

Concussion in Alaska: Support for Veterans

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a growing concern among veterans, with long-term effects that can impact daily life. Alaska has the highest per-capita veteran population and one of the highest TBI rates. Symptoms may include changes in thinking, mood, daily function, physical abilities, or sleep, and may not appear right away. TBIs can also contribute to longer-term cognitive and mental health challenges.

Recognizing symptoms and seeking care early is important. This guide explains how to access medical and mental health support through the VA in Alaska.

You Are Not Alone

If you or someone you love has suffered a brain injury during or after military service, it can feel overwhelming. But you're not in this alone. Many veterans have walked this road before and found help, healing, and hope.

How to Enroll and Access VA Health Care

1

Enroll in VA Health Care:

[VA.gov/health-care/how-to-apply](https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply) or call: 877-222-8387

2

Register at a VA Alaska clinic:

[VA.gov/alaska-health-care/register-for-care](https://www.va.gov/alaska-health-care/register-for-care)

3

Schedule a TBI evaluation:

[VA.gov/alaska-health-care/make-an-appointment](https://www.va.gov/alaska-health-care/make-an-appointment)

These steps must be completed in this order to schedule an appointment.

Documenting a Previous TBI Through the VA

Starting a TBI claim with the VA begins with reviewing your service treatment records (STRs) and identifying any in-service events that may have caused a brain injury, such as exposure to blasts, falls, or head trauma, even if you were never formally diagnosed at the time. This process can be complex and overwhelming, especially when records are incomplete or symptoms appear years later.

If you encounter roadblocks, there are resources for guidance, advocacy, and assistance with paperwork:

- [Veteran Service Officers \(VSOs\)](#)
- [VA Polytrauma System of Care](#)
- [Local VA Locations](#)
- [Disabled American Veterans \(DAV\)](#)
- [American Legion](#)

Overcoming Barriers to Care

Access to care is often limited by geography and weather, making it harder to find nearby specialists. In such cases, telehealth and online resources can be crucial first steps. Discuss these options with your provider. For veterans, Community Care may be available if local VA options are limited.

Travel reimbursement via VA's Beneficiary Travel or Medical Travel program is offered to eligible veterans and caregivers to help cover mileage, special transport, or a taxi to approved appointments.

TBIs can also impact mood and social interaction, which may lead to isolation, especially when communities are far apart. Staying connected through virtual or occasional in-person visits can improve emotional health and support recovery.

Additional Resource for Caregivers and Families

For caregivers of veterans enrolled in VA healthcare, Alaska VA has a comprehensive Caregiver Support Program. [The VA Caregiver Support Program](#) (CSP) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered veterans enrolled in the VA care system. It provides services and support to caregivers of veterans with TBI of all eras.

Support & Resources

[Alaska VA Health Care Services](#)

Schedule an appointment, speak with a nurse,
or meet virtually with a medical provider: 833-983-0486

[Concussion Legacy Foundation \(CLF\) HelpLine Alaska](#)

Resource facilitation and peer support: CLFHelpLineAK.org

[National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Alaska](#)

Mental health support, peer support, resources and education: info@namialaska.org

[Love Your Brain](#)

Yoga, mindfulness, and education programs for veterans. info@loveyourbrain.com

[Veteran Health Library](#)

VA-reviewed health education & resources for veterans & caregivers.

[Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence](#)

VA/DoD-reviewed fact sheets, guides, and tools focused on understanding, managing, and recovering from TBI.

[Face The Fight](#)

Crisis support, peer networks, training, treatment access, transition tools, and family support services for veterans.

[Wounded Warrior Project](#)

Provides support and resources to post-9/11 veterans, their families, and caregivers. Call 904-405-1213 to get connected.

If you or a loved one is in crisis or need someone to talk to, call or text Veterans Crisis Line by dialing 988, then press 1. Support is free and available 24/7.