

The-News-Leader.com

Veteran's Beat: E-records would streamline switch to post-military service

April 15, 2009

by Ron Seman

President Barack Obama, along with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of Veteran's Affairs Eric Shinseki, announced in a White House news release April 2 that the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs have taken the first step in creating a Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record.

Currently, there is no comprehensive system in place that allows for a streamlined transition of health care records between DoD and VA. Both departments will work together to define and build a system that will contain administrative and medical information from the day an individual enters military service and throughout their military career, to the time they leave the military.

Access to electronic records is essential to modern health care delivery and the paperless administration of benefits. It would provide a framework to ensure that all health care providers have the information to deliver high-quality health care, while reducing medical errors.

The creation of this Joint Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record by the two departments would take the next leap in delivering seamless, high-quality care and serve as a

model for the nation.

The president believes that the quality of care for veterans should never be hindered by budget delays. He has shared this concern with Shinseki, and they have worked together to support advanced funding.

The White House has proposed increasing funding by \$200 million from the Department of Veteran's Affairs for improvements in child care, spousal support, lodging, and education. If that department's budget increases by \$25 billion over the next five years, it would dramatically increase funding for veterans' health care; expand eligibility for health care by 2013 to 500,000 veterans; and enhance outreach and services related to mental health care and cognitive injuries, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, according to a White house release.

The White House says the government should combat homelessness by safeguarding vulnerable veterans, and facilitate implementation of the education benefits earned by veterans.

Vets Health Options: A group of local companies will donate their time and expertise to sponsor "A Promise Unbroken -- Complimentary and Alternative Health Information for Veterans." The program will be at the Hilton Garden Inn Cleveland/Twinsburg April 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event is free to all U.S. active military and veterans and their families. A \$5 per person suggested donation will benefit the Wounded Warrior Project, according to Tim Loomis of The Silent Mind in Twinsburg, coordinator of the non-profit program.

Presenters at the program will include Dr. David Santoro; Dr. Vincent Gentiluomo, Returning to Peace of Mind; Eric Snyder, Acupuncture for Pain Management; Suburban Physical Therapy; Andrea Ber, cranial sacral therapy; and Solon Spine and Wellness Center.

Free chair and table massages, as well as martial art demonstrations with a Shaolin monk, will be featured throughout the day.

These area companies and officials have donated their time and expertise, and the sponsors of the event include The Silent Mind, Wellspring Studio, NEO Acupuncture and Hilton Garden Inn.

For more information, call Loomis at 330-425-7204.