

BENEFITS & BEYOND

Veterans & Social Security Disability

THE
JAN DILS
FOUNDATION

MARCH/APRIL 2021



In This Issue

Celebrating 75 Years of Veterans' Care

Social Security Benefits – the Aftermath of COVID-19

Mindful Matters: Health Checklist

Recreational Spotlight: Dolly Sods Wilderness

Recipe: Fresh Pasta Primavera

Celebrating 75 Years of Veterans' Care

The Department of Medicine and Surgery within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established in 1946, along with numerous other programs like the VA Voluntary Service. The law helped the VA to recruit and retain top medical personnel by modifying the civil service system.

This year, the VA commemorates 75 years of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Today the VHA has evolved to meet the unique challenges and care needs of Veterans from every era and at every stage of their lives.

The VA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA) continues to meet Veterans' changing medical, surgical and quality of life needs. New programs provide treatment for traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide prevention, women Veterans and more. VHA operates one of the largest healthcare systems in the world and provides training for a majority of America's medical, nursing and allied health

professionals. Roughly 60% of all medical residents obtain a portion of their training at VA hospitals, and our medical research programs benefit society at-large.

“
As we celebrate this historic milestone, we are presented with an opportunity to share the VHA's rich history while looking toward our next chapter as a learning organization that is committed to continuous improvement.

“As we celebrate this historic milestone, we are presented with an opportunity to share the VHA's rich history while looking toward our next chapter as a learning organization that is committed to continuous improvement,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “It is also a fitting occasion to recognize the extraordinary efforts of VHA staff and volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is just the latest example of VHA's long-standing commitment to providing care to Veterans whenever and however they need it.”

Over the past 75 years, the VHA has made vast and wide-reaching contributions to improve the health of Veterans and the entire nation by providing services and technologies that have changed the way healthcare providers

Continues on back page >>



Letter From Jan

2020 is behind us. As we move into 2021 (our 27th anniversary!), we have been inspired by the new year to refresh our newsletter and add sections we hope you will like: **Recreational Spotlight** and **Mindful Matters**. Both were inspired by the toll isolation took on us and the toll it took on our health. We hope you will find these articles helpful.

As in the past, we have always worked to keep you informed. This is the 75th anniversary of the Veterans Health Administration. They have been at the forefront of medicine since their inception.

Our second article is particularly important for anyone who contracted COVID. We are still learning about long-term symptoms

which may lead to disabilities that prevent people from working. Know that we are on top of information as it comes in and are fully prepared to represent these new (and perhaps numerous) disability cases. If you feel you have developed a chronic case due to COVID, please contact us at jandils.com or 877.526.3457.

Sincerely,

JAN DILS brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. While her knowledge spans the critical areas pertaining to Personal Injury, Veterans benefits, Social Security disability benefits and related appeals and claims, her practice remains focused on people, making sure you get the right answers and, above all, results.

MINDFUL MATTERS

At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we take pride in our culture. One way we connect is through our voluntary Book Club. Twice a month, we virtually chat about our personal, work and professional lives in order to better serve our clients. Here are some helpful tips for all of us:

DOCTOR VISITS

Don't neglect your health. Be sure to plan your annual checkups and don't forget about your teeth and eyes. With COVID-19 in mind, take advantage of telehealth services when available.

MENTAL HEALTH

2020 brought an abundance of stress. Take stock of the state of your mental

health as often as you can. Talk to someone. Take up a new hobby like journaling, meditation or hiking.

RELATIONSHIPS

Maybe 2020 brought you closer to some, or perhaps it created a distance with others. Check in on those you care about the most, and be open to new ways you can strengthen those relationships.

EXERCISE

It doesn't have to be strenuous. Adding a little movement or activity to your daily routine can be good for the body and mind.

EAT WELL

Take care of your immune system. Make sure you're getting plenty of water and add more

fruits and vegetables to each meal. Now's a great time to try new recipes.

CHANGE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

With all the extra time at home, why not change things up a little if you're able? Redecorate or rearrange the rooms in your home.

WRITE DOWN YOUR GOALS

Everyone has things they want to get done. Write them down and set deadlines. But don't beat yourself up if you're not able to meet them on time. Reassess and keep pushing forward!

Going forward, be sure to check out **Mindful Matters** for tips to help you live a more fulfilling life! Got any great suggestions for self-help? We'd love to hear from you. Email us at information@jandils.com.



Recreational Spotlight

Dolly Sods Wilderness

Travel lovers like me are coming off a challenging year, and we couldn't be more anxious to get back out there and travel responsibly. With many restrictions still in place, great experiences still remain right at our fingertips. West Virginia couldn't be a more perfect place to unwind and relax from all the stress.

With the return of spring, there's never been a better time to venture out and enjoy

all the natural beauty the Mountain State has to offer – starting with my personal favorite, the Dolly Sods Wilderness. It boasts the highest plateau east of the Mississippi River with almost 50 miles of hiking trails that offer sweeping views of stunted trees, rocky outcroppings, wildflowers, and unique plant species normally found much further north in Canada. Dolly Sods is also home to one of the nation's newest National Landmark sites, Bear Rocks and Allegheny Front Preserve, both fully accessible by car from April – December. But be forewarned, the road can be a little rough.

Don't just take my word for it, take full

advantage of the change in weather at these special gems. Share your adventures on social media and be sure to tag us. We'd love to see them!

–Devin Dye, Market Development Specialist & Social Media Coordinator



Social Security Benefits – the Aftermath of COVID-19

SOCIAL SECURITY HAS always aimed to provide retired or disabled workers (and their survivors) with a benefit that replaces a reasonable fraction of their lost earnings. Benefits make up a larger fraction of past earnings for lower-paid workers than for higher-paid workers, which is one of the program's progressive features.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Procedure, as policymakers turn to 2021 appropriations to fund the government, they should ensure that the Social Security Administration (SSA) has enough funds to meet daunting workloads that have become even more challenging during the COVID-19 crisis.

While the SSA received supplemental appropriations to fund its short-term response to the crisis, which included switching abruptly to teleservice and administering economic impact ("stimulus") payments, that funding won't likely be enough for the agency, which was already severely under-resourced, to deal with COVID-19's long-term fallout.

Even before the pandemic, the SSA's customer service suffered from over a decade of underinvestment. From 2010 to 2020, the

agency's operating budget fell 12% in inflation-adjusted terms – even as the number of Social Security beneficiaries grew by 21%.

These cuts have hampered the agency's ability to perform its essential services, such as determining eligibility in a timely manner for retirement, survivor and disability benefits; paying benefits accurately and on time; responding to questions from the public; and updating benefits promptly when circumstances change.

Also, since 2010, the SSA's staff shrank by 12% even as call volume grew 6%, resulting in more busy signals, more hang-ups, longer waits, and fewer calls answered.

With COVID-19, we will likely have long-term disabling effects on many who contract

it, including lung scarring, heart damage, and neurological and mental health effects. The SSA will need to process these new disability claims and possibly adjust its medical listings for these new cases.

In this independent budget request, which was published before the pandemic, SSA's new commissioner requested an 8% increase, of \$935 million, for 2021. That would be the largest single-year increase in SSA's operating budget since 2010. But with the onset of COVID-19, SSA beneficiaries received a modest 1.3 percent (as reported in our last newsletter).

If you have questions about your disability benefits, don't hesitate to contact us at **877.526.3457** or **jandils.com**.

Sources: www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/social-security-benefits-are-modest / www.cbpp.org/kathleen-romig



What's Cooking?

FRESH PASTA PRIMAVERA



In Italian, primavera means "spring," and there couldn't be a better name, or time, for VA Case Manager **Abigail McGill's** dish.

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. uncooked pasta
2 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 small zucchini, diced
1 cup assorted diced bell peppers
5 oz. grape tomatoes

1 small carrot, chopped
3 tbsp. minced garlic
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
1 tbsp. basil
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt & pepper (to taste)

DIRECTIONS: Boil water for the pasta and cook it according to package directions. Prep your ingredients. Add oil and butter to a skillet over medium heat. Add the vegetables and garlic to the skillet, and stir often for about 5 minutes or until the vegetables are tender-crisp. Stir in the lemon juice, Italian seasoning and basil to skillet. Before draining the pasta, add a tablespoon of the pasta water to the skillet. Drain the pasta and add it to a large bowl. Add the ingredients from the skillet in the bowl with the pasta. Toss and add Parmesan cheese. Let it cool in the refrigerator for 2-3 hours. Serve and enjoy!!!!

IT'S GAME TIME

COMMONYMS

What's a commonym, you ask?

A commonym is a group of words that have a common trait in the three words/items listed. For example, the words: A car - A tree - An elephant... they all have trunks. These will make you think!

1. Wagon - Ferris - Cart
2. Love - Chain - Dear John
3. Hot - Chili - Corn
4. Bricks - Eggs - Carpets
5. Skyscraper - Ernest Hemingway - Mark Twain
6. Tone - Zest - Dove
7. Door - Grand - Nobel
8. Pillow - Dog - Fist
9. Dinner - Straight - Leather
10. Labor - Columbus - Ground Hog

Answers: 1 wheels 2 letters 3 types of dogs 4 they are laid 5 they have stories 6 names of soap 7 prizes 8 fights 9 jackets 10 days

MARCH/APRIL 2021

P.O. Box 112
Parkersburg, WV 26102

PERSONAL INJURY / VETERANS DISABILITY / SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

Want to keep up with all the latest news or get to know us better? Like us on Facebook!



JANDILS.COM

Connect with us on our social networks!



Continues from front page >>

across the country practice medicine:

- Almost 70% of the country's healthcare providers receive medical training at a VHA facility. The skills and knowledge they learn from VHA are implemented in hospitals and clinics across the country.
- The VHA performed the first successful liver transplant, developed the nicotine patch and Hepatitis C medication, invented the first cardiac pacemaker, and paved the way in the field of pain management.
- The VHA leads the nation in telehealth services, with more than 900,000 Veterans using these services in FY19, and increasing telehealth by 1,180% during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- More than 60% of VA researchers also provide direct patient care. Their work has resulted in three Nobel prizes, seven Lasker awards, and numerous other

national and international honors. The VA currently has more than 7,000 active research projects focused on improving the lives of Veterans.

However, there is more than just the care itself. Many Vets are left with disabilities that make them unable to work or live normal lives. When it comes to these heroes, facts speak for themselves – 31% of claims are denied benefits. At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we know how to help you prepare your case or an appeal. Please don't gamble with your

benefits. Contact the Jan Dils Veterans disabilities team at **Fight4Vets.com** or call **877.526.3457**.



Sources: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5602 / www.va.gov/vha-history/