

The Gratiot County Department of Veterans Affairs is pleased to announce that "Remote Operations" have been established. We are "open" for service to our Veterans and family members.

Those Veterans who previously had an appointment can rest assured that their claims work is being accomplished "Remotely". Our Remote Operations are both "technologically secure" and "safe" for our clients and Veterans Service Officers (VSO). The Veterans Service Officer (VSO) responsible for that claim will be in contact with the Veteran/Client (telephonically, by email, or via USPS) if additional information is needed. When the work is complete, the completed forms will be sent to the Veterans via USPS for signature. Upon return (via USPS), the forms will be submitted to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for processing and adjudication.

Veterans and family members who did not previously have an appointment scheduled can call (875-5258) or email (veterans@gratiotmi.com) to schedule a "remote appointment" with a VSO. New claims or Appeals will be established and accomplished through remote means. If a Veteran or family member is filing a new claim, the "Best Practice" at this time is to call the United States Department of Veterans Affairs directly (1-800-827-1000) and tell them "I want to file an Intent to File." This will protect the earliest possible effective date for benefits. Otherwise, the Gratiot County VSO will assist in filing the Intent to File along with the remaining forms.

Veterans can also establish an "eBenefits" account (www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage) to file an "Intent to File" as well as performing a wide variety of other functions that can be accomplished through this Web based platform.

Veterans Director Rodolfo R. Diaz-Pons says, "We look forward to the day when we can once again see our Veterans and family members in person at our Courthouse Office. But until then we want everyone to be safe during this Public Health Emergency. Please know that claims work is still being done, just remotely. The process is slower, it will take longer for the claims to be completed, but the Benefits will be the same when the process is over since the "effective date" for benefits will be when the Intent to File was processed by the VA. As such, don't delay filing new claims, we are open for Remote Operations."

Authorized for Release by Rodolfo R. Diaz-Pons, Director, Gratiot County Department of Veterans Affairs