

Buckley SFB, CO - RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) NEWSLETTER - December 2024

18401 East A-Basin Ave, Stop 95, Buckley AFB, CO 80011

Building 606, Room 104, phone **720-847-6693**, e-mail address: **raobuckley@gmail.com**

Normal Hrs: Mon 0900-1500, Tues 0900-1400, Wed 1000-1500, Thurs 0900-1200 & Fri 1000-1500

These hours are totally dependent on volunteer availability!

Director: Steve Young, Lt Col, USAF, Ret

RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO) LOCATION: We are in Rm 104 of Bldg 606, close to the main building entrance. As you come into the main entrance, turn left, enter the first hallway on your right and Rm 104 is the first room on your left. Remember, we assist military retirees from **all** Services!

Buckley AF MPF Bldg 606 ID card service hours are: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri 0800 to 1500; Wed 0800-1200

For folks not comfortable making ID card appointments with the Buckley SFB AF Military Personnel Flight (MPF) using the RAPIDS website, you can call the MPF at 720-847-4357, Option 2, from 0800 to 1200 Mon-Fri for assistance with appointment scheduling. If no one answers you will be able to leave a message, after the beep, and (we're told) someone will call you back. The MPF requests your message just leave your name, contact information and basic need, i.e. you need to make an appointment, you have a policy question etc. You can also e-mail 460fss.fsmps.customerservice@us.af.mil

Retiree & Dependent ID Cards (Appts Only)

To find the ID facility nearest you and make an appointment online please go to the RAPIDS Site Locator at the following link: <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/#/>

Once you get to the RAPIDS site, click on the "ID Card Office Locator & Appointments" Continue box. The page that comes up should default to the "Search for Site by Address" tab. Ensure "All" is selected under the "Search For" area, then enter your zip code in the "Enter Location" area, select an entry from the "Radius" drop-down menu, and click on the "Search" box. A list of sites will pop up and then you can select "More Info" for the site you want to use, and the "Schedule an Appointment" block. A calendar will come up for that site where you can scroll through the months on the calendar to see when appointments are available. During the pandemic some locations may not show any appointments available. When you pick a day with appointments you will see a list of the times available for that day below the calendar and you can pick the one you want and click on "Book This Appointment." Just FYI, you will typically find more online appointments available on the 140th ANG and NOSC sites - both on Buckley SFB - than at the MPF in Bldg 606.

OBSERVANCES IN DECEMBER: 1 - Civil Air Patrol B-Day; 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day; 13 - National Guard B-Day; 14 - National Wreaths Across America Day; and 20 - Space Force B-Day.

FAMILY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS IN DECEMBER: Wednesday, 25 Dec, is Christmas, so Thursday, 26 Dec, is a Family Day. Wednesday, 1 Jan, is New Years, so Thursday, 2 Jan, is a Family Day. As you know, Family Days impact various operations on base (Pharmacy, MPF ID card section, 6th Ave Gate, etc.) so keep that in mind if you have things to do on base during those days.

QUILTS OF VALOR: Quilts of Valor (QOVF) was founded in 2003 when the mother of a soldier deployed in Iraq had a dream. Her first image was of a despondent soldier fighting his war demons, then an image of the same soldier being comforted by a quilt. What she took from this vision was "Quilts = Healing" and started this organization. Since 2003 QOVF has provided over 400,000 Service Members and Veterans with a quilt.

Basically, any Active Duty, National Guard/Reserve or retiree from any Service, that served during a declared war/conflict/police action/peacekeeping mission, that received an honorable discharge is eligible for a quilt. For more general information and details see: <https://www.qovf.org/>

To nominate yourself, a service member, or another veteran to receive a *Quilt of Valor*, please go to:

<https://www.qovf.org/nominations-awards/>

- Select “*Nominate a Service Member or Living Veteran*” - follow the prompts, providing information about your (her/his) service.
- When you get to the section that reads: “*If you have coordinated this nomination with a local QOVF group or individual, please add the name of the group and the name of the person you contacted*”
 - Please enter “Buckley SFB RAO”.

Once your request has been received, you will be contacted and offered the opportunity to receive a quilt at a future award ceremony. The RAO is currently working to organize an award ceremony on base in late summer 2025. You will be offered the opportunity to be considered for that event or, if more convenient for you, another ceremony in a different location during 2025. For questions, please reach out to Sandra Lazaroff, CO State Coordinator for QOV: Sandra.Lazaroff@QOVF.org

BUCKLEY SFB SNOWLINE: With winter right around the corner base operations are sometimes impacted by snow/weather. Sometimes there is delayed reporting for non-mission essential personnel, or the base is only open to mission-essential personnel. The 6th Ave gate hours may be impacted, as well as the commissary, Exchange, ID card section, pharmacy, etc. For delayed reporting of non-mission essential personnel, most facilities on base will also have a delayed opening: the Exchange and ID card section normally open 1 hour after NET reporting time; the pharmacy tries to open by 30 min after the NETS reporting time; the Commissary tries to open by the NET reporting time. **If the base is only open to mission-essential personnel, the Exchange, Commissary, Pharmacy and ID card section will ALL be closed.** The bottom line is this, if the weather forecast is calling for snow you should check the Buckley SFB Facebook page ([Buckley Space Force Base | Facebook](#)) and/or call the Snowline (720-847-7669) for the latest base information before you head to base.

CASTLE ROCK HOLIDAY BAZAAR: This bazaar will be held on **Friday (1300-1800) and Saturday (0800-1130), 6 & 7 Dec** at the Cantril School Auditorium, 312 Cantril St, Castle Rock. There will be craft booths, a gift card tree, book sale, etc. Proceeds go to the Castle Rock Senior Activities Center.

EASTERN COLORADO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (ECHCS) ASCEND PTSD RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION TREATMENT PROGRAM RIBBON CUTTING: On **Tuesday, 10 Dec, from 1300-1400** there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Ascend PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. The ceremony will be held at the Ascend PTSD building located on the north end of the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center located at 1700 N. Wheeling Street, in Aurora, Colorado. Tours of the facility will be offered.

The Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program provides care to Veterans who need help with mental health, substance abuse, homelessness, and many other hardships. This group of programs covers a wide range of care, including the Domiciliary PTSD (Dom PTSD) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PTSD-RRTP). PTSD-RRTP provides 24/7 care in a residential setting. Eligibility for any of the programs within the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Program generally requires enrollment in the [VA healthcare system](#) and a discharge status that is anything other than dishonorable. For more specific eligibility questions, visit the [VA Mental Health site](#).

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Here are a few volunteer opportunities on Buckley SFB, and in the local area, for those interested.

Hope Starts Here food bank in Centennial is always looking for volunteers. You just go to their website to sign up or donate. <https://www.hshfoodbank.org/>

The **Food Pantry on Buckley SFB** is always looking for donations to stock their shelves for Military Families in need. If you have donations, you can contact MSgt Taylor Ramos at taylor.ramos@spaceforce.mil and he will help you get your donations delivered.

The **Commissary is looking for volunteers to help stock shelves** during the Holiday Season. You can get more information by calling the commissary at 303-353-3473.

Operation Deck The Dorms on Buckley SFB helps bring a little holiday cheer to Airmen (E-4s and below). They need volunteers to donate materials and stuff stockings at the Base Chapel on 20 Dec at 1400 and to deliver stockings to the Dorms on 23 Dec at 1300. If you want to help, or have questions, you can contact TSgt Melissa Edwards at melissa.edwards.7@us.af.mil.

2025 CONTRIBUTION LIMITS ANNOUNCED: The contribution limit for TSP, 401(k), 403(b) and most 457 plans will increase to \$23,500, up \$500 from 2024. The catch-up contribution limit for 2025 mostly remains the same at \$7,500 for savers 50 and older. Under a change made in SECURE 2.0, a higher catch-up contribution limit of \$11,250 applies for savers aged 60, 61, 62, and 63. The limit on annual contributions to an Individual Retirement Arrangement (IRA) is \$7,000, the same as 2024. The catch-up contribution limit for IRA's remains the same at \$1,000. Check the IRS website for income ranges when determining eligibility to make deductible contributions to traditional IRAs, to contribute to Roth IRAs, and to claim the Saver's Credit.

MEDICARE PART B PREMIUM INCREASE FOR 2025: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has announced that the standard monthly Part B premium will be \$185.00 in 2025, an increase of \$10.30 from \$174.70 in 2024. However, some Medicare beneficiaries may pay less than this amount because, by law, Part B premiums for current enrollees cannot increase by more than the amount of the cost-of-living adjustment for social security benefits.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA: The National Wreaths Across America (WAA) Day for Fort Logan will be held on **Saturday, 14 December**, 2024. All sponsored wreaths in 2024 will be placed following the Ceremony starting at 1000 by volunteers. If you have a Grave Specific Wreath you are placing yourself, those will be placed starting at 1300. This is to allow you quiet time with your loved one. No wreaths will be handed out any sooner than the times indicated. This is a National Ceremony, and we will be follow their guidelines. If you have questions, please contact the volunteer Location Coordinators at WAAFortLoganNational@gmail.com. You can donate to "sponsor" wreaths, and sign up to volunteer to lay wreaths at the following link: [Overview - Wreaths Across America](#)

There is a similar WAA ceremony at Denver's Fairmount Cemetery on the same day starting at 1000. Fairmount Cemetery is at 430 S Quebec, Denver, just south of the former Lowry AFB. Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Capt Elaine Stewart, current commander of the Mile Hi Cadet Squadron, organized this year's WAA ceremony. Col Heidi Dexter, Buckley Space Base Delta (SBD) 2 Commander, will be the opening guest speaker, and will be joined by SBD2 Chief Master Sergeant Sharma Haynes. USAF Col Benjamin Couchman of the 140th Colorado Air National Guard Wing will be the closing speaker. A US Army bugler will play at the ceremony. You can contact Capt Stewart at elaine.stewart@cowg.cap.gov if you have questions and check out the following link:

https://search.app?link=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wreathscrossamerica.org%2Fpages%2F28109%2FOverview%2F%3FrelatedId%3D155926&utm_campaign=aga&utm_source=agsad12%2Csh%2Fx%2Fgs%2Fm2%2F4

Fairmount is one of the largest cemeteries in Denver and the final resting place of about 2000 military service members. These include Lt Francis Lowry, after whom Lowry AFB was named. At the Fairmount WAA ceremony, CAP members and other attendees will place wreaths on the graves of members of all branches of the military services.

U.S. ARMY RETIRED SOLDIER HANDBOOK: The 2025 version of the U.S. Army Retired Soldier handbook is now available online: <https://soldierforlife.army.mil/Retirement/post-retirement> The purpose of the handbook is to provide current and updated information for Retired Soldiers and their Families, about the benefits and entitlements they've earned through their years of service. It's important that all Retired Soldiers maintain a working knowledge of their benefits and entitlements in order to take full advantage of them. In addition to the information presented in the handbook, Retired Soldiers should refer to the Army Echoes newsletters which also outline changes in benefits and entitlements. The current and previous editions of Army Echoes dating back to 1997 are available at the link provided above.

U.S. ARMY SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES: Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) is the official Army program designed to provide long-term support to surviving Families of fallen Soldiers. The Army has a network of SOS coordinators at locations across the country. Contact phone numbers are listed by state and county, or by country at https://dcs9.army.mil/sos_staff_Locator . Use the drop-down lists to find survivor coordinators by state/county or country/ region. If a coordinator is not listed, you can call 210-834-0494 or the IMCOM toll free number - (833) 313-1960 for survivor assistance. Locally, you can contact Alison Patton at 720-250-1564 or alison.l.patton2ctr@army.mil

VA DISABILITY BENEFITS CLAIMS ASSISTANCE ON BUCKLEY SFB: On 19 Dec, from 1300-1600, in Building 606, Room 140 (the Military & Family Readiness Center), on Buckley SFB, there will be Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) available to help you file a VA disability benefit claim. You can just show up and walk in, no registration is required. If you are being discharged from the military within 90-180 days, bring a copy of your medical records, your marriage certificate and your children's birth certificates and they can do the rest. You should understand up front that an average Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claim can take 2 hours or more for a records review and submission and there is almost always "homework" a veteran needs to do before they are completely prepared for an appointment. That being said, there are three things the VSOs at these meetings can do to prepare you for filing: answer any questions you may have about claims and claim processes; process simple requests such as input an Intent to File, for a retiree for instance, to save a date or update address information; prepare you for, and schedule, longer appointments in a VSO office to complete and submit claim documents. This event is scheduled for the third Thursday of every month, so expect the next one to be on 16 Jan. For more info, you can contact Ms. Stephanie Rozmarich at 460MSS.DPF@us.af.mil or call 720-847-6681.

WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES AIR & SPACE MUSEUM AND WINGS OF EXPLORATION AT CENTENNIAL AIRPORT: Below is some information regarding December events for the museums, and links where you can get further information.

December:

- Museum Store Sunday
 - Date: 12/1
 - Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
 - <https://wingmuseum.org/events/museum-store-sunday/>
- Breakfast Fly-In
 - Date: 12/7
 - Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport (13005 Wings Way Englewood, CO 80112)
 - <https://wingmuseum.org/events/breakfast-fly-in-dec/>
- Colorado Gives Day
 - Date: 12/10
 - Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum and Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport (13005 Wings Way Englewood, CO 80112)
 - <https://wingmuseum.org/events/colorado-gives-day/>

- Santa in the Hangar at the Museum
 - Date: 12/14
 - Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/santa-in-the-hangar-museum/>

- Santa in the Hangar at Exploration of Flight
 - Date: 12/15
 - Exploration of Flight at Centennial Airport (13005 Wings Way Englewood, CO 80112)
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/santa-in-the-hangar-eof/>

- Evening at the Museum
 - Dates: 12/17
 - Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
 - <https://wingsmuseum.org/events/evening-at-the-museum/>

MyHealthVet - SIGN-IN CHANGES COMING: The VA will transition to two modern, secure sign-in options in 2025: a Login.gov or ID.me account. After this transition, Veterans, beneficiaries and caregivers looking to access VA's online services (VA.gov, the VA: Health and Benefits mobile app, and other VA online services) will need to sign in with either a Login.gov or ID.me account. Veterans and other beneficiaries will no longer be able to use usernames and passwords for My HealthVet after 31 Jan 25, or DS Logon after 30 Sep 25. The Virtual Health Resource Center (VHRC) team at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is offering in-person, hands-on help sessions to assist Veterans with creating a secure sign-in account. Veterans can stop into D1-187 Mon-Wed from 0800-1430. Veterans can also call the VHRC directly at 720-723-6279. Another back up number is 720-857-5233. This is incredibly important because a high percentage of Veterans use MyHealthVet to order prescriptions and message their care teams.

QUARTERLY MEDICAL GROUP TOWN HALL: We expect the next Town Hall to take place **Wed, 15 Jan**, from 1600-1700, at the Buckley SFB Chapel (Bldg 316 - across from the A-Basin CDC). The dial in for the townhall will always be the same number and same code: [+1 410-874-6757](tel:+14108746757) Phone Conference ID: 241 738 417# These town halls are your opportunity to engage with pharmacy personnel face-to-face to express your concerns and ask questions, so we strongly encourage retirees with any pharmacy concerns to attend. These events are held every three months, on the third Wednesday of the month.

PHARMACY CLOSURES AND YOUR TRICARE BENEFITS: Access to the TRICARE Pharmacy Program impacts many military retirees, their families, and their survivors. A recent announcement from a national in-network pharmacy chain has highlighted how this network is shrinking. Walgreens will close about 1,200 stores over the next three years. The chain hasn't announced which locations will close, but it's not the only TRICARE network provider likely to have fewer locations in the coming years - about 900 CVS stores have closed or are closing, and a planned merger involving Kroger could reduce that brand's footprint. The brick-and-mortar TRICARE pharmacy network has lost about one-fourth of its locations since 2022, with a disproportionate impact on beneficiaries in rural areas and those with complicated prescription needs.

DFAS QUICK TOOLS FOR RETIREES, SPB ANNUITANTS AND SURVIVORS: There is a DFAS website with lots of helpful information for retirees, SBP annuitants, and survivors. It has links and online tools that allow you to report deaths, change your address, a customer guide, request your 1099-R, access checklists related to retiree/annuitant deaths, etc. You can find all this at the following website: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/Quick-Tools-for-Retirees-SBP-Annuitants-Survivors/>

DFAS CUSTOMER GUIDE TO ONLINE TOOLS: You can access this customer guide directly at the following link: https://www.dfas.mil/Portals/98/Documents/RetiredMilitary/askDFAS%20Online%20Tool%20Guide%20Retirees%20and%20SBP%20Annuitants%20May2024.pdf?ver=5JPcRQ_O5c7cW9DZ4R6EAQ%3d%3d

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD IN 2024: If you are currently enrolled in a Medicare plan you should have your “Annual Notice of Change” document, which will list any changes in your plan coverage, service area or cost that will go into effect in 2025. You can use this to help decide if you want to change plans. According to the website, **open enrollment is 15 Oct - 7 Dec 2024 and changes will be effective Jan 2025.** During this time, you can: switch from Original Medicare to Medicare Advantage; switch from Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare; or switch from one Medicare Advantage plan to another. If you are already in a Medicare Advantage plan you can also change to another Medicare Advantage plan or to Original Medicare plus a Part D plan from 1 Jan - 31 Mar 2025. Remember, some Medicare Advantage plans from commercial providers (Blue Cross, Kaiser, Humana, GEHA, etc) offer “0 Premium” plans that will cost you no more out of pocket than your current Medicare Part B premium - **some of these plans may actually give some of your Part B premium back. Some Advantage plans offer benefits Original Medicare does not (free gym membership, dental/vision benefits, hearing aids, transportation to medical appointments, etc).** As always, you have to do your research to see which plans your current doctors take, where the plans are accepted (different states, etc), what the co-pays are, etc. in order to determine what plan best meets your needs. **Tricare for Life (TFL) functions as your “Medicare Supplement” whether you use Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan.**

NEED HELP WITH MEDICARE OPTIONS? A health insurance broker can provide you with information regarding various Medicare Advantage carriers/plans. Just be aware these brokers generally focus on plans offered by insurers with whom they have a contractual arrangement (think Kaiser, Humana, Blue Cross, United Healthcare, etc). You can do a Google search to locate a health broker in CO. Another alternative is the counselors working in the federally funded **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).** **These counselors provide free advice with no conflicts of interest** whereas brokers typically earn commissions from policies they sell. For example, a broker will get no commission if you select Original Medicare vs a Medicare Advantage plan. You can get additional info on SHIP and counselors in your area at the following link: <https://www.shiptacenter.org/> click on the “SHIP Locator” icon. For Colorado you can also call 1-888-696-7213 or visit the following link: <https://doi.colorado.gov/insurance-products/health-insurance/senior-health-care-medicare>

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE DENTAL & VISION INSURANCE PLAN (FEDVIP) OPEN SEASON: Federal Benefits Open Season is your annual opportunity to enroll in, change, or cancel a FEDVIP dental and/or vision plan. Each year, open season runs from the Monday of the second full work week in November through the Monday of the second full work week in December. **For 2025 plans, the open season dates will be 11 Nov - 9 Dec.**

2025 FEDVIP PRICES ANNOUNCED: The dental and vision plans under the Federal Employee Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) will see average monthly premium increases of 2.97% (dental) and 0.87% (vision) for 2025, according to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM manages the health, dental, and vision insurance programs for federal civilian employees. Military retirees (and their beneficiaries) enrolled in TRICARE have been eligible to utilize FEDVIP programs since 2019. FEDVIP features 12 dental plan providers and five vision plan providers. All but one dental provider will offer both “standard” and “high” plan options. Standard plans have lower monthly premiums (about half of the high option) but higher co-pays. The major difference between standard and high vision plans is the yearly frame/lens allowance. Plan premium rates are based on your ZIP code. You can see costs of all the plans at the following link: [Plan Premiums](#)

TRICARE OPEN SEASON AND MANAGED CARE SUPPORT CONTRACTOR CHANGE: Tricare Open Season is your annual opportunity to enroll in, change, or cancel a Tricare plan. **For 2025 plans, the open season dates will be 11 Nov - 10 Dec.** TRICARE Open Season lets you change your healthcare plan for next year. Changes you make during this time start on 1 Jan 25. Starting 1 Jan 25, new T-5 regional contracts will also take effect in the U.S. The Managed Care Support Contractor (MCSC) for regular TRICARE programs in the old 21 state West Region will change from Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) to TriWest Healthcare

Alliance for the new 26 state West Region. The TRICARE for Life (TFL) MCSC will still be Wisconsin Physician Services (WPS, 1-866-773-0404) www.tricare4u.com

UPDATE YOUR TRICARE PAYMENT INFORMATION WITH TRIWEST: If you currently live in the West Region and pay for your TRICARE coverage via credit card or bank electronic funds transfer, you can now securely give your recurring payment information to the incoming West Region contractor, TriWest Healthcare Alliance online. You may get an email or letter from TriWest to let you know you can set up your payment information online or download a printable Automatic Payment Authorization Form for mailing to provide your recurring payment information. TriWest will **not** charge your recurring payment method before 1 Jan 25, but it will need to have your payment information on file before 31 Dec. Your recurring payment information **won't** automatically transfer from Health Net Federal Services, LLC or Humana Military. If you don't provide TriWest with payment information before 1 Jan 25, you may be involuntarily disenrolled from TRICARE and lose your health coverage.

Don't cancel your current recurring payment method after you've set up your new payments with TriWest. If you live in the West Region on 1 Jan 25, HNFS and Humana Military will stop collecting payments after your December payment.

You don't need to take any action if:

- You pay by a military pay system allotment. Allotment payments will transfer automatically.
- You live in a state that's staying in the East Region. Humana Military will keep your current payment information on file.
- **You have TRICARE For Life**, the US Family Health Plan, or a TRICARE health plan overseas. The new contracts won't affect you.

To securely give your payment information to TriWest:

1. Visit tricare.mil/west.
2. Look for information and the link on how to securely set up your recurring payments.
3. Select the link. Then, select the "New User? Sign Up Now" option.
4. You'll be asked to input your email address. A verification code will be sent to you.
5. Check your email for the verification code. Then, enter it to continue.
6. Complete the information requested (name, address, etc.) in the secure forms.
7. Select your payment method.
8. Complete all fields.
9. Submit.

USAA MEMBERSHIP NOTE: The spouse of a deceased veteran came by the RAO recently, indicating USAA told her she wasn't eligible to use USAA products/services. This surprised me so I called a USAA rep in Colorado Springs to ask him about it. I learned that since her spouse was never a USAA member (membership is free), then she indeed wasn't eligible to use USAA. So, just something those of you who are military retirees/vets, and not USAA members, might want to think about. If you are not a member, and you pass away, your spouse will be ineligible for USAA insurance or other products/services. Membership is free and you don't have to purchase anything from them to be a member.

PHARMACY OPERATIONS:

The pharmacy is upgrading their Audiocare refill line on 4 Nov. The new refill number is 720-615-2857. The old number will still work for approximately two months. **For patients interested in text notifications of when their prescriptions are ready, please speak to a pharmacy team member to enroll - have your cell phone number and carrier/company available.** You can call 720-847-7450 if you need to speak to someone in the pharmacy.

The pharmacy will normally close at 1500 on the last Friday of each month. There is a lot of good information on the pharmacy website - here is the link: [460th Medical Group - Buckley Space Force Base > Health Services](#)

> [Pharmacy \(tricare.mil\)](http://Pharmacy.tricare.mil) The site also lists a phone number for the Pharmacy Patient Relations/Advocate, which is 720-847-6603. The e-mail for the advocates is: usaf.buckley.460sw-mdg.mbx.pharmacy-patient-advocate@mail.mil.

New Prescriptions

Activation of new prescriptions by customers via phone or the Genesis Patient Portal is no longer required.

Electronic prescriptions will automatically be activated

Hardcopy prescription activation is via the Pharmacy DROP BOX

Urgent prescriptions will be ready the same day

Routine prescriptions ready after 1400 on the 2nd duty day

Refills

There is a 5 duty-day turnaround - after 1400

There has been an education adjustment for patients regarding the turn-around time for new prescriptions and refills. The pharmacy asks that beneficiaries call in their refill medications 7 days prior (for a 30-day supply) or 21 days prior (for a 90-day supply) to ensure they do not run out of medications before their refill will be ready.

BUCKLEY PHARMACY HOURS OF OPERATION:

Lobby Hours of Operation:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 0730-1630

Wednesday: 0930-1630

Thursday Extended Hours: 1630-1730 **Pick-Up Only**

Drive-Thru Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday: 1300-1600

FUTURE CLOSURES:

25 Dec - Christmas

26 Dec - Family Day

1 Jan - New Years

2 Jan - Family Day

Reminder: the pharmacy is closed every Wednesday from 0730 to 0930 for Training

LEGAL OFFICE OPEN FOR “LIMITED SERVICES” FOR RETIREES & DEPENDENTS: Legal provides **limited** legal assistance services for military retirees and their dependents. **Wills for retirees and dependents will only be done on Wednesdays and Thursdays of each week from 1300 to 1500 and you must have an appointment.** For notary services and powers of attorney, walk-ins for retirees are available on **Mon-Thurs from 0800-1200.** Retirees have the option of conducting their legal assistance appointment by telephone or in person. Legal expects the will appointments to fill up very quickly and they will **not** have a “waitlist.” Thus, legal may ask that retirees call back in 2-3 weeks to check for open appointments once they are booked for several weeks. **Prior to scheduling an appointment for a will, medical directive or power of attorney, legal will require a ticket # or worksheet, as well as your DoD ID Number** which is located in the lower right front of the old (DD Fm 2) ID card (10-digit number). You can obtain a ticket # from the AF legal assistance website at [U.S. Air Force Legal Assistance \(AFLASS\)](http://U.S. Air Force Legal Assistance (AFLASS)) when you go to the site to fill out the required information for whatever document it is you want completed. **If you call legal to make an appointment, they**

will **not** give you an appointment unless you have the ticket number issued by the website. For any questions call base legal at 720-847-6444.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES: There are numerous organizations that can provide mental health services in Colorado. We've listed a few examples here:

Below are a couple generic links to mental health website pages for the **VA Eastern CO Health Care System (ECHCS)** and **VA** that *might* provide some useful info. The VA ECHCS page does have a phone number in the upper right to contact someone. The one for the VA has info and a "Contact Us" box at the upper right corner of the page and at the bottom left of the page is a Veterans Crisis Line number.

[Mental Health Care | VA Eastern Colorado Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)
[Mental Health Home \(va.gov\)](#)

You can also **contact a Veteran Service Officer (VSO)** since they are the experts at dealing with the VA and very knowledgeable about what services are available where. The link below will take you to a website where you just click on the CO county you are in and it will give you a list of VSOs in your county, along with their contact info (phone and e-mail). If you contact a VSO from your county and you aren't happy with them, don't hesitate to reach out to one in another county.

[County Veterans Service Offices | Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs](#)

There are also **Veterans Benefits advisors in Building 606 on Buckley SFB**, where the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) is located - Tyrone Groce and Deloris Evans. They can be reached at 720-847-4838/4839 and may have some ideas on people and/or organizations you can contact.

Another organization you can contact is the **Cohen Veterans Network**, a non-profit that offers mental health services for veterans and their family (link below). If you go to Clinics and Resources at the top, then click on Locate a Clinic, you will see there is one in Greenwood Village here in Denver - The Steven A. Cohen Military and Family Clinic at University of CO at Anschutz Medical Campus on 7800 E Orchard Rd, Greenwood Village. Their phone number is 303-724-4255.

<https://www.cohenveteransnetwork.org/>

Tricare also provides some mental health resources. The first link below is to the general Mental Health Care site and the second link to the Mental Health Appointments table.

[Mental Health Care | TRICARE](#)
[Mental Health Appointments | TRICARE](#)

Mental health problems can affect your thoughts, mood, and behavior.

- If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text 988 or chat at [988Lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org). 988 connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help.
- If you or a family member needs help, call a [crisis hotline](#)
- If you're not sure, you can call the [Nurse Advice Line](#).

Another option available for health and wellness assistance is the **Mt Carmel Veterans Center**. They can support treatment services including, but not limited to: depression, anxiety, trauma or relationship struggles, PTSD and life transitions. They offer donation-based counseling services. You do NOT need a referral; you do NOT need to have insurance. You need only call to schedule your first appointment. Through partnerships with local universities, Mt. Carmel is able to offer a range of counseling services for individuals, couples, families and children. They also have active group counseling opportunities. Treatment is provided by licensed

professionals, post-grad/prelicensure therapists, and graduate interns supervised by an on-site supervisor who is a Licensed Professional Counselor. All clinicians are uniquely trained and experienced in providing military specific services. All of the graduate interns are chosen from the top accredited Universities along the front-range, have completed advanced coursework in mental health services, and provide confidential, trusted and supervised care. Many providers have either served or are military connected. Interns are currently provided by Denver University, University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, University of Northern Colorado, Regis University, Denver Seminary and Colorado Christian University. You can reach the Mt Carmel Veterans Center at [719-309-4758](tel:719-309-4758).

UBER ACCESS TO BUCKLEY SFB: We recently had an interaction with an elderly retiree who had taken an Uber to the BX and got dropped off (he doesn't drive). When he was ready to leave, he didn't think he could get an Uber to pick him up because he didn't think the driver would be allowed on base without an ID card holder in the car. He had no way to get to the Visitor Control Center (VCC) and it was a very distressing situation for him. One of our volunteers happened to be at the BX, noticed his distress and talked to him to find out what his issue was. After their discussion, he took him to the VCC, got him inside and got him squared away with a ride home.

Based on this, we contacted the VCC to find out if there is a process to address this situation, since we did not know how it is supposed to work. Security informed us that if the retiree had called for an Uber driver to pick him up on base, Uber is supposed to send someone that already has an Uber DBIDS card with Buckley SFB. Buckley SFB is Geo fenced off so that only Uber drivers with DBDIS cards will be selected to come pick up passengers on the base. If anyone has an experience where that is not the case, please contact the VCC (720-847-9381) and let them know so they can work with their Uber POC to try and correct the issue.

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE GENESIS PATIENT PORTAL? For members looking for assistance with the MHS-Genesis Patient Portal, the pharmacy recommends reaching out to the MHS help desk and/or reviewing the FAQ's they provide. They believe the best place to call for help is the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) at 800-368-3665. You can also try the Global Service Center (800-600-9332). **You need to make sure your information in DEERS is correct, to include your email address, as this must match the Genesis login email used.**

PRESCRIPTION OPTIONS WHEN BASE PHARMACY IS CLOSED: Resourcing for DoD pharmacies does not provide staffing for extending hours for an on call or emergency service as a standard. The Buckley SFB pharmacy is not resourced that way as the surrounding area is able to support emergence prescription needs. In delivering the Tricare Benefit, the option for utilizing the prescription benefit outside of Buckley Pharmacy open hours is to utilize an in-network pharmacy in the surrounding area. Using the Express Scripts In-Network Pharmacy locator (<https://www.express-scripts.com/frontend/standalone-ui/#/find-a-pharmacy/commercial-oe/search>), there are two pharmacies in the surrounding area providing 24-hour pharmacy availability (Walgreens @ 12051 E Mississippi Ave in Aurora and CVS @ 4005 E 8th Pl in Denver).

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS USING MHS GENESIS PATIENT PORTAL: The Defense Health Agency has launched a new feature that lets you request prescription refills through MHS GENESIS. We've posted a flyer about this on the RAO website. We're told prescription refills through the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal became available on 29 Feb. You can refill prescriptions by selecting the "Rx Refills" tab in the upper right panel on the portal's homepage. Through your MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, you'll be able to:

- See all your prescriptions that are available to be refilled.
- Choose which ones you want refilled.
- Choose where you want to pick up the refill.
- See when your prescriptions are ready to be picked up.

This new feature also applies to existing prescriptions that have remaining refills. You can request a refill once you've used 75% of the previous fill, and no earlier. To access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, visit <https://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil>.

TRICARE PRESCRIPTION POLICY CHANGES: TRICARE beneficiaries with prescriptions for specialty drugs through a retail pharmacy may need to make new arrangements to receive their medication after a 1 Mar TRICARE policy change that expanded the list of maintenance medications beneficiaries must refill through home delivery or at military treatment facilities (MTFs). Patients taking new medications added to TRICARE's [maintenance drug list](#) will have a limited time - two refills - to move their prescription to either a military pharmacy or TRICARE Home Delivery. This change supposedly impacts fewer than 1% of TRICARE beneficiaries, and those impacted have been notified by mail. Specialty medications treat chronic conditions and may require special storage and/or clinical training to administer. These include a variety of cancer-fighting medications, as well as treatments for multiple sclerosis and hepatitis C. While these drugs represented less than 1% of military health system (MHS) prescriptions in FY 2022, they accounted for roughly half of total drug costs.

DFAS “WHAT TO DO WHEN A MILITARY RETIREE DIES” CHECKLIST: DFAS has created a PDF checklist for actions required to complete with them following the death of a military retiree. The checklist includes all the pertinent information about the required forms and supporting documents, along with important reminders. The checklist also provides helpful tips on how to submit the documents to DFAS. You can find the “What to Do When a Military Retiree Dies” Checklist on their new Quick Tools page. The checklist can be found toward the top of the page: <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools> They have also added more information to their webpage on DFAS.mil for reporting the death of a retiree and the next steps your family will need to take.

Report a Retiree’s Death - <https://www.dfas.mil/retdeath>

BUCKLEY SFB PHARMACY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS: The Buckley pharmacy wants you to volunteer! They are looking for volunteers to assist in the pharmacy, connect with the pharmacy team and other beneficiaries as a pharmacy volunteer. Current opportunities include helping to dispense at the window, preparing prescriptions for the pickup system, prepacking medications, along with other opportunities. Requirements for volunteering include: 1) over 18 years old, 2) current vaccination statuses, 3) availability to come in at least twice monthly (due to training requirements), 4) a positive attitude and willingness to work with an infectious team! Please reach out to the pharmacy by phone (720.847.9355 (option 4, option 4)) or in person. We have posted a volunteer application form on the RAO website.

TRICARE FOR LIFE HANDBOOK: If you have Tricare for Life (TFL), you can find the Tricare for Life Handbook at this link - [TRICARE For Life Handbook](#) **The handbook is from Jan 2021 but still has lots of very useful information.**

HQ AIR RESERVE PERSONNEL CENTER RESERVE RETIREMENT COUNSELING CELL (RRCC): We hear from a lot of Gray Area retirees from all Services, typically as they are approaching 60, start working on their retirement packages, and have questions or run into problems. On 1 Jun 23 ARPC activated a Reserve Retirement Counseling Center (RRCC) to help AF Reservists or Guard members working on their retirement package. If you click the link below it will tell you a little about this group.

[ARPC activates new retirement services initiative > Air Reserve Personnel Center > Article Display \(af.mil\)](#)

RRCC Contact Info: 800-682-1929, E-mail: arpc.dpt.rrcc@us.af.mil

BUCKLEY SFB COMMUNITY CENTER EVENTS: The Buckley Community Center has upcoming trivia nights, and more. You can see info on their activities on the Community Center Facebook page at: [Buckley Community Centers | Facebook](#)

HOW TO CREATE A MYPAY ACCOUNT WITH DEFENSE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS): If you don’t have a MyPay account with DFAS I recommend you create one. With your own account

you can download your Form1099 for taxes, print a copy of your Retiree Account Statement (RAS), set up beneficiaries for Arrears of Pay, update your mailing and e-mail address, adjust federal and state withholding for taxes, etc. You start by requesting an initial password on the myPay homepage ([myPay Web Site \(dfas.mil\)](https://www.dfas.mil)) using the "Forgot or Need a Password" link. The password will be mailed to the address you have on file with DFAS and you will receive it in about 10 business days. Once you receive your password in the mail, you return to the myPay homepage and log in with your social security number and the password you received in the mail to create your myPay profile. DFAS has a downloadable step-by-step Get Started Guide to myPay on their website and a how-to video on the DFAS YouTube channel. For additional info on obtaining a MyAccount you can visit: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/manage/mypay/>

HOW TO REACTIVATE MYPAY ACCOUNTS: Some of you may only use myPay once a year to get your 1099-R during tax season and when you do try to access your account, you discover your password is expired, lost, or forgotten. If your myPay account is in an inactive status because your password has expired, you can follow the steps below to reactivate your account.

1. Go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil> in your web browser on a computer or connected device.
2. Click on the "Forgot or Need a Password?" link
3. Enter two of the following: your Login ID, Social Security Number and/or registered email address (previously registered in myPay). Check the box affirming you are the account owner and click "Continue."
4. If you previously set up the security questions, you'll be presented three security questions to answer. When finished answering the questions, click "Check my Answers."
5. If you answer the security questions correctly, you will be able to reset your password online.

If you haven't set up security questions, or answer them incorrectly, you'll get the option to have a temporary password sent to you. You can choose to send the temporary password to: A) Your mobile phone via text if your mobile phone number is registered in myPay; OR, B) The mailing address you have on file with DFAS in your pay account. When you receive the temporary password, go back to myPay and log in to reactivate your account. If you need assistance accessing your myPay account, please contact the myPay Customer Care Center toll-free at 1-888-332-7411, select option 5 or at 1-317-212-0550.

DFAS MYPAY ACCOUNTS FOR ANNUITANTS: If you weren't aware, widows/widowers who are receiving Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments from DFAS can have a myPay account, which is the quickest and most convenient way to manage your annuity pay. This online account allows you to view your SBP annuity account detail, including your Annuitant Account Statement, change Direct Deposit information, change your mailing address, and print and view IRS forms, such as the 1099-R. **Only annuitants who are current receiving an SBP annuity payment or SSIA pay can use myPay.** If you've never used myPay, it's easy to get started. Go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil> using the internet from your computer or your mobile device browser and click "Forgot or Need a Password" to have a temporary password mailed to you. The password will be mailed via regular mail to the address you have on file with DFAS and you will receive it in about 10 business days. Once you have received a password, return to the myPay home page and click "Create your myPay Profile" to get started. Enter your SSN and temporary password. You can get a downloadable myPay guide at: [Slide 1 \(dfas.mil\)](#)

MYPAY SUPPORT AT DEFENSE FINANCE & ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS): For problems using myPay, or establishing/changing your myPay password, contact the DFAS Centralized Customer Support Unit toll-free at 1-888-332-7411 or commercial at (216) 552-5096. This support line is available Monday through Friday, 0800 to 1700, Eastern Time. The Centralized Customer Support Unit can also provide assistance on how to use the options available to you in myPay. The support unit will also provide support for establishing and changing your password.

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR DEERS INFORMATION: When your life changes, make sure you update the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Wrong information in DEERS can prevent you

from using your TRICARE benefits properly. There are four ways to update your contact information in DEERS:

- Online via [milConnect](#)
- By phone: 800-538-9552 (TTY/TDD: 866-363-2883)
- By fax: 831-655-8317
- By mail:

DMDC Support Office
Attn: COA
400 Gigling Road
Seaside, CA 93955-6771

You also need to update your information with:

- Your [regional contractor](#)
- The [pharmacy contractor](#)
- Your dental contractor (if you have dental coverage)
- Your doctors

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SBP) AND DFAS NOTIFICATIONS: You need to ensure you inform DFAS about life-changing events promptly to ensure the correct premiums are billed and your dependents don't face delays or difficulties in receiving their SBP annuity payments. Below are two examples of common life events and deadlines for changing your SBP coverage:

At retirement, you're single with no children. After retirement, you marry or have a child. You need to notify DFAS within ONE YEAR by sending them a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of the marriage or birth certificate if you want SBP coverage for them.

You divorce and elect former spouse coverage. Your former spouse passes away and you later re-marry. You need to notify DFAS within ONE YEAR of your re-marriage by sending them a DD Form 2656-6 and a copy of your new marriage certificate if you want SBP coverage for your new spouse. You can find out more about changing SBP coverage at: <https://www.dfas.mil/changesbp>

MY AIR FORCE BENEFITS WEBSITE: While the site is mainly focused on active-duty folks, there is a lot of information on there of interest to retirees/surviving spouses as well. The site has about 180 fact sheets on various benefits and a section for "Transition and Retirement Planning." If you look under the "Benefit Library" tab (top left of the page), and click on the "Resource Locator" link, you can then click on CO (or any other state) to see a wealth of information on resources in your state (with base specific resources as well). I strongly encourage you to check out this website. [Home | An Official Air Force Benefits Website \(af.mil\)](#)

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS: Arapahoe/Douglas Works! (A/D Works!) Workforce Center is a member of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and provides a variety of no-cost services to veteran job seekers; resources and workshops for a self-directed job search, one-on-one employment counseling, customizing resumes, referrals to other state and federal agencies and training assistance. For more information you can visit their website at <http://www.adworks.org/> Just FYI, there is an A/D Works! Veterans Employment Specialist that works several days a week in Bldg 606 on base (when non-mission essential personnel are allowed back in their offices on Buckley AFB). For more info you can also contact the AD Works! Call Center at (303) 636-1160 and ask to be contacted to a Veterans Employment Team Member.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED UNSATISFACTORY SERVICE FROM THE RAO? We are staffed completely with volunteers who do their very best to help with your issues. While we always strive to provide you with the best possible support, we realize there may be times you experience what you consider to be unsatisfactory customer service when you contact the RAO. Perhaps you never received a response to a voice mail/e-mail you left, you got inaccurate information regarding a question you had or the person who helped you was unable to provide an adequate answer to your question. **If you are ever dissatisfied with the support you get**

from the RAO please contact the RAO Director to discuss the situation. The best way to reach me is via the RAO e-mail - raobuckley@gmail.com.

DENVER VA REGIONAL BENEFITS OFFICE HOURS & LOCATIONS: *Do you have a question about your VA Benefits? Compensation Claim, Pension Claim, Aid and Attendance, Appeals, survivor and burial benefits, Home Loans, Employment, or Education*

The VBA Office in the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center is holding office hours:

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (last appt. at 3:30 p.m.)

Phone: (800) 827-1000

Location:

Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

1700 North Wheeling Street

Aurora, CO 80045

Sign up to meet with a counselor in the Pharmacy waiting room.

We also have a Veterans Affairs Office on Buckley SFB in Bldg 606 with Benefits Advisors (Mr Tyrone Groce & Ms Deloris Evans) who can normally be reached at 720-847-4838 from Mon-Fri 0800 - 1600.

LIFE CHANGING EVENT? KEEP DFAS INFORMED: Ensuring your retired pay comes to you accurately and on time is the primary goal at DFAS. To do this, they need your help to keep your account up to date. *Keeping your account up to date includes making sure your mailing address, banking information, allotments, tax withholding status, and your beneficiary choices are current. Be sure to report any change of life events as soon as they happen. These life-changing events include:*

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Death of a spouse or child
- Birth or adoption of a child

Some changes, especially those regarding SBP, have a one-year time limit, so it is very important that DFAS is notified of life-changing events when they happen. When you notify them, be sure to include supporting documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. Keeping your contact information updated is also key to staying informed. DFAS occasionally sends out correspondence regarding changes in the law that affect your pay, and a new Retired Account Statement (RAS) is sent when your net pay changes (unless you are on **myPay** where the new RAS is available online). **If your mailing address is not correct and you are not on myPay, they have no way of notifying you about changes. The easiest way to stay up to date is to use myPay. You can use myPay to change your mailing address, your direct deposit information, Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, certain allotments and your tax withholding status. You can create a myPay account at <https://mypay.dfas.mil/>**

Reporting the Death of a Retiree

Do your loved ones know who to contact in the event of your death? Casualty Assistance Representatives (CARs) stand ready to lend a hand with your casualty assistance needs. Call them for an appointment to talk about what you should have ready for your loved ones in the event of your passing. **If you are not sure who your AF Casualty Assistance Representative (CAR) is, you can call 877-353-6807, enter your zip code, and you will be automatically transferred to the base CAR responsible for your area.**

Buckley SFB Casualty Assistance Office (Loretta Lopez) - CAR/SBP Rep 720-847-6946

Retired Air Force.....1-877-353-6807

Retired Army.....1-800-626-3317

Retired Coast Guard.....1-800-772-8724

Retired Marines.....1-800-847-1597

Retired Navy.....1-800-368-3202
Retired Civil Service.....1-888-767-6738
Receiving VA Compensation.....1-800-827-1000
Social Security Administration.....1-800-772-1213

This newsletter is a RAO publication for retirees, annuitants and surviving spouses. Content is not to be construed as the official view of, or endorsement by, the RAO, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Air Force.