

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION
WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 05/10/2024

Division Operations

Meetings:

- May 8-9: Division Director attended the National Executive Committee (NEC) Spring Meeting at National Headquarters in Indianapolis, IN.

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- May 7: Health Policy Team (HPT) attended the monthly Veteran Service Organization (VSO) Health Care and Mental Health Suicide Prevention meeting hosted by Disabled American Veterans (DAV).
- May 8: HPT attended the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Treatment Innovation meeting discussing on the updates, concerns, and opportunities to provide feedback on the approval of midomafetamine (MDMA) by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA).
- May 8: HPT met with K9s For Warriors and discussed about their mission as a service dog organization and the potential attendance at the National Convention in August.
- May 9: HPT attended the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Coalition Subcommittee on veterans and Families.
- May 10: HPT met with Warrior Canine Connection for a continued discussions about service dog policy challenges, raising awareness with The American Legion, and potential attendance at National Convention.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- **S.4176 – Fiscal Year 2024 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act - Support**
 - To authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 6: Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Program](#)
- [Resolution No. 16: Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protections](#)
- [Resolution No. 136: Strategic Capital Investment Planning Program](#)
- [Resolution No. 360: Advance Appropriations for all of the Department of Veterans Affairs Discretionary Accounts](#)

Benefits Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- May 7: Deputy Director of Benefits & Claims (DDBC) participated Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Partnership meeting discussing the new discharge rule.
- May 7: DDBC and Legislative team attended a roundtable discussion House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) Chairman Rep. Morgan Luttrell (TX-08), Ranking Member Chris Pappas (NH-01), Rep. Eli Crane (AZ-02), Rep. Keith Self (TX-03) and subcommittee staff members to discuss VA notification letter issues.
- May 8: DDBC met with BVA Veterans Service Organization Liaison discussing the current backlog at the Board, and talked about solutions to reduce those backlogs.
- May 9: DDBC and Benefits Policy Team (BPT) met with Bergmann & Moore, LLC for updates on American Legion Accreditation & Training (ALAT) School, Appeals Team training, the upcoming site visit for DSO Symposium and the Nationwide Q2 American Legion Service Officer meeting featuring Undersecretary of VA, Hon. Josh Jacobs.
- May 9: BPT attended Military and Veterans Service Organization (MSO/VSO) STAR Act Workshop to discuss strategies of urging Congress to pass Major Richard Star Act as well as letter to the Congress.
- May 10: DDBC and Legislative Associate met with DAMA Staff Director to discuss VA Claims Accuracy Request (CAR) pilot program.

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications received from TAL Departments 17
- Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office 17
- Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel 16

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

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days) 1
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared 207
- Memos generated 6
- Phone inquiries 204
- Internal quality reviews 6
- Individual training 3 hours
- Team training 7 hours
- Hearings 2
- Board dispositions 135
 - o Appeals granted 35 (25.9%)
 - o Remanded 75 (55.6%)
 - o Denied 20 (14.8%)
 - o Other 5 (3.7%)
- Total retroactive awards won for veteran \$1,093,087

Veterans Service Officers

- Compensation & Pension Claims 42
- Other Issues 0
- Phone 20
- Emails 25

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims 28
- Supporting Submissions 31
- Sensitive Claims 6
- Rating Reviews/Audits 100
- Contacts 180
- Debt Notices Received 146
- Insurance Questions 0
- Waivers Granted 19
- Pension Notification Letters Processed 80
- Total debt waiver granted \$791,695

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Director

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

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End of VA&R weekly update – 05/10/2024