

*La Plata County Veterans Services*  
*By: Richard S Schleeter*

DECEMBER 6, 2015

The main objective of the Veterans Service Office is to provide prevention, protection, advocacy and support services to veterans and their families so they can maximize their quality of life, well-being and potential. The La Plata County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) provides information and assistance to veterans and their families. There is a wide range of benefits available for our nation's veterans. Every veteran is encouraged to contact the CVSO to find out more about their VA benefits. Your CVSO can assist you in any matter pertaining to the Department of Veterans Affairs. These services are free of charge. Please visit the La Plata County web site at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/> for more information about what the La Plata County Veterans Service Office can do for you.

The La Plata County Veterans Service Office is co-located with the Durango VA Clinic at 1970 E. 3rd Avenue, Suite 102, Durango, CO. 81301. For clinic appointments, call 970-247-2214. The Veterans Service Office phone number is 970-759-0117. Office hours are 8am to 12pm and 1pm to 5 pm, Monday – Friday, except holidays, and appointments are encouraged. Call (970) 382-6150 to schedule an appointment with the Veterans Service Office

**Birth Defects in Children of Female Vietnam Veterans**

Veterans Affairs (VA) presumes that certain birth defects in the biological children of female Vietnam Veterans were caused by military service when the birth mother served in Vietnam between February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975. Eligible children may receive VA benefits. Birth defects covered by VA are abnormalities present at birth that result in mental or physical disabilities. VA recognizes a wide range of birth defects as associated with women Veterans' service in Vietnam.

These diseases are not tied to herbicides, including Agent Orange, or dioxin exposure, but rather to the birth mother's service in Vietnam. Covered birth defects include, but are not limited to, the following conditions: Achondroplasia, Cleft lip and cleft palate, Congenital heart disease, Congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot), Esophageal and intestinal atresia, Hallerman-Streiff syndrome, Hip dysplasia, Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon), Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis, Hypospadias, Imperforate anus, Neural tube defects, Poland syndrome, Pyloric stenosis, Syndactyly (fused digits), Tracheoesophageal fistula, Undescended testicle, and Williams syndrome. Conditions due to family disorders, birth-related injuries, or fetal or neonatal infirmities with well-established causes are not covered.

If any of the birth defects listed above are determined to be a family disorder in a particular family, they are not covered birth defects. Children with covered birth defects, who meet the following requirements, may be eligible for VA compensation, health care, and vocational training. The children must be biological children of a female Vietnam Veteran who served in Vietnam during the period beginning February 28, 1961 and ending on May 7, 1975. The children were conceived after the date on which the Veteran first entered the Republic of Vietnam. The children have a covered birth defect, which resulted in a permanent physical or mental disability.

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To learn more about benefits for children with birth defects and how to apply- See more at: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth-defects/children-women-vietnam-vets.asp#sthash.qtAbaLqJ.dpuf>. You may also contact your local La Plata County Veterans Service Officer by calling (970) 759-0117.