

## New VA Support Line Provides Important Assistance to Caregivers Benefits and Support Information a Phone Call Away

WASHINGTON (Feb. 8, 2011)- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is increasing its support to caregivers with a new, toll-free telephone line for the caregivers of Veterans of all eras.

"The families and loved ones who care for severely injured Veterans deserve the highest level of support," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "At VA, we consider them important partners in our efforts to care for and rehabilitate our nation's heroes."

The National Caregiver Support Line -- 1-855-260-3274 -- will serve as the primary resource and referral center to assist caregivers, Veterans and others seeking caregiver information.

The line unofficially started Feb. 1, and in its first week logged nearly 600 calls, including 134 referrals to local VA caregiver support coordinators and 233 calls from caregivers themselves.

"VA has been providing support for the caregivers of Veterans for more than seven decades," Shinseki added. "We already have more than two dozen successful programs, policies and services that support the caregivers of Veterans of all ages."

The support line will provide information regarding new caregiver benefits, referrals to local caregiver support coordinators as well as emotional support to those concerned with their ability to provide care to loved ones who are Veterans.

The National Caregiver Support Line will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Eastern time; and Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Eastern time. Licensed VA social workers and health technicians will staff the support line.

Local caregiver support coordinators are available to assist Veterans and their caregivers to understand and apply for VA's many caregiver benefits. VA also features a Web page, [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) <<http://www.caregiver.va.gov>> , with general information on other caregiver support programs available through VA and the community.

Access to the National Caregiver Support Line was also identified as a significant need in a November 2010 study on caregivers of Veterans published by the National Alliance for Caregiving.

For an opportunity to get to know a few of today's remarkable caregivers of Veterans, go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/veteranshealthadmin#p/u/0/XRmAwZHRYFE> or look at it on the Department Auxiliary Website Home page.