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Thomas Whiddon, SMSgt, MA Air National Guard,  
and Amy Whiddon with Ashleigh, Austin, and Alyssa



# summer calendar

## JUNE



June is PTSD Awareness Month

14

Happy Birthday U.S. Army!  
Flag Day

20

Summer begins

21

Father's Day

## JULY

4

Independence Day

30

Eid al-Adha (est.)

## AUGUST

4

Happy Birthday U.S. Coast Guard!

10

Victory Day (Rhode Island)

## SEPTEMBER



September is Suicide Prevention Month

7

Labor Day

11

Patriot Day

18

Happy Birthday U.S. Air Force!  
Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown

22

Autumn begins

27

Yom Kippur begins at sundown

### FITNESS



**PAGE 7** Using online workouts to stay fit • An equipment checklist for online workouts

### WELLNESS



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### COMMUNITY



**PAGE 2** Improving, adapting, and overcoming during a global pandemic: a message from Gail Schlesinger **PAGE 4** Mark Wasnock, SCPO, USN (Ret.) reflects on fishing, family, and his Navy career

US Family Health Plan members choose from a network of over 2,000 civilian primary care providers and thousands of specialists, plus a large network of civilian hospitals.

## Who We Are

US Family Health Plan of Southern New England is a Department of Defense TRICARE Prime option, and one of six regional US Family Health Plan programs across the nation. Our large network of civilian doctors, hospitals, and other health providers serves Plan members who live in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and parts of southern New Hampshire and northern Connecticut.

We pride ourselves on friendly, personal service. If you have questions, call us at **1.800.818.8589**. You can also get to know us better at [usfamilyhealth.org](https://www.usfamilyhealth.org) or at [facebook.com/USFHP.SouthernNewEngland](https://www.facebook.com/USFHP.SouthernNewEngland).



a message from Gail Schlesinger,  
our Senior Vice President and Plan CEO



Please know that  
US Family Health Plan  
is always here for you.

## Improvising, Adapting, Overcoming

In the spring issue of U, I mentioned that back in 1995 I couldn't have imagined still being part of this great organization in 2020. In the same way, as I wrote that article — only three months ago — I couldn't have fathomed that I would be penning my next message in the midst of a global pandemic.

I hope that by the time this magazine reaches your homes, the virus is leveling off and we are inching back to "normal." But I want to acknowledge the profound effect that the pandemic has had on all our lives — from financial concerns, to juggling how to homeschool children while working from home, to worrying about loved ones we cannot visit, to ensuring we are social distancing.

In early April, I spoke with Dave Mendoza, one of our sales representatives and a U.S. Air Force retiree. He said that he had been talking with some of his military buddies about quarantining and they all were thinking the same thing: that this was nothing in comparison to deployments many of them had experienced — with limited access to showering and clean clothes, endless MREs, and little contact with family.

I don't mean to minimize that this is a deadly adversary we are fighting, but what Dave said was a great reminder to me to look at the positive of what we have instead of dwelling on the limitations that we're living with. We have food in our stores, books to read, and TV shows to watch. We can go out for walks, and we can

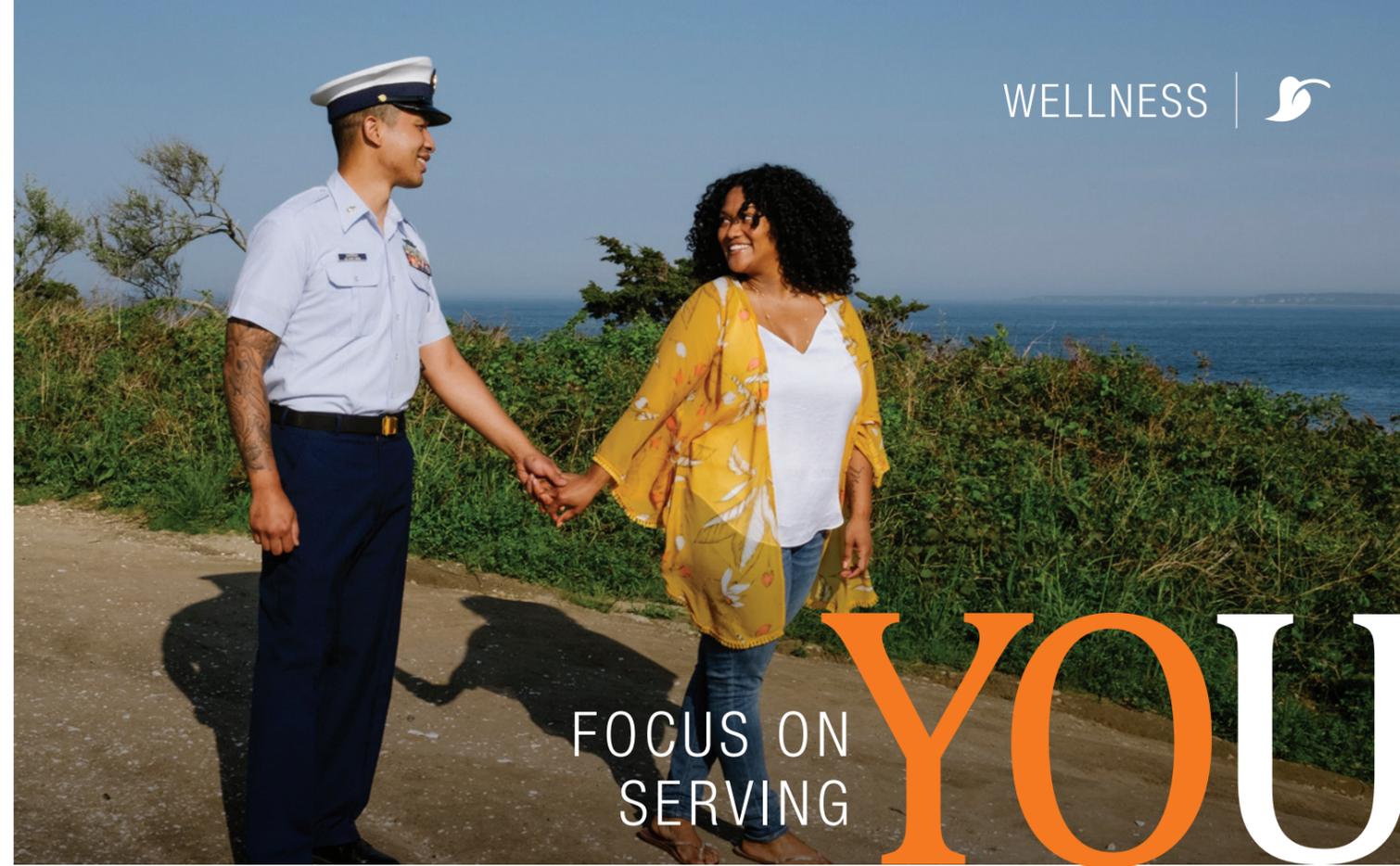
FaceTime with family. Some of us are using this at-home time to slow down a bit and connect with old friends.

Dave's comment also made me realize that no one is better equipped to deal with this than you, our beneficiaries. You have all sacrificed and faced adversity during your military careers. You have proven over and over how resilient you are. To put it the way the U.S. Marine Corps does — you know how to improvise, adapt, and overcome.

Please know that US Family Health Plan is always here for you. Together with our business partner, Tufts Health Plan, we are constantly monitoring and improving how we support and serve you.

Most of the employees at both of our organizations have transitioned to working remotely, as have so many employees at organizations across the country. I was amazed at how quickly and seamlessly we made this adjustment, which has had little to no impact on our ability to answer your questions or your ability to get care when you need it. Our phone lines are staffed, our care management teams are here to assist you and our providers, and our pharmacy continues to provide your medications. This is a tribute to all those involved.

On a final note, I would be remiss not to recognize that some of you may have lost someone you loved to this terrible virus. If you are experiencing such a loss, please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. ■



## Health Care by Phone or Video

Covid-19 and social distancing have brought some changes to the ways our members can access health care. Many in-network primary care providers are offering telephone or video consultations, also known as "telehealth" services. We urge you to explore this option with your PCP.

### Telehealth from Teladoc®

For an urgent, non-emergency health concern outside of your doctor's usual business hours, you may use Teladoc virtual health care to supplement your usual in-network care. You may also use Teladoc during ordinary business hours if your doctor doesn't provide telehealth services.

With Teladoc, you can talk with a licensed medical doctor by web, through an app, or by phone. Teladoc is available:

- At no extra cost
- Without a referral
- For urgent (but not emergency) medical concerns — for example, a rash, urinary tract infection, or sinus problems
- For behavioral concerns — for example, anxiety
- To US Family Health Plan members, including children (behavioral health is only for ages 18 and up)

Learn more about Teladoc, including how to register, at [usfamilyhealth.org](https://www.usfamilyhealth.org). If you have questions about Teladoc, call **1.800.835.2362**. We plan to offer this service at least through December 31, 2020.

### 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line

Our 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line at **1.866.767.4546** is also available to members to answer basic health questions (Does my cut need stitches? Should I worry about this rash?). Registered nurses are available to talk with you by phone every day, at any time of the day or night.

### ID Card Extensions

The Defense Health Agency has announced that most Uniformed Services ID cards that expire after January 1, 2020 will remain valid until September 30, 2020. Please call **1.800.818.8589** if you have questions about DEERS.



## Meet US Family Health Plan members Mark Wasnock, SCPO, USN (Ret.), Marie Wasnock, and Mia Wasnock

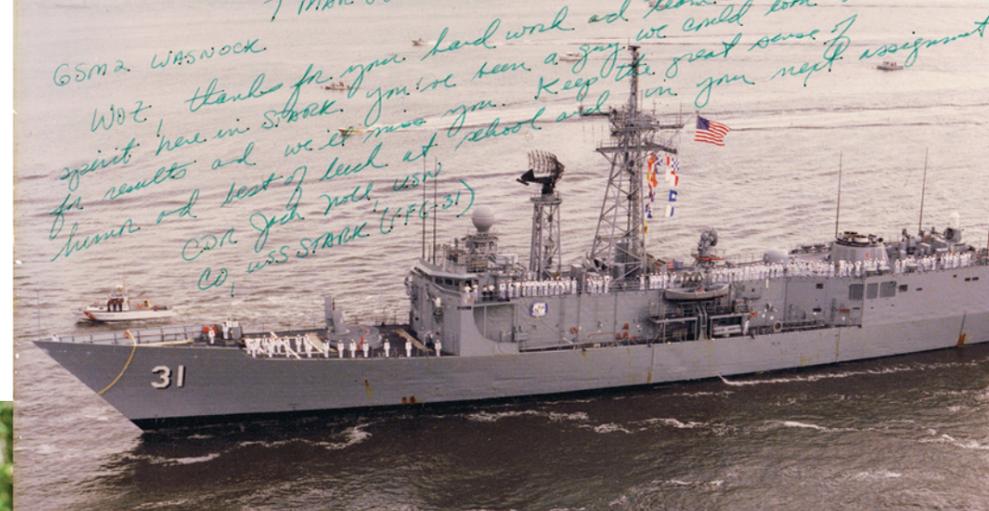
Mark Wasnock, SCPO, USN (Ret.), credits his two decades in the Navy with giving him an invaluable skill that has transferred to his civilian career. “I learned,” he says, “about diversity. About diversity of people with different backgrounds — from exposure to all kinds of people, from managing them on the ship. Diversity of how they think, react, respond, and communicate. They can be a lot different from the people in the world you grew up in.”

The world Wasnock grew up in was Rochester, New York. As a kid and teenager, he loved camping and the out-of-doors, and especially fishing. He fished in Lake Ontario and the Finger Lakes for bullhead, perch, trout, and bass. That love of fishing, boats, and the water led him to enlist in the Navy under a program that allowed him to complete his senior year of high school before heading to boot camp in the fall of 1985. “Also,” he says, “I was looking for girls.”

The Navy’s vocational testing identified Wasnock’s engineering strengths, and set him on his path as a power-plant operator and

mechanic. An early posting, to the USS *Stark* out of Naval Station Mayport in Jacksonville, Florida, proved to be an extremely tough one. He was on board on May 17, 1987, when an Iraqi jet fired two missiles at the ship. Thirty-seven Navy personnel were killed as a result of the attack, and twenty-one were injured; others received physical and emotional injuries during the efforts to save the ship.

Wasnock continued to serve on the *Stark* as part of the repair effort into 1988. He attends reunions for the ship’s crew, responders, and family members of those who didn’t survive the attack.



Above: (Top) The USS *Stark*. (Middle) Graduating as a Gas Turbine Systems Technician, Mechanical C School, 1992. (Bottom left) Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton and Mark. (Bottom right) A family outing.

During the rest of his 20-year Navy career, Mark honed his engineering, mentoring, and management skills. He received advanced power-plant training and traveled the world, serving on the USS *Bunker Hill*, USS *Ingersoll*, USS *Chosin*, and USS *Lake Erie*. He completed his Navy career as an engineering inspector and ship’s trainer at Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific.

During a decade in Hawaii, Wasnock met Marie, and they married in 2002. When Mark retired from the Navy in 2005, Marie chose Massachusetts as the place she wanted to launch her career in library science. They made the move and enrolled in US Family Health Plan. Four years later, Mark became our sales representative for Hanscom Air Force Base and northeastern Massachusetts.

Today Marie works as the archivist for Emerson College in Boston. The couple has a daughter, Mia, who just turned six. “I’d still like to be out on a boat fishing,” says Mark, “but I’m trying to spend as much time as I can with Mia. We play hide-and-seek, basketball, and dolly stuff.”

Thank you, Mark and Marie, for your dedication to your country, your family, and to US Family Health Plan. We’re honored to have you as members. And we’re honored to have Mark working with us. ■



Charles Rollinger, MD, is our Vice President of Medical Management and Quality

## Telehealth for Behavioral Health

Since the last issue of this magazine, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world dramatically. Sudden changes like these create stress and uncertainty. In response, US Family Health Plan has made some changes in our benefits to help our members deal with this dramatic shift in our world. One change that we have adopted has been in the area of telemedicine.

Because of social distancing, behavioral health providers have been unable to see patients face-to-face. This change comes at a time when our members may also be unable to see their family members or to gather with friends. This puts additional stress on people who may already be suffering from anxiety, depression, or other conditions. With telemedicine, members can contact a behavioral health professional via an audio-visual program on a computer. If a member doesn't have a computer, a smartphone with a camera may be used.

### Telehealth through the US Family Health Plan provider network

Most mental-health professionals in the US Family Health Plan network can now have one-on-one meetings with this technology, even though they can't see members in person. Many of our medical providers are also able to schedule appointments with members for other health issues using this technology.

**With the feeling of isolation that comes from staying at home, it's important to reach out for help.**

### Telehealth through Teladoc®

In addition to our network providers, we have contracted with Teladoc, a company that specializes in telemedicine, to provide services to our members. This company provides both mental-health and medical professionals for video conferencing. If your network provider doesn't offer telemedicine, it would be appropriate to contact Teladoc for a consultation. Besides help for issues such as anxiety, they can help with medical conditions in a way that is similar to urgent care centers. You can find out more about using Teladoc on page 3.

### Self-Care

With the feeling of isolation that comes from staying at home, it's important to reach out for help through these types of tools. It's also important to take care of yourself in other ways.

Financial worries and other worries about the future can disturb our usual healthy routines. It's easy to put on weight when the gym isn't available and the refrigerator is in the next room. Please stay as physically active as you can, get enough sleep, and eat healthy foods.

There are many tools available on the internet for exercise classes. You can learn more about these tools on page 7. There are also apps available to help you to deal with stress and to relax, including Omvana (free), Breathe2Relax (free), and White Noise (\$1.99). If you're having difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep, the American Sleep Association at [sleepassociation.org](http://sleepassociation.org) provides comprehensive, practical advice.

By the time you read this article, I expect that the situation will have evolved, but US Family Health Plan will be here to help. ■

# No Excuses

## Free online workouts to help keep you fit

With less access to the out-of-doors, it can be hard to keep up your usual levels of physical activity. Fortunately, lots of organizations are stepping up and providing free online fitness programs for all ages and abilities. They're helpful for bad-weather days, too.



### What you'll need

You don't need anything expensive to participate in most online fitness programs, just:

- A computer with internet access (a tablet or large mobile phone can work, too)
- Comfortable sneaker-like shoes with laces and no-slip soles (slip-ons don't provide enough support)
- A loose, comfortable top and elastic-waist pants or shorts

For some workouts, you'll also need

- A sturdy chair
- An exercise or yoga mat

### Programs for all ages and activity levels

Dancing, balance exercise, strength-training, even yoga that you can do in an office chair — there's something for everyone online and much of it is free.

#### **ymca360.org**

Free on-demand workouts from the YMCA for all ages and activity levels. You'll find core conditioning, dance fitness, yoga with guided meditation, chair yoga, barre, and special workouts for older adults, kids, and teens.

#### **crossfit.com/at-home/workouts**

Crossfit's free at-home video workouts feature ordinary people working out with the simplest of equipment, including plastic jugs of water.

#### **eatsmartmovemoreva.org**

The University of Virginia offers a group of free workout videos, including workouts for warming up, core strength, high intensity interval training (HIIT), stretch-band workouts, and special workouts for new moms and moms-to-be.

#### **aarp.org** (enter "today's workout" into the search tool)

You don't need to be a member of the AARP to use these 10-minute workouts designed especially for older people. ■

# Are You Listening?



A conversation with someone who is curious about what you think and values what you say is a tonic. When your partner, colleague, or neighbor takes time to attend to your words — and resists checking their phone, interrupting, or finishing your sentences for you, the conversation can give you a lift that lasts all day.

Some experts think that email, texting, and a cultural shift that demands instant satisfaction have eroded our listening skills. Have you noticed how annoyed some people become when you leave them a voicemail message, even if it's only fifteen seconds long?

Fortunately, it's never too late to brush up on your listening skills. It just takes a little patience and self-awareness.

## How to listen better

These tips can help make sure that you're valuing others in a conversation, not just hearing their words.

### DO

- **Pause before you respond to someone.** The first thing on your mind may simply be something you've been saving up while the person talked. If you pause, you can truly reflect on what the person said, and think about what you're going to say before you say it.
- **Recognize when you're making "mental detours" when someone is speaking to you, and resist them.** Turn your phone face down, turn away from your computer, and look directly at the speaker.
- **Be open to opposing views.** Resist folding your arms or rolling your eyes. Stay calm. Be curious. You may ultimately disagree with the person, but you can learn from other perspectives.

### DON'T

- **Interrupt other people or finish their sentences** for them.
- **Look at your phone or computer, fidget, tap your foot, or look around** the room while someone is talking to you.
- **Nod to make it seem as though you're listening**, even though you're not.
- **Finish your comment with "Right?"** This cuts off any genuine response.

## Support instead of shift

It's likely that you know people who turn the conversation back to themselves when you ask them a question or make a remark. For example:

*Alyssa: My daughter got lost walking home from school yesterday. She was scared to death and so was I.*

*Jake: My daughter never gets lost. She must have inherited my great sense of direction.*

*Luis: My back is killing me. I wonder if I should get a different kind of office chair.*

*Sharon: I don't get back aches. It's probably because I do yoga.*

Jake and Sharon, who refocused the conversation on themselves, made what sociologist Charles Derber calls a "shift response." A shift response stops any kind of real discussion dead in its tracks.

Derber distinguishes the shift response from a "support response." A support response acknowledges what the other person has said and how that person feels. It is the springboard to real conversation.

If Jake had said to Alyssa, "I'm sorry, it's a terrible feeling when you don't know where your kids are," this would have been a support response. Alyssa would have felt valued and encouraged, and the two might have gone on to have a meaningful discussion.

If Sharon had said to Luis, "The right chair can make a difference. What if I help you adjust the height on yours?" a real conversation would have been launched.

If you find that you make shift responses (or if someone points out that you do), it's a good idea to take time to think before you respond to others, and try to reformulate what you might say. ■

**"The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."**

— H. D. Thoreau, *Life Without Principle*



# Dog Bites

## Teaching and protecting your child

Every year, at least 400,000 children in America receive medical care for a dog bite. Most of the bites happen while the child interacts with a familiar dog—like the family dog or a dog the family knows well. Fortunately, you can take steps to help keep your child safe.

- Never leave a small child alone with a dog, even with the family dog or a dog that you know. Any dog can bite.
- Don't let your child play aggressive games with a dog, such as tug-of-war or wrestling.
- Teach your child to ask a dog owner for permission before petting a dog.
- Make sure your child knows to stay away from a dog's face and tail.
- Teach your child to pet a dog gently, and to avoid eye contact, especially at first.
- Make sure your child knows not to bother a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Teach your child to move calmly and slowly around dogs. ■

Source: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

June is PTSD Awareness Month

## Combat Stress

Does someone you care about have symptoms?



Combat stress, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), can make your loved one hard to live with. When a combat veteran is anxious, quick to anger, has difficulty sleeping because of nightmares, or is triggered by certain sights and sounds, the entire family is affected.

If someone you care about has symptoms like these, these resources can help:

### National Center for PTSD

[ptsd.va.gov](https://www.ptsd.va.gov)

This U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website provides comprehensive information for veterans and family members, including recognizing symptoms and understanding treatments.

### Home Base

[homebase.org](https://www.homebase.org) 617.724.5202

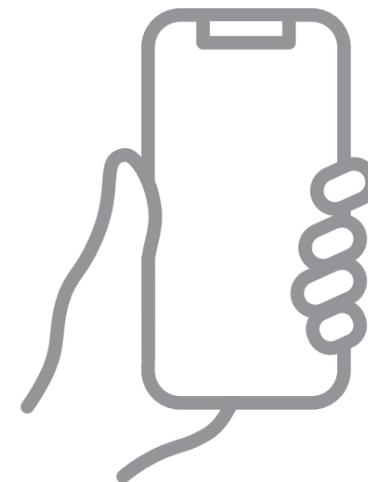
A partnership between the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, Home Base serves veterans from any conflict, regardless of ability to pay.

### US Family Health Plan

Members may self-refer to an authorized mental-health provider for the first eight outpatient visits in a Plan Year (January 1 through December 31). Call **1.800.208.9565** for a list of authorized network providers before you access services. ■

## COVID Coach

New to the VA's suite of PTSD apps



The VA's National Center for PTSD has created a free mobile app to support mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. It joins the center's group of apps for veterans, but it can be helpful to anyone. The app features:

- Tools to improve emotional well-being
- Trackers to check your mood and measure your growth toward personal goals
- Graphs to help you visualize progress over time ■



Find the download at [ptsd.va.gov](https://www.ptsd.va.gov)

(click on "Mobile Apps" in the left menu)

# Outside-Inside Picnic

## With a Clean-Out-the-Fridge Frittata

In the spirit of making do with what we have, this frittata helps use up bits of veggies, frozen or not, in a delicious way. Got some frozen okra? Chop it up and throw it in. Leftover black beans? They'll work too.



While you're at it, why not bring the outdoors inside, and set up a picnic in your living room? When you're done eating, stay in the mood with a game or two. Whether your tastes run to cribbage, solitaire, or Go Fish, go ahead and have some fun.

### 4 servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 4 cups of any chopped veggies (we used zucchini, broccoli, red pepper, carrots, and frozen peas)
- 1 teaspoon of any kind of herb, dried or fresh (we used oregano)
- salt and pepper
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup of grated parmesan

Put the olive oil in a medium skillet and cook the onion on medium heat for about 3 minutes. Add the vegetables, raise the heat a little, and cook until the vegetables are tender (about 6 minutes), stirring occasionally.

With a fork, beat the eggs and grated cheese together in a small bowl. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the vegetable mixture.

Turn the heat to low, and let the frittata cook without stirring it until the eggs have set (about 10 minutes). If you want to brown the top, put the pan under the broiler for about 2 minutes. Slice into wedges and serve.

### Switch it up

Add chopped ham, salami, chicken, or other cooked meat you may have in the fridge. If you don't have parmesan, use cheddar or feta.

Instead of cooking this on the stovetop, you can put the ingredients in a pie pan and bake the frittata in the oven at 375° for about 20 minutes, or until just firm. ■

*at ease*

I go to nature to be soothed and healed,  
and to have my senses put in order.

— John Burroughs





## A Tribute to Dad and to U

I'm working for US Family Health Plan because I want to pay back to the military, who changed my dad's life forever. My dad, who is 92, was 18 when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. A country boy, he was raised in a house without electricity or indoor plumbing, shooting squirrels on his way home from school to help feed the family. His prospects would have been limited if he hadn't enlisted.

The Marine Corps recognized his strengths and rewarded his work ethic. Dad served, went to college, and was called back in during the Korean War. After the war, he went to law school while he worked in a shoe store to support my mom, my sister, and me. He practiced law for over 35 years and contributed non-stop to the community. I have never known a more self-disciplined, hardworking person.

I know that I'm a beneficiary of my father's military service. The Marines lifted him from rural life and opened his world. He raised his children to work hard and to serve others, and I've been proud to carry on that tradition.

An especially happy Father's Day this year to my dad and to all military dads. Thank you for your example and your service.

What inspired you to make your career choice? Let me know at [Kerry.Tucker@usfamilyhealth.org](mailto:Kerry.Tucker@usfamilyhealth.org).

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