



For Immediate Release:  
Friday, Oct. 15, 2021

Military-Veterans Advocacy (MVA), a Louisiana-based veterans advocacy organization, is urging the Department of Veterans Affairs to do more to help our veterans overseas receive doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

While veterans in the Philippines have been able to access the vaccine at the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic, veterans in many other countries have not had the same access to the vaccine. Some countries are refusing to provide doses to non-citizens and other countries simply do not have enough doses.

Congress passed the SAVE LIVES Act in March 2021, giving the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the authority to furnish a vaccine for COVID-19 to military veterans, their spouses, their dependents, and their caregivers. The legislation also gives authority to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to “adjust the allocation for the Department of Veterans Affairs for the vaccine for COVID-19 based on the additional eligibility of covered individuals.” Despite this, many military veterans living overseas are still struggling to find access to the vaccine.

MVA wants the VA to follow through with the authority granted to them by Congress through the SAVE LIVES Act and provide military veterans overseas, as well as their families and caregivers, with easier access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

MVA sent a letter to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis McDonough requesting that the VA “enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Defense to provide the vaccine at military facilities.” In the same letter, MVA asked the VA to “enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of State to provide vaccines at consulate facilities when there is no DOD medical center nearby.”

In response to MVA’s letter, the VA claimed to not have the authority to furnish hospital and medical services to veterans living or traveling abroad even with the passing of the SAVE LIVES Act, but did not have a response to our requests for Memorandums of

Agreement.

With an estimated 20 percent of American expatriates being military veterans and the SAVES LIVES Act putting the burden of furnishing COVID-19 vaccines to veterans on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, there is definitely more that can and should be done.

“We frankly don't give a damn on how they do it,” said Cmdr. John B. Wells, USN (ret.), MVA Chairman of the Board. “The VA needs to stop talking about this and start acting.”

For more information on Military-Veterans Advocacy go to [www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org](http://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org)

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