



PRESS RELEASE

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VVA Applauds House Passage of VA VACCINE Act

(Washington, D.C.) --“We applaud Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and Ranking Member Mike Boss (R-Ill) for the swift passage of H.R. 1276, *The Department of Affairs Veterans’ and Caregivers’ COVID-19 Immunizations Now Expanded Act of 2021*, the *VA VACCINE Act*,” said John Rowan, VVA National President. The bill passed the House of Representatives unanimously on Tuesday and is headed to the Senate.

“Vietnam veterans are vulnerable—most of us are in our 70’s, and our health has been compromised due to our military service and exposures to Agent Orange and other toxicants,” said Rowan. “The vaccine saves lives, and the more people we get vaccinated, the sooner our country will be back to normal.”

“The *VA VACCINE Act*, when enacted, will grant VA the authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all veterans not currently enrolled in VA’s healthcare system, including veterans without compensable service-connected disabilities; veterans who have incomes above VA’s threshold; and veterans living abroad,” said Rowan. “The bill will also allow the VA to provide COVID-19 vaccines to the caregivers of veterans enrolled in various VA home-based and long-term care programs.”

The Senate has introduced a similar bill, the *Saves Lives Act*. In addition to all veterans and caregivers specified to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the *VA VACCINE Act*, the Senate bill calls for the VA to vaccinate the spouses of veterans. “It makes good sense to employ VA’s resources to get more people vaccinated, especially our spouses,” said Rowan. The VA has delivered over a million shots. It has proven it can get the vaccine into arms effectively and efficiently. We are fortunate to have a system that works.”

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”