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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA to Take Applications for New Caregiver Program *New Program enhances VA services for Family Caregivers*

May 4, 2011– On Tuesday, staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published the interim final rule for implementing the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act 2010. This new rule will provide additional support to eligible post-9/11 Veterans who elect to receive their care in a home setting from a primary Family Caregiver.

"Family Caregivers are encouraged to apply for this assistance to get all support services available for the family unit," said William F. Feeley, medical center director. "The new program builds on the foundation of Caregiver support now provided at VA and reflects what families and clinicians have long known; that Family Caregivers in a home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Veterans under VA care."

Additional services for primary Family Caregivers of eligible post-9/11 Veterans and Service members include a stipend, mental health services, and access to health care insurance, if they are not

already entitled to care or services under a health care plan. Comprehensive Caregiver training and medical support are other key components of this program.

Veterans and their Family Caregivers can apply for the new services starting May 9 at www.caregiver.va.gov. Mary Skibinski, VA Western New York Healthcare System Caregiver Support Coordinator is also available to assist with the application process and direct Veterans and their Family Caregivers to more than two dozen other programs VA offers Family Caregivers for support.

“These services will enhance quality of life for Veterans while providing training, respite and support for the Caregiver.”

Assistance and information on additional resources are also available to Family Caregivers through VA’s National Caregiver Support Line, 1-877-222-VETS (8387). Veterans and Caregivers with questions about the new program can contact Skibinski at 716-862-8541.