

Jan Dils Veterans Disability Benefits Newsletter

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## VETERANS DISABILITY BENEFITS IN THE NEWS



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Spring is one of my favorite times of year. Opening a window and seeing everything in bloom always gives me a much-needed boost after a long winter indoors. I'm even willing to deal with the pollen and allergies in exchange for the brand new season!

Our newsletter this month is meant to share that same sense of optimism, with some good news for the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we all enjoy. For instance, presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, are now effective. If you or someone you know was an active-duty, reserve or National Guard member who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between Aug. 1,

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1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, please be sure to read this important article. We have also included an additional article that explains recently expanded provisions for urgent mental health care needs to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges.

If you have questions about these or any other topics related to Veterans benefits, please don't hesitate to give us a call or send an email. Our team has experience in every aspect of applying for benefits, and we are always happy to help. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,



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**VA'S RULE ESTABLISHES PRESUMPTION  
OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR DISEASES  
ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO  
CONTAMINANTS IN WATER SUPPLY  
AT CAMP LEJEUNE**



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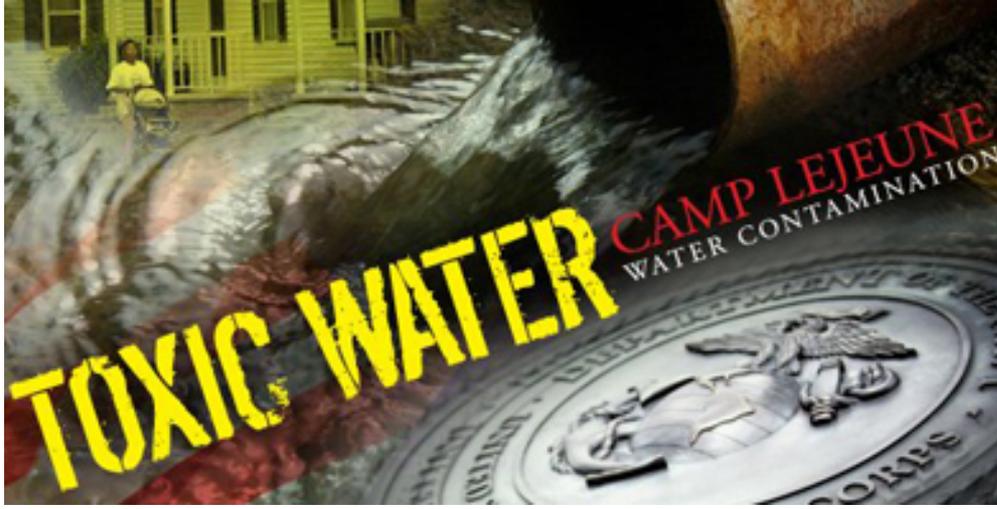
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The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, are effective as of March 14, 2017.

“Establishing these presumptions is a demonstration of our commitment to care for those who have served our nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs, [Dr. David J. Shulkin](#). “The Camp Lejeune presumptions will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

The presumption of service connection applies to active-duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

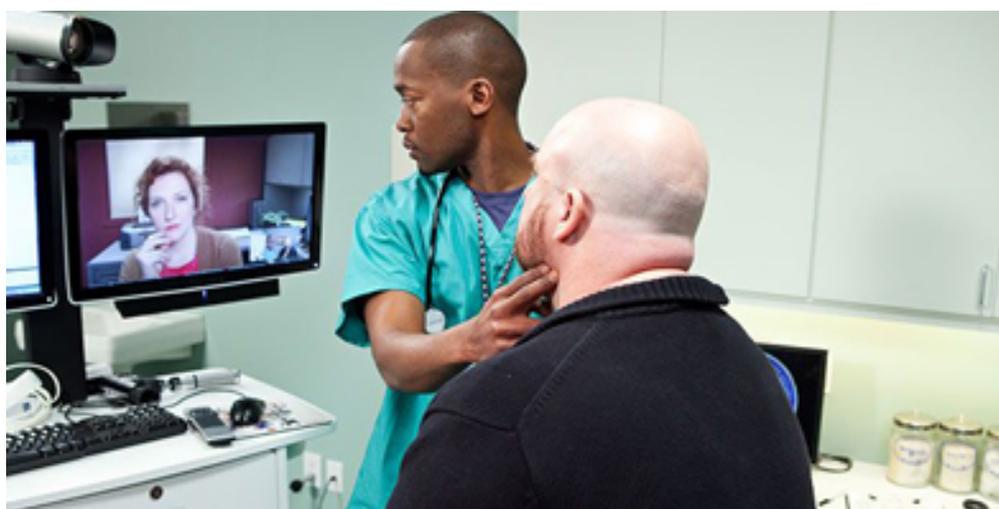
The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

This presumption complements the health care already provided for 15 illnesses or conditions as part of the [Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012](#). The Camp Lejeune Act requires VA to provide health care to Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune, and to reimburse family members or pay providers for medical expenses for those who resided there for not fewer than 30 days between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2869>



## **VA SECRETARY ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH CARE**



Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin while testifying in a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing on March 7, 2017, announced his intention to expand provisions for urgent mental health care needs to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges. This move marks the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on expanding access to assist former OTH service members who are in mental

health distress and may be at risk for suicide or other adverse behaviors.

“The president and I have made it clear that suicide prevention is one of our top priorities,” Shulkin said.

“We know the rate of death by suicide among Veterans who do not use VA care is increasing at a greater rate than Veterans who use VA care. This is a national emergency that requires bold action. We must and we will do all that we can to help former service members who may be at risk. When we say even one Veteran suicide is one too many, we mean it.”

It is estimated that there are a little more than 500,000 former service members with OTH discharges. As part of the proposal, former OTH service members would be able to seek treatment at a VA emergency department, Vet Center or contact the Veterans Crisis Line.

**“Our goal is simple: to save lives,” Shulkin continued.**

**“Veterans who are in crisis should receive help immediately. Far too many Veterans have fallen victim to suicide, roughly 20 every day. Far too many families are left behind asking themselves what more could have been done. The time for action is now.”**

Before finalizing the plan in early summer, Shulkin will meet with Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and Department of Defense officials to determine the best way forward to get these former service members the care they need.

“I look forward to working with leaders like Congressman Mike Coffman from Colorado, who has been a champion for OTH service members,” Shulkin added. “I am grateful for his commitment to our nation’s Veterans and for helping me better understand the urgency of getting this right.”

Source: [https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?](https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2867)

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Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, handles Personal Injury Claims, Social Security and Veterans Disability for clients throughout West Virginia with offices located in Parkersburg-Beckley-Charleston-Huntington-Logan as well as one additional office located in Charlotte, North Carolina. But regardless of where you are located we are able to serve you or a family member Nationwide.

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