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National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission

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VA Exceeds 2012 Goal to Improve Online Access to Benefits Information

Expanding Functions Draw Millions of Monthly Visitors

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today that 1.67 million Veterans and Servicemembers have registered for the secure, joint VA-Department of Defense (DoD), self-service web portal, *eBenefits*, which provides online information and access to a wide variety of military and Veteran benefits resources.

“We know that 3 out of 4 Veterans who use VA services want to connect online, so we must to be there for them with the information they need,” said Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits. “*eBenefits* is clearly becoming the platform of choice for Veterans seeking access.”

The strong pace of registrations for the site since its launch in October 2009 has allowed VA to exceed its fiscal year 2012 agency priority goal of 1.65 million users, and puts it on track to meet the 2013 goal of 2.5 million users, as outlined for VA in Performance.gov.

Veterans and Servicemembers new to the Website www.ebenefits.va.gov are guided through the registration process to get a full-access account, called a premier account, which allows maximum ability to update personal information and learn about benefits without having to visit a VA facility. With the premier account, one password—called a single sign-on—allows Veterans to access multiple applications on the secure portion of the website.

A premier account also allows Veterans to check the status of compensation and pension claims that they have filed with VA. This feature, the most popular within the *eBenefits* application, had over 700,000 visits in June alone. Overall, visits to the site have increased 60 percent over the previous year, approaching 2 million per month.

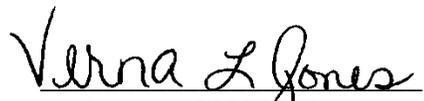
On July 1, VA introduced its 11th consecutive quarterly release of improved functionalities to the *eBenefits* application that includes benefits eligibility email messages to Servicemembers as they

reach career milestones and a new Career Center page with employment self-assessment tools, a resume builder, and a translator that relates military expertise to civilian work skills. The Career Center, which received over 8,000 visits in its first week, has single sign-on connectivity to VA's Veteran hiring site, "VA for Vets." Another key function added is a single sign-on capability for Veterans to transition securely between benefits information on *eBenefits* and health information on VA's *myHealtheVet* website without an additional log-on step.

VA has completed a record-breaking 1 million claims per year the last two fiscal years, and is on target to complete another 1 million claims in FY2012. Even so, too many Veterans have to wait too long to get the benefits they have earned and deserve. That is why VA is aggressively building a strong foundation for a paperless, digital disability claims system – a lasting solution that will transform how VA operates and eliminate the backlog. This plan will help VA achieve Secretary Shinseki's goal: claim completion in less than 125 days with 98 percent accuracy in 2015 – delivering faster, better decisions for Veterans.

With the most recent release, there are now 46 self-service features enabling Servicemembers and Veterans the ability to download copies of their official VA and military correspondence, including Veterans civil service preference, service verification, benefits verification letters, military records and VA home loan certificates of eligibility. Servicemembers and Veterans can also access records that directly impact their family members, like the Post-9/11 GI Bill enrollment status, VA payment history, and DoD TRICARE health insurance status.

The *eBenefits* application is a key component in VA's ongoing transformation to a digital environment for Veterans' benefits delivery. Additional functionality and features will continue to be added to the site throughout the coming months.


VERNA L. JONES, Director
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