental care – should be implemented uniformly. We also will work with Congress and the VA to keep the department ahead of the ever-increasing demand for long-term care services, to include expansion of at-home care for more veterans, which can provide the veteran with the care they desire at a savings to the VA, in many instances. This type of care remains significantly limited at medical centers across the country.

Caregiver Support Budget: The FY 2025 request includes \$2.9 billion for the VA's caregiver support program, up from the \$2.4 billion enacted in FY 2024. We were early supporters of the legislation establishing the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) for post-9/11 veterans, as well as expansion and improvements to caregiver benefits and programs for veterans of all eras. MOAA continues to work closely with Congress, the VA, and stakeholders on respite care and other caregiver improvements, including funding and resources to support program and policy changes.

Congress will pour over budget details and hold hearings with VA officials in the coming weeks to consider the department's proposal. Passing appropriations legislation by Oct. 1 would avoid another series of harmful continuing resolutions. Stay informed during this important funding debate by registering at [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#), where you can urge Congress to support important legislation to help our veteran community. Find the latest on these priorities and others at [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#).

****REMINDER****

Bring your cleaned and bagged bottles and cans to our next meeting to support chapter initiatives!

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, 4 April 2024 @ 11:30 am - 1:00 pm @ Piazzano's restaurant, 1825 N. Grand River Ave, Lansing

2024-2026
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CAPITOL AREA CHAPTER MOAA
992 PENNINE RIDGE WAY
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Membership

For membership inquiries please use this link: www.cacmoaa.org. For eligibility or other questions regarding membership please contact Bruce Bahr at (517) 526-2406. **Why join?** <https://youtu.be/42YD9d8W15Q>

CAC Mission Statement

Our mission is to support legislative and charitable initiatives at the local, state, and national levels to enhance our families, communities and country.

Support our Scholarship Program with a Kroger Card!!

We continue to increase our enrollment in the Kroger Community Rewards Program! Thank you for all of your support in signing up and shopping with Kroger. For those interested in beginning the program, our chapter non-profit organization number is: JR311, use this number when contacting Kroger for admission to the program and Kroger will donate a portion of your purchase to the CAC MOAA chapter scholarship fund.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call (800) 273-8255 and press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

Your local Capitol Area Chapter and National MOAA are nonpartisan groups representing all members regarding legislative issues and current events affecting you and your community! For more information regarding issues that affect you and your family members please use this link: <http://takeaction.moaa.org> or call (800) 234-6622/(703) 549-2311

Newsletter

Help the chapter reduce newsletter costs by requesting an email version in lieu of a printed copy. If you are able to and would like to get this via email, or if you need some help with it, contact me at moaaeditor@gmail.com or call (517) 526-2406