

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 04/26/2024

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- April 22-26: Health Policy Team (HPT) met with various programs from the Carl T. Hayden Veterans' Administration Medical Center to identify challenges and best practices in advance of the System Worth Saving site visit in Phoenix, Arizona.
- April 22: HPT met National Nurses United to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Employee Fairness Act of 2024 and challenges that VA nurses face related to patient care.
- April 23: HPT met with the Veterans Affairs Physician Assistant Association to discuss the resolution process and barriers to hiring, providing residency programs, and increasing scholarships for Physician Assistants in the VA.
- April 24: The HPT attended the White House Wounded Warrior Soldier Ride Kick-Off Event. This event featured adapted bicycles made for disabled veterans who will participate in a 3-day cycling event throughout the country.
- April 26: HPT met with the VA Innovation team to discuss the Uber Health Initiative and inclusion in the American Legion magazine and/or digital media platforms.
- April 26: HPT met with Patriot PAWS to discuss service dogs for veterans and potential attendance as an exhibitor at the National Convention in August.

Legislative Bill Reviews/Letters of Support:

- **H.R. XXXX – SERVICE Act**
 - To authorize the Attorney General to make grants for the creation and operation of veterans response teams within law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 59: Establish Green Alert System Interagency Group or Committee for Veterans in Crisis | Digital Archive \(legion.org\)](#)
- [Resolution No. 145: Veterans Treatment Courts | Digital Archive \(legion.org\)](#)
- [Resolution No. 20: Suicide Prevention Program | Digital Archive \(legion.org\)](#)
- [Resolution No. 364: Department of Veterans Affairs to Develop Outreach and Peer to Peer Program for Rehabilitation | Digital Archive \(legion.org\)](#)

Benefits Policy Team Operations

Meetings

- April 19: Benefits Policy Team (BPT) participated in a conference call with the Star Act Working Group regarding the legislative status of the Richard Star Act.
- April 22: Deputy Director of Benefits & Claims (DDBC) and Benefit Policy Analyst participated in a conference call with the Albuquerque VA Regional Office staff in preparation for the upcoming ROAR visit.
- April 23: BPT along with the National Veterans Service Officers provided assistance with claims and benefits to attendees at the virtual Military Hire Job Fair jointly sponsored by The American Legion.
- April 24: DDBC and BPT attended the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) Bar Association 7th Annual “VA Update” Program.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- H.R. 6023: Veteran Restitution and Justice Act of 2023 (Support with amendment)
 - To amend Section 1724 of Title 38, United States Code, to extend comprehensive medical coverage under the VA Foreign Medical Program (FMP) to include non-service-connected conditions for disabled veterans rated 100% Permanent & Total (P&T)
- H.R. 4016 – Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act (Support)
 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the repayment by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of benefits misused by a fiduciary

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications received from TAL Departments 30
- Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office 30
- Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel 28

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

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days) 2
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared 198
- Memos generated 3
- Phone inquiries 196
- Internal quality reviews 6
- Individual training 3 hours
- Team training 2 hours
- Hearings 2
- Board dispositions 157
 - o Appeals granted 54 (34.4%)
 - o Remanded 69 (43.9%)
 - o Denied 29 (18.5%)
 - o Other 5 (3.2%)
- Largest retroactive awards won for veteran \$136,523

Veterans Service Officers

- Compensation & Pension Claims 134
- Other Issues 2
- Contacts 136

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims 18
- Supporting Submissions 24
- Sensitive Claims 0
- Rating Reviews/Audits 72
- Contacts 88
- Debt Notices Received 202
- Insurance Questions 0
- Waivers Granted 12
- Pension Notification Letters Processed 0
- Largest debt waiver granted \$145,730

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End of VA&R weekly update – 04/26/2024