

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 04/05/2024

Division Operations

Meetings:

- March 26: Director of VA&R met with the Director and staff from VE&E, North Carolina (NC) Adjutant, and the NC Department Service Officer to discuss service officer accreditation.
- March 27: Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims and Health Policy analyst attended the Veterans Benefits Administration's Survivor Summit to discuss the current status of the Veterans Affairs' Office of Survivors Assistance and upcoming legislation.
- April 4: Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims and Deputy Director for Health Policy participated in a training on Writing & Preparing Congressional Testimony provided by Georgetown University Government Affairs Institute.

The American Legion will be submitting a Statement for Record (SFR) to the House of Veterans Affairs Committee for the April 10th hearing on “Pending Legislation”.

Statement For Record

LEGISLATION	POSITION
Draft Legislation - Veterans Appeals Efficiency Act of 2024	Support
Draft Legislation - Medical Disability Examination Improvement Act of 2024	Support
Draft Legislation - Veterans Appeals Options Expansion Act of 2024	Support
H.R. 2911 - Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2023	Support
Draft Legislation - Prioritizing Veterans' Survivors Act	Support
Draft Legislation - Toxic Exposures Examination Improvement Act	Support
Draft Legislation - Clear Communication for Veterans Claims Act	Support
Draft Legislation - Veterans Claims Quality Improvement Act of 2024	Support

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- March 26: The Health Policy Team (HPT) attended the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) meeting to discuss updates with VA, community care tools, and the Idea lab.
- April 3: HPT attended the April Center for Women Veterans meeting at VA. This meeting had presenters from various women veteran partners/stakeholders. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
- April 4: HPT met with MindCo Health to discuss how their approach and product can improve the mental health of veterans using Virtual Reality Mindfulness Exposure Therapy (VR-MET).
- April 4: HPT met with the Toxic Exposure in the American Military coalition subcommittee on Veteran Health.

Benefits Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- March 21: Benefits Policy Team (BPT) monitored the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) full committee hearing on the “TEF Improvement Act of 2024.”
- March 26: BPT met virtually with the Majority staff of the Subcommittee of Disability Assistance & Mortuary Affairs (DAMA) of the HVAC regarding a package of eight draft bills scheduled for introduction in early April.
- March 28: BPT met virtually with other Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) concerning proposed legislation being introduced at the upcoming DAMA hearing on April 10.
- March 28: BPT met with B&M concerning American Legion Accreditation & Training School (ALAT) school matters, including upcoming DSO Symposium.
- April 1: BPT met virtually with VSOs on VBA Claims, Appeals, and Legislative concerns.
- April 2: Deputy Director of Benefits and Claims (DDBC) and BPT virtually met with VA Albuquerque Regional Office concerning upcoming ROAR visit in May.
- April 2: DDBC and BPT virtually met with VA Phoenix Regional Office to discuss details of the ROAR visit to Phoenix.

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications received from TAL Departments 14
- Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office 14
- Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel 9

The American Legion Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) Unit

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days) 1
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared 107
- Memos generated 4
- Phone inquiries 182
- Internal quality reviews 7
- Individual training 5.5 hours
- Team training 0 hours
- Hearings 0
- Board dispositions 148
 - o Appeals granted 48 (32.4%)
 - o Remanded 72 (48.6%)
 - o Denied 21 (14.2%)
 - o Other 7 (4.7%)
- Largest award won for veteran \$176,668

Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist

- Compensation & Pension Claims 26
- Other Issues 1
- Contacts 27

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims 19
- Supporting Submissions 26
- Sensitive Claims 4
- Rating Reviews/Audits 79
- Contacts 131
- Debt Notices Received 205
- Insurance Questions 0
- Waivers Granted 3
- Pension Notification Letters Processed 192
- Largest debt waived for veteran \$189,421

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Director

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End of VA&R weekly update – 04/05/2024