DAV Applauds VA Caregiver Expansion Proposal

DAV is very pleased that the VA is proposing to expand access to its caregiver support program by redefining eligibility to include all service connected veterans whose serious disabilities are caused by illnesses, rather than just injuries—a policy change we have advocated for a decade.

Far too many seriously disabled veterans and their family caregivers have been ineligible for this life-changing program due to a misinterpretation of the original caregiver law a decade ago. For example, DAV Past National Commander Dave Riley, a Coast Guard rescue swimmer, lost all four limbs to a bacterial infection in 1997, yet he and his wife Yvonne would not able to receive comprehensive caregiver supports simply because his disability was caused by illness, not injury.

This regulation would finally remove any uncertainty and make them—and many others like them—eligible for this critical support. This change would also impact veterans covered by presumptive conditions based on toxic and environmental exposures, such as Agent Orange.

The full caregiver regulatory package announced by the VA today contains a number of other significant changes and we are continuing to evaluate how it will affect disabled veterans and family caregivers. However, we want to thank...
Secretary Wilkie and VHA's Executive in Charge Dr. Stone for taking this important step to correct a longstanding injustice for those who suffer from serious service-connected illnesses, and of course, for those who have dedicated so much of their lives to care for them.