

April 2020



# Caregiver Support

## COVID-19 Check-In

Dear Caregiver,

The VA Caregiver Support team is here to support you! We pulled together some resources that we hope you find helpful. Thank you for all you are doing during this stressful time! We are just a phone call away at 701-239-3700, ext. 4399 if you need us!

*Trisha, Amy, Patti, Loni, and Tammy*



AARP Caregiving and COVID-19

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, older adults and individuals with chronic health conditions are at higher risk for serious illness from the coronavirus (COVID-19). With already more than 40 million family caregivers helping loved ones with care in the U.S., we expect the virus to increase the number of family caregivers who are providing short-term or long-term care to an older loved one. AARP wants to offer some guidance to family caregivers, specifically to help them tackle how to create a plan for those they are caring for, and supporting those new to caring for someone due to the virus impacting more of the older population.

- ❑ **Pull together a team.**—Put together a list of individuals in your family or friend network and services in your community that can help you perform some key caregiving tasks.
- ❑ **Inventory Essential Items**—Determine how much food, medication, and basic supplies are needed. A two-week supply of the following items is recommended: food, water, house cleaning supplies, and medical supplies/equipment.
- ❑ **Get Medications in Order and Ask for Extra**—Make sure you have a list of medications, medical contacts, and know where to find healthcare documents like advance directives. It's recommended to have an extra 30 day supply of essential medications on hand.
- ❑ **Create a Plan to Stay Connected**—Isolation is a huge issue as we follow the social distancing guidelines from the CDC. Set up communication using a variety of technology with your loved one and your team—FaceTime, Google Home, Skype, smart speakers, or simply phone and text.
- ❑ **Maintain Personal Safety and Self Care**—In order to be safe and stay healthy, limit contact with visitors, stay home and continue to follow guidelines from the CDC. While most of us are very focused on the person we are caring for, it is essential to also care for yourself.

Visit AARP's Caregiving during Coronavirus resources at: [www.aarp.org/coronavirus](http://www.aarp.org/coronavirus)

The CDC website is an excellent source of reliable information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



# Self care is important, now more than ever!

## There are a variety of on-line and phone-based Veteran and Caregiver resources

Try Phone-based Mindfulness Meditation! No equipment or experience needed! Mindful Meditation is an evidenced-based, VA-supported mind-body technique that helps you face the challenges and stressors of everyday life.

- April 3rd, 10th, 17th & 24<sup>th</sup>
- May 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd & 29<sup>th</sup>
- June 5th, 12th, 19th & 26th

### Time:

9am-10am Mountain  
10am – 11am Central

Sessions are offered via telephone using a toll free number: 1-800-767-1750 with Access Code 54220# No registration required.

### Caregiver Website:

Go to [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) and sign up for email updates on caregiver topics. Look at the Diagnosis Care Sheets, download Everyday Tips and Checklists, read other Caregiver stories and more.

### Fargo VA Caregiver Support Team

Caregiver Support Program Manager:  
Trisha Chaddock  
Caregiver Support Coordinators:  
Amy Gunkelman, LICSW  
Patti Sele, LCSW  
Caregiver Support Social Worker:  
Loni Larson, LCSW  
Caregiver Support Program Support  
Assistant:  
Tammy Hiltwein

### Advance Directive Help

Do you or your Veteran need assistance setting up or changing your Advance Directive? Call Ann Adams-Hove, LCSW Advance Care Planning Coordinator at 701-239-3700, Ext. 4166.

## Additional Supports

For a referral contact:  
Fargo VA Caregiver Support  
Program  
701-239-3700 ext 4399

### Caregiver Support Line Education Calls

Focus on strategies to enhance resilience and restore balance. Calls are facilitated by the VA Caregiver Support Line.

### Peer Support Mentoring Program

Matches caregivers with peer mentors who can provide personalized support, guidance and friendship, experience and knowledge, and wisdom and skills about thriving as a Caregiver.

### Building Better Caregivers

Six-week online workshop for Caregivers who are caring for someone with dementia, PTSD, serious brain injury, or any other serious injury or illness.

### Annie Caregiver Text Program

Text messaging service that sends personalized text messages that provide information to help you manage your well-being and provide care for your Veteran.

**CAREGIVER  
SUPPORT LINE**  
1-855-260-3274