



Wichita Chapter News



February 14, 2023

Dear MOAA Members,

Happy Valentine's Day! Hope you had a Happy Valentine's Day with all the love and chocolate you were looking for. Just a historical note on Valentine's Day. Many trace the celebration back to St Valentine of Rome who was martyred in the 3rd Century AD. He supposedly sent a note of kindness to a young girl, his jailer's daughter, who had been blind and was cured by Valentine and he signed the note "your Valentine". Fast forward a millennia, and several commentaries and inputs from the Catholic church and romantic poets, and St Valentine's day evolves into a day for sending love notes and presents to loved ones. Fast forward to today and it's a major spending holiday supporting the economy by approximately \$26.5 billion. So please know, your expenditures were not alone.

Speaking of supporting the economy, and by extension government spending, MOAA National recently sent out an alarm about a recurring Congressional Budget Office (CBO) proposal to alter TRICARE for Life. (TFL) to cut the cost of TRICARE for the government. Just as a refresher "TRICARE For Life is a Medicare-wraparound coverage if you are TRICARE-eligible and have Medicare Part A and B, regardless of age or place of residence. Coverage is only for those with Medicare and who are TRICARE-eligible." For all intents and purposes, you must be retired military and over age 65. There are exceptions, but not many. What the CBO is recommending is "an annual enrollment fee of \$575 for individual coverage or \$1,150 for family coverage." Currently, there is no enrollment fee. In addition, the CBO is recommending an \$850 deductible and a 50% cost share for the next \$7,650 in medical expenses not paid by Medicare. This could mean an annual increase in cost up to \$4,675 to be in the TFL program. Per MOAA National, they "will fight any attempts to reduce the TFL benefit for retirees." However, they need the membership to be heard by contacting their federal legislators. The easiest way to do this is by going to the www.moaa.org website, select Advocacy on the Home Page, then Legislative Action Center. Once in the center there is a list of Active Legislative Campaigns. This campaign is listed as "Tell Congress You Oppose TRICARE for Life Fee". Click on Write and submit the necessary information. Your position will be forwarded to your congressman and senators. You can also make entry to the other campaigns listed. The more we raise our voice, the better chance we have of them hearing us.

Similar to the MOAA National list of Legislative Priorities, there is a Kansas list for Kansas legislation. This list is provided further on in the newsletter.

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As for happenings in our chapter, at our January Brunch we received an outstanding presentation from the JROTC cadet staffs from Wichita JROTC and Leadership Programs and the Derby AFJROTC cadets. As we see every year, it is sincerely heartwarming to know we have such superb young people getting ready to graduate from high school and go on to starting their employment, college education or military training. I continue to feel that as long as we have young adults like them stepping up to take their place in society, our society will continue to advance and succeed. Just so you know, I've been in contact with Larry Burks, LTC, USA (Ret), Director, Military and Veterans Services at WSU. He liaisons with the Army ROTC program at WSU and he is quite happy with the idea of having the ROTC cadet leadership provide us with a similar presentation on how the WSU ROTC program is doing. We should be able to schedule that presentation for the fall. Our presentation for February will be from Trevor Macy, Public Information Officer, Wichita Police Department. In his position, officer Macy supervises the local Crime Stoppers program and gives periodic briefings to the Crime Stoppers Committee and the Wichita Metro Crime Commission. He will be giving us some insight into how this program works and what criminal activity is occurring around the area.

As always, your input is always welcome. Email all concerns to me at m2george55@gmail.com. Also, please save **the dates for upcoming MOAA Meetings:** 26 February, 26 March, 30 April, and 28 May 2023. Please be sure to make a special effort to be here for the 26 March meeting when Ms Virginia "Gail" Joyce will be here from MOAA National to talk about MOAA's Surviving Spouse program.

Sincerely,
Michael R. George, President

Officer Trevor Macy Speaks at our February Brunch

Trevor Macy is the Public Information Officer for the Wichita Police Department and will headline our February 26 Meeting at Rolling Hills Country Club. He also serves as the Law Enforcement Coordinator for Crime Stoppers for Wichita/Sedgwick County. Officer Macy has been with the police department for four years – serving as the law enforcement coordinator for the past two years. Prior to joining the WPD, Trevor worked at KWCH News as a studio technician, photojournalist, and multimedia journalist. Born and raised in Whitewater, KS, He is now proud to call Wichita his Home. He has resided in Wichita since 2014. The brunch begins at 11 a.m., on the 26th.

Linda Phillips Performs at TROW's February Luncheon

The Retired Officer's Wives Club will meet at the Scotch and Sirloin February 17 at 11:30 a.m. for their monthly luncheon. Linda Phillips, a TROW member, will provide entertainment. She plays an electronic Yamaha woodwind instrument which can imitate sounds of several instruments. She has performed with the Wilmore Opry for several years. TROW President Sue Tanner says everyone will order what they want from the menu. Callers are contacting members to get a count for the seating. Sue also said that all spouses of retired military officers are invited to attend. The restaurant is located at

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5325 E. Kellogg Drive. If members haven't paid their annual dues, please bring to the luncheon on Friday, or mail them to Anne Tibbetts, 1103 N. Kokomo, Derby KS 67037.

MOAA's Legislative Priorities for 2023

- Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits
- Military Housing [Increased BAH and improved government provided quarters]
- Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees [Reverse cuts to the pharmacy benefit and access to medical treatment facilities]
- Health Care and Benefits for Veterans [Monitor enactment of the PACT Act and improved care through the VA]
- Service Families [Improved support for spouse employment, basic needs allowance and accessible, affordable childcare]
- Survivors [Repeal recoupment of last month's paycheck after retirees passing, continue to improve SGLI/VGLI to match inflation, and improve DIC baseline]
- Guard and Reserve [TRICARE coverage for reserve component, overcome delayed pay when promoted or retired, and support for policy solutions to support the total force]

These are MOAA's priorities to present to the 118th Congress in support of the 50th anniversary of our all-volunteer force and to address the challenges facing our uniformed community. MOAA needs our help to keep momentum for these priorities and more. To stay connected, ensure you are signed up for the MOAA Newsletter and register as an advocate at the MOAA Legislative Action Center. For more information, go to <https://www.moaa.org/moaas-legislative-priorities>.

Kansas Military and Veterans' Legislative Priorities for the 2023 Session

1. Extend Property Tax Exemptions on primary residence and autos for disabled veterans
2. Support full KCVA Office budget request
3. Provide sales tax exemption for veterans rated 100% disabled for purchases up to \$25K
4. Exempt currently serving military pay from Kansas Income Tax
5. Provide family caregivers of disabled veterans a tax credit
6. Design planned northeast Kansas skilled nursing facility for expansion beyond 72 beds
7. Expand veterans treatment courts, especially in rural regions
8. Permit permanent hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans

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Surviving Spouse Information *(by Roy Yenchesky)*

Put a star on your calendars for the 26 March MOAA Chapter brunch. We will have a guest speaker from National MOAA. Gail Joyce will speak to us about Surviving Spouse issues. Gail is a member of the National MOAA Board of Directors, Chair of the MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, and Vice President of the MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter.

I have had the privilege of hearing Gail speak on several occasions. She is a very engaging speaker and has a compelling personal story on being a surviving spouse. She is also a dynamic resource for information on survivor benefits and ongoing initiatives for surviving spouses. Her focus is on issues that are important surviving spouses. Her messages are not just intended for retirees, but active duty, reserve and guard as well.

Please think of questions that you have about benefits, initiatives, etc., that I can present to Gail prior to her arrival in Wichita so she can have the opportunity to address specific concerns you may have. Send your questions to me at: wichitaroy@hotmail.com. Thank you in advance for your input. It will make her visit that much more meaningful. This will also be a great opportunity to invite friends and associates you have that are surviving spouses, or officers that want to ensure their loved ones are provided every resource available. Remember: "Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence, courage, and peace of mind."

Hidden Costs of the TRICARE Pharmacy Cuts

(By MOAA Staff) With about 13,000 community pharmacies removed from the TRICARE Retail Pharmacy network, and thousands more leaving after the departure of a nationwide grocery chain, about 400,000 beneficiaries must find a new location to fill their prescriptions if they want to receive the full value of their earned benefit.

And while DoD officials claim the program will "meet or exceed" access-to-care standards after the reduction in community care and the departure of 2,200 Kroger locations, some of the beneficiaries affected would take significant issue with that claim.

MOAA has heard from hundreds of these individuals, with complaints ranging from longer drives to availability concerns to significant financial burden caused by a pharmacy's departure from the network. This is an acute problem for long-term care (LTC) residents, many of whom don't have an option to switch drug providers if their LTC facility contracts with a local pharmacy.

MOAA has met with both Express Scripts (ESI) and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to give them an opportunity to address our concerns. Express Scripts has now given independent pharmacies the opportunity to rejoin, but it is unclear whether the contract terms will be modified with more favorable reimbursements.

Grassroots efforts will be critical in reversing this pharmacy cut. Please watch the weekly MOAA Newsletter for additional calls to action, and keep up with the latest on this and other issues at MOAA Advocacy News page. We hope you will also continue your individual outreach to your elected officials – hearing directly from constituents really does make a difference.

Upcoming Speakers for Chapter Business Meetings

26 March – Virginia “Gail” Joyce, MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Council

30 April – Joe Stumpe, Author & Editor of *The Active Age*

28 May – Tony Mattivi, new Kansas Bureau of Investigation Director

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