



# VETERANS AFFAIRS



## Spring Renewal

Dear Indiana County Veterans and Families,

As we welcome the month of April, we are reminded that spring is a season of renewal, growth, and new beginnings. Just as the earth awakens with vibrant colors and fresh energy, this month presents an opportunity for each of us to reflect, reset, and move forward with purpose. Renewal is not just about nature—it is about our personal journeys, our resilience, and the continuous growth we experience as Veterans, families, and as a community.

April holds deep significance for the military and Veteran communities, as it highlights the sacrifices not only of those who have served but also of their families. One of the most important observances this month is the **Month of the Military Child**, recognizing the strength, resilience, and sacrifices of children in military families. These young individuals face frequent relocations, long separations from parents, and unique challenges that shape them into the strong, adaptable leaders of tomorrow. I want to take a moment to personally thank my daughters, Tori and Brinley, for their sacrifices as the children of their dad, a retired Active Duty Army Veteran, who was often away, and for their constant support as I continue to serve in the Army Reserves. We honor all military children for their courage and the vital role they play in supporting their service members.

Additionally, we observe **Gold Star Spouses Day** on April 5, a solemn day of remembrance for the spouses of our fallen heroes. Their strength and perseverance inspire us all, and we must continue to support them in every way we can. On April 9, **National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day**, we pay tribute to those who endured captivity and emerged as symbols of resilience and patriotism. Their sacrifices remind us of the true cost of freedom and the unbreakable strength of the human spirit.

This month, I encourage you to embrace the theme of renewal in your own life. Take time to reconnect—with fellow Veterans, with family, and with yourself. Seek opportunities for personal and professional growth, whether through education, career advancement, or community involvement. And if you are facing challenges, remember that you are not alone. Indiana's Veteran community is strong, and there are many resources available to support you.

As April unfolds, we recognize the resilience of our military families and the legacy of service they uphold. May this month bring you renewal, strength, and peace as we continue forward with purpose.

*Jessica*  
Jessica Walker  
Director

### Highlights

Thrive in 25

Senior Summit

VA Social  
Workers

Improving  
Diabetes Care

What Did My  
Doctor Say?

Heroes Never  
Alone

VA Whole Health





**THIRD THURSDAYS**  
LIVE MUSIC LOCAL EATS  
APRIL - SEPT **IRMC Park** 5 - 8 PM



The experts at IRMC are dedicated to prioritizing your health! Each month, take advantage of free screenings or educational offerings.

Take control of your health, make informed choices, and **thrive** in all aspects of your well-being throughout the year.

**JANUARY**  
**Weight Loss Surgery**  
Start 2025 off by learning about options for weight loss surgery and what to expect to help you achieve your health and wellness goals for the year ahead.

**FEBRUARY**  
**Heart Health: Love Your Heart**  
Education about heart health, the importance of cardiovascular care, and how to reduce risk factors, presented in a fun way to get you moving.

**MARCH**  
**Colorectal Cancer Awareness: Early Detection**  
Prevention strategies, the importance of screening, and early detection. Learn how lifestyle choices and timely screenings can help reduce risk.

**APRIL**  
**Protect What's Important**  
Join our new Maxillofacial Surgeon to learn about the impact of facial injuries and oral cancer, the local services available to you, and how to reduce your risk of these conditions.

**MAY**  
**Mind Matters: Suicide Prevention**  
A community event focused on raising awareness, recognizing the signs of distress, and learning how to support those in need.

**JUNE**  
**Minding Your Brain Health**  
Join us to explore the entire process, from recognizing the signs and symptoms of stroke to knowing what to do in an emergency.

**JULY**  
**Stay Steady: Summertime Fall Prevention**  
Reduce your risk of falls and enjoy a safer, more active summer.

**AUGUST**  
**The Skinny on Skin**  
Free skin cancer screening for new dermatology patients.

**SEPTEMBER**  
**Step Up for Vascular Health: Walk to Protect Circulation**  
Join us for a PAD (Peripheral Artery Disease) Awareness walk.

**OCTOBER**  
**MammoGLAM!**  
Pamper yourself, get or schedule your mammogram, and enjoy great company while meeting our dedicated team.

**NOVEMBER**  
**Diabetes Education**  
Manage your health for the long-term. Learn about diabetes prevention, care, and healthy lifestyle choices to manage the condition.

**DECEMBER**  
**Finish Strong**  
A year-end reflection on health goals, celebrating progress, and setting intentions for continued health in the coming year.



## Veteran Spotlight



Darvina Monice Miller enlisted into the USMC in November of 1987 as a 6094 Marine Corps Aircraft Intermediate Level Hydraulic/Pneumatic Mechanic. Sergeant Miller was assigned to the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323 (VMFA 323) as well as the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 (MAL-11). As an Aircraft mechanic, you could find her working on F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets, C130 Hercules aircrafts, and Harrier Jump Jets. During her time in the service, she was stationed in Japan, Philippines and many additional states. She is the proud mom of Kayla, Rodney, and Briana and grandma to Dylan. When she isn't remodeling her home, you can find her traveling and enjoying retirement.




**SENIOR SUMMIT 2025**  
Brought to you by the INDIANA COUNTY ELDER ABUSE TASK FORCE



**SAVE THE DATE**  
Wednesday  
May 7th, 2025  
8:00 a.m. to Noon  
YMCA OF INDIANA COUNTY  
60 N. Ben Franklin Rd  
Indiana, PA 15701



**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**



**GOLDEN ONSITE DENTAL**

The Arc is partnering with Golden Onsite Dental to provide individuals with disabilities a sensory-safe location to receive dental health check-ups. All insurances are welcome!


**We bring the dental office to you!**  
Our Public Health Team will Provide:

- Exam
- Cleaning
- Fluoride Varnish
- Treatment options if needed, including with a local dental provider
- Parent education and hands-on learning for families

**Upcoming dates:**

March 13, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	April 10, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
May 15, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	June 19, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
July 17, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	August 21, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
September 18, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	October 23, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM
November 13, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM	December 18, 2025 10 AM – 2 PM

**ACCEPTS ANY INSURANCE!**  
**FOR AN APPOINTMENT** – Please Text: Arc to 412-361-9265 and someone will be with you to schedule an appointment time.  
The clinic will be held at The Arc of Indiana County  
(120 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street Indiana, PA 15701)







### **Move Well with Tai Chi**

Getting regular exercise is one of the best things for our bodies. Practicing mind-body movement, like tai chi, benefits our mind, emotions, and relationships, making it a great way to support your Whole Health. Whole Health is an approach that focuses on what matters to you, combining physical health with mental health and community. Tai chi supports relaxation, focus, balance, and strength. Research shows it can improve confidence and help you achieve other goals. Practicing tai chi with others is also a great way to build community. Healthy community and relaxation are important for your Whole Health. Tai chi combines gentle movements with breathing and focused attention, strengthening and stretching muscles while bringing attention to different parts of the body. This quiets the mind and teaches relaxation. Practicing tai chi allows the body, mind, and spirit to work together. So how do you get started? Check out our tips and videos. [Read More](#)



### **What Does a VA Social Worker Do?**

Social workers help people facing challenges like poverty and homelessness, but they're also a core part of VA health care. As part of your VA team, they can connect you to a variety of resources and services. VA social workers help Veterans overcome challenges to their health and well-being, including issues related to care access, mental health, housing, and more. If you're unsure where to find support, talking to a social worker is a great start. VA encourages you to contact one anytime. Ask for a referral from your primary care provider, pharmacist, nutritionist, or advanced care providers. Call your local VA and ask to speak to a social worker. If a social worker is available, they'll talk to you then; if not, an appointment will be scheduled. During your meeting, the social worker will assess your needs, provide resources, and create an action plan, including hospitalization or ER visits if needed.

[Read More](#)



### **Improving Diabetes Care**

Nearly 25% of Veterans receiving VA care have diabetes, more than double the rate in the general population. Veterans are at higher risk of Type-2 diabetes due to service-related chronic pain, joint damage, and herbicide exposure like Agent Orange. The disease is the leading cause of blindness, kidney disease, and amputation for Veterans. VA also leads in diabetes research and seeks solutions to improve care, including expanding patient-generated health data (PGHD) to help teams monitor health. The most important PGHD for Veterans with diabetes is blood sugar levels. Veterans can use continuous glucose monitors (CGM) to track levels in real time. [Read More](#)



### **Anti-inflammatory Diet**

The Latin word for inflammation translates to “a kindling, a setting on fire.” Ancient Romans defined inflammation by four signs: redness, swelling, fever, and pain—a definition that holds true today. Think back to the last time you recovered from a cut, burn, or infection. That’s inflammation working to protect your body. When faced with an injury or illness, the immune system activates and starts the healing process by sending extra blood with nutrients and immune cells to the affected area. This reaction is essential to protecting tissues and maintaining health. However, when inflammation doesn’t respond properly, it can lead to problems. While many factors are involved and some are out of our control, diet can help manage chronic inflammation. [Read More](#)



### **What Did My Doctor Say?**

Making decisions about your health care can feel overwhelming, but with the right information and tools, it becomes more manageable. We offer tips, tools, and resources to help you make the most of your care. It's important to understand your providers' advice and how your treatment works. When you grasp your medical information, you're better equipped to care for your health. This helps you follow instructions, take medications correctly, and know when to seek help. Play an active role by discussing questions or concerns with your health care team. Many Veterans find it helpful to write down questions, take notes, or bring a family member for support and never hesitate to ask if something is unclear. [Read More](#)

## Resources



**Prioritizing yourself now can help prevent a crisis in the future.** When you think about it, so much of what we do every day is to avoid a future problem. Like going to the gym to try to stay healthy and prevent disease. The same goes for our well-being. If we take the time now to find ways to decrease stress and depression, we reduce our risk of a future crisis. I encourage you to check out the **Veterans Self-Check Assessment**. It could help you find the resources you need to stay healthy and safe. The assessment includes a series of questions that takes about 10 minutes to complete. It's designed specifically for Veterans, active-duty military service members and members of the National Guard and Reserve, as well as their family members.



Standing beside those who once stood before us, **Heroes Never Alone Inc.** is dedicated to honoring and supporting our Veterans. Based in Ligonier, PA, they deeply appreciate those who answered the call to protect our rights, freedoms, and livelihoods. With a heartfelt commitment to elevating their quality of life, they have identified four key areas where they can make a meaningful impact: affordable housing, PTSD advancements, food distribution, and animal companionship.

There mission is to build, strengthen, and maintain the Veteran community, ensuring that they feel loved, valued, and never alone. Through these initiatives, they strive to provide the support and resources necessary to enhance their well-being. If you are interested in contributing to any of these programs, we encourage you to reach out. Together, we can make this vision a reality for many Veterans in need.

They firmly believe that every American has a role in serving this great country. Our Veterans have already made their choice to serve—now, it is our opportunity to serve those who served us.

Watch the **Heroes Never Alone - Purposefully Good Featured Nonprofit Video** featured by the Trellis Project.

**Mission Outfitters** operates under Heroes Never Alone. Motto: Helping Veterans through Christ and the Great Outdoors. We are dedicated to helping our Nation's Veterans battle the enemies of war within and defeating Veteran suicide. This is accomplished with the whole Armor of God and the great outdoors. We are dedicated to providing Veterans with outdoor opportunities, at NO COST to the Veteran! Opportunities like guided hunting and fishing trips, hiking, camping, and shooting sports!

**Whole Health - How to Get Started**  
Start a conversation with your VA health team about Whole Health. Use this **Brief Personal Health Inventory** to start and guide the discussion of your hopes, desires, and goals.

VA staff and Veteran peers can also support you on your Whole Health journey too. Learn about Whole Health practices from other Veterans through the Introduction to Whole Health and Taking Charge of My Life and Health courses. Find the Whole Health contact at your VA here: **Whole Health Facility Contacts**.

Learn more about getting started with the **Personal Health Inventory self-assessment**, and **Personal Health Plan** and how it can shape your well-being programs and clinical treatments.

The road to better health and well-being starts here, with you.

**Start Your Journey With Whole Health Today**

*Thank you for reading!*

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