

BENEFITS & BEYOND

Veterans & Social Security Disability

THE
JAN DILS
FOUNDATION

MAY/JUNE 2021



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VA Partnership Streamlines Veterans' Access to Care and Housing Assistance

Did you know 22,740 Veterans have been sheltered since 2019? And Veterans experiencing or at risk for homelessness are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19?

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is partnering with customer relationship management company Salesforce to improve access to essential VA services and resources among homeless and at-risk Veterans.

The Status Query and Response System (SQUARES) is a VA web application first created in 2015 to provide external homeless service organizations with reliable and detailed information about Veteran eligibility.

Thanks in part to the VA and Salesforce collaboration, the updated and expanded version of SQUARES lets VA partner organizations easily verify Veterans' eligibility for VA homeless programs in real time.

"Providing safe and stable housing to our nation's Veterans is a department priority," said VA Executive Director for the Homeless

Programs Office Monica Diaz. "The use of SQUARES helps enhance access to VA care and services among Veterans facing housing crises."

“**Providing safe and stable housing to our nation's Veterans is a department priority**”

SQUARES has been vital during the COVID-19 pandemic in assisting food pantries, homeless service providers, state agencies, nonprofits and other organizations in swiftly connecting vulnerable Veterans to VA's homeless prevention, rapid rehousing and wraparound supportive services.

"Providing the backbone for SQUARES demonstrates how the cloud helps the government move faster, extend its impact into the community, and connect Veterans who are experiencing homelessness to the benefits they earned while serving our country," said Dave Rey, president of Salesforce's global public sector. "More than 2,100 partner organizations – including state Veteran agencies, state and local health and human services groups and nonprofit

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Letter From Jan

Summer is on the way! With one of three vaccines in supply, if you want one you can now get one. If

you haven't received yours, don't let unfounded conspiracy theories keep you from getting back to life as we knew it before the pandemic.

It's a personal choice. Learn more at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

COVID has left many unemployed and struggling to stay in their homes, including our Veterans. Take a moment to learn more about what the VA is doing to provide housing assistance.

In our second article we address bone fractures and their ability to leave many Americans with a disability. Those with improperly healed breaks may have limitations in use of the injured limb due to nerve or muscle damage. Or if there is bone death or contracture of

the muscles due to the break, an individual may have no use of that limb. In addition, sometimes a fracture into a joint space will cause arthritis that makes it difficult to use the joint.

Have you had a break that has caused chronic pain? Give us a call at **877.526.3457** to see if you may qualify for compensation.

Most importantly, stay safe! This is a season when such injuries spike. But don't let fear hold you back. Have fun.

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

Looking for a simple way to improve your outlook? Research has grown significantly over the last few years in a scientific field called ecotherapy. At its core, it shows a strong connection to time spent in nature and reduced stress, anxiety and depression. Great news because Veterans, Gold Star Families and U.S. military Veterans are eligible to receive free access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges and forests.

Also, improving your mood can be as simple as going for a walk in the woods. However, we know that not everybody is capable of getting out. So, we've put together a few alternatives to get your daily dose of nature:

Gardening/Flowering – Proven to engage you physically, mentally and sometimes socially. With its numerous health benefits, you don't need lots of land to take advantage. You can start small with a tiny flowering pot of herbs to grow right in your kitchen.



Forest Bathing – Unlike walking or running, this is not exercise. It is simply being in nature and connecting with it through our senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.

Park Prescriptions – Some healthcare providers have begun to recommend spending a specific amount of time outdoors or involved with other activities.

Animal-Assisted Therapy – Petting, playing or working with animals like horses, dogs and birds outdoors has shown to reduce stress, anxiety and depression.

Outdoor Meditation and Yoga – Both meditation and yoga provide many great health benefits on their own. Combine them with nature for an added bonus.

These are just a few of the many activities you may find helpful beyond the pandemic. Experience the benefits firsthand.

Recreational Spotlight

The New River

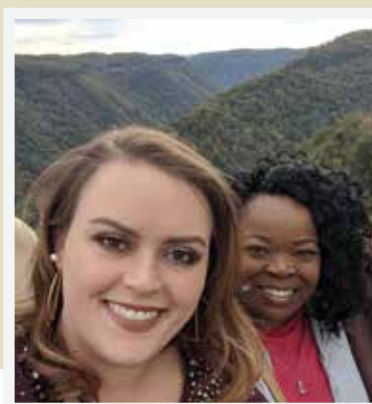
The New River is one of the oldest rivers in the world, and is the longest and deepest river gorge in Appalachia. With 70,000 acres of land, there are countless recreational activities and breathtaking scenic views. As we've all struggled to weather the pandemic, the \$2.3 trillion coronavirus relief and spending bill passed by the federal government in December brought on an unexpected distinction for the New River Gorge, as it was designated as America's sixty-third National Park. Just 40 miles

southeast of Charleston, West Virginia, a visit to the New River Gorge National Park is the perfect day trip or weekend getaway for hikers, rafters and other outdoor enthusiasts.

"I've lived in West Virginia my entire life, and my first trip to the New River Gorge was on Bridge Day in 2019. I didn't know what I had been missing! The bridge was lined with local artisans and vendors for as far as you could see. Between the crafts, food and bungee

jumpers/bridge divers, there was plenty of entertainment as we made our way to the Welcome Center. There we learned about the rich history of the bridge and checked out some of the nearby scenic views. Bridge Day isn't the only time you can enjoy this National Park, however. There are many outdoor activities for the adventurous at heart including hiking, biking (and for the especially brave) white water rafting! If you haven't visited this park, it's a must-see!"

—Mary-Michael McClung,
Human Resource Manager



Potentially Disabling Complications from Bone Fractures

WHILE MOST FRACTURES heal without permanent injury, there are several complications that can occur with broken bones. These complications can lead to disability.

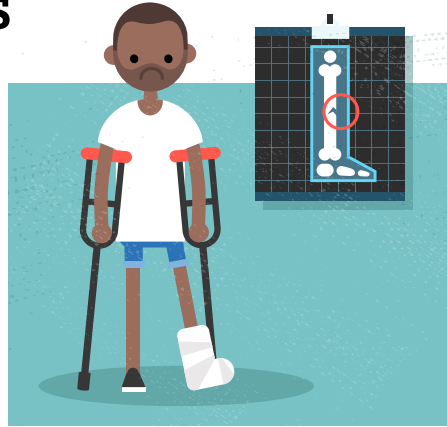
Immediate complications (complications that occur at the time of the fracture) include:

- Injury to muscles, joints, major blood vessels and organs
- Hypovolaemic shock (quick loss of body fluid that causes major organ to stop working) if significant other injuries accompany the bone fracture

Early complications (complications that occur within a few days after the fracture):

- Infection
- Compartment syndrome (the compression of nerves, blood vessels and muscles in a closed area of the body due to swelling)
- Hypovolaemic shock (quick loss of body fluid that causes major organ to stop working) if other significant injuries accompany the bone fracture
- Embolism (blood clot)
- Adult respiratory distress syndrome

Late complications (complications that occur well after the fracture):



- Improper healing, including the bone not rejoining, or healing in a deformed way
- Bone death due to lack of oxygen
- Shortening of the bone
- Sudeck's dystrophy, which can cause muscle wasting (atrophy) and stiffness and pain
- Bone infection
- Volkmann's contracture, which is permanent contracture of the hand at the wrist (making your hand look like a claw). Use of your fingers is severely restricted and forced movement of your fingers is very painful
- Myositis ossificans, which is where the bone grows within the muscle, causing pain

Qualifying for Social Security Disability Benefits

There are two ways in which you can qualify for Social Security disability benefits.

First, you can prove that you meet or equal the requirements of a disability listing from the Social Security "Blue Book," which contains a list of impairments that are predetermined to be disabling based on their severity. Secondly (if you do not meet or equal a listing), you can show that you are unable to work.

If you claim in your application that pain or fatigue affects your ability to work, or this is mentioned in your medical records, Social Security will assess your ability to complete work tasks, to handle work stress, and to interact properly with coworkers and supervisors in a mental Residual Functional Capacity (RFC). With regards to reports of pain, Social Security requires medical documentation that proves the possible sources of the pain in order to properly weigh the effects of the pain on your overall impairments.

After Social Security assesses all the above limitations, the agency will consider whether they keep you from doing your prior work. If so, the agency will then consider your limitations along with your age, education and work experience to decide whether there is other, less demanding work that you can adjust to.

That's the process. Now the reality: Two-thirds of all disability claims are initially declined. At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we are in a position to beat the odds. We know what you need to present and how to prepare – and without all the second guessing. Learn more about our award-winning firm at jandils.com.

Source: www.disabilitysecrets.com/resources/disability/getting-social-security-disability-bone-fracture

What's
Cooking?

TEXAS CAVIAR

From the kitchen of **Sabrina Stanley**, Social Security case manager, enjoy this champagne appetizer on a beer budget. Just in time for the Memorial Day holiday!



INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 can shoepeg corn | 1 whole onion chopped (or more if you like) |
| 1 can black-eyed peas | 2 chopped jalapenos (with seeds) |
| 1 can black beans | 1 cup olive oil |
| 1 cup chopped celery | 1 cup sugar |
| 1 large jar of pimentos | ½ cup vinegar |

DIRECTIONS: Empty corn, black-eyed peas and black beans into a colander and drain before adding to a large bowl. Add celery, onion, pimentos and jalapenos to bowl. Combine olive oil, sugar and vinegar to a medium saucepan and heat on low until the sugar has dissolved. Pour mixture over the veggies in the bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, drain off any excess liquid. Serve chilled with tortilla chips.

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. Your Hand - Your Voice - Your Children
2. Chop - Yard - Pogo
3. Lawn - Rocking - Wheel
4. Sheep - Watch - Seeing-Eye
5. Lilac - Plum - Violet
6. Tug - Sail - Steam
7. Turkey - Teddy Bear - Christmas Stocking
8. Sea - Taco - Turtle
9. Sand - Juke - Toy
10. Time - Stink - Atomic

Answers: 1. things you raise 2. sticks 3. chairs 4. dogs 5. purples 6. boats 7. they are stuffed 8. shells 9. boxes 10. bombs

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PERSONAL INJURY / VETERANS DISABILITY / SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

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homeless service providers – are already using SQUARES to provide better care to Veterans across the country.”

The VA and Salesforce will convene virtual workshops to educate users

about SQUARES and its features. The two will also create videos and case studies to educate registered users and potential new users on how to use the online tool. Learn more about VA’s homeless programs.

At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we continue to support our Veterans by partnering with organizations

throughout the region to ensure much of their money stays local. We also work with Veterans with disabilities and their caregivers to navigate the system and get their deserved compensation. Just contact us at **fight4Vets.com** or call **877.526.3455**. Get your free disability evaluation.



“ More than 2,100 partner organizations – including state Veteran agencies, state and local health and human services groups and nonprofit homeless service providers – are already using SQUARES to provide better care to Veterans across the country. ”

Sources: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5633
www.endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/who-experiences-homelessness/veterans/