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**VVA Introduces First Collaboration Between Veterans and Private Sector to  
Address Healthcare Needs for Vets**  
*New Veterans Health Council and Web Site Provide Information and  
Resource Safety Net*

(Washington, D.C., February 25) – Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) today formally debuted a new alliance that will offer veterans, their families, and health professionals a new resource for information about healthcare risks experienced by those who served in the military. The Veterans Health Council, made up of veterans and health organizations, announced its mission, participants, and Web site, [www.veteranshealth.org](http://www.veteranshealth.org), at a media event today at the National Press Club.

“The mission of the Veterans Health Council is to improve the health of veterans by creating an ongoing forum for health professionals, employee representatives, advocacy organizations, and healthcare firms,” said John Rowan, VVA National President. “We want to inform veterans and their families about health risks related to their military service and the healthcare available to them; educate healthcare communities about the multiple health issues associated with military service; develop educational materials for medical schools, nursing schools, teaching hospitals, and related entities; and advocate on behalf of healthcare initiatives for veterans.”

Up to 80 percent of veterans do not use the VA – the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities – for their healthcare needs. VVA attributes this significant underutilization to the fact that most veterans are simply unaware that they may have health problems related to their military service--diseases, conditions, and maladies which entitle them to compensation and medical care from the VA, if they so choose.

The Veterans Health Council Web site provides information on health conditions associated with military service and provides links to healthcare sites related to specific diseases. Most importantly, it offers general information on how to file a claim for disability compensation and provides a locator service for accredited veterans’ service representatives who can assist in filing claims for benefits.

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