

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 06/07/2024

Division Operations

Meetings:

- June 4: Division Director met with Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Health and Innovative Learning (OHIL) to discuss strengthening the collaborative relationship between VHA and Veterans Service Organizations.
- June 4: Division Director and Veterans Program Manager met with the Department of Minnesota Department Service Officers to discuss correction and update to proposed resolution on memorial benefits for veterans.

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- June 3: The Health Policy Team (HPT) attended the Family, Caregivers, and Survivors Federal Advisory Meeting to learn about recommendations being made to the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding support services, eligibility, access to mental health services, and communication with providers about plans of care.
- June 4: HPT attended a meeting with Lindsay Livingston, Mathew Riley, Lori Murphey, and Melissa Tran from the VA Innovation team. This meeting discussed two new VA programs. Compassionate Contact Corps, a program designed to combat loneliness and the PERPARE program, a new perinatal program for veterans in the VA maternity care program.
- June 4: HPT attended a Veteran Service Organization (VSO) roundtable discussion on VA innovation programs hosted by Paralyzed Veterans of America.
- June 4 - 5: HPT Deputy Director of Health Policy (DDHP) attended the PACT Act EPMO Second Annual Offsite to discuss PACT Act innovations including the VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard and the creation of a Collective Veteran Authoritative Dataset (CVAD).
- June 5: HPT attended the Senate Committee hearing on Veterans Affairs (SVAC) Special Committee on Aging and Veterans' Affairs Committee: Heroes at Home: Improving Services for Veterans and their Caregivers which discussed challenges with caregiver programs/benefits, caregiver mental health services, and care for aging veterans at home and in the community.
- June 5: HPT attended a meeting with Vice Chairman Cohen regarding planning for the Albuquerque System Worth Saving (SWS) trip on June 24.
- June 6: HPT attended meeting with Rep. Lloyd Smucker LA Juliana Dauchess to discuss H.R. 6315 the VA Billing Accountability Act and the possibility of inserting the bill as an NDAA Amendment.
- June 6: HPT attended the VA Innovation Social Connection Workshop training. This workshop concentrates on social health as a key factor in a holistic approach to veteran health.

Benefit Policy Team Operations

Meetings

- June 4: Benefits Policy Team observed full House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Oversight Committee hearing entitled, “*Bonus Blunder: Examining VA’s Improper Decision to Award Senior Executives Million in Incentives.*”
- June 6: Deputy Director of Benefits & Claims (DDBC) along with Benefits Policy Team met with Bergmann & Moore, LLC to discuss the current status of American Legion Accreditation & Training School
- June 6: DDBC met with Bergmann & Moore, LLC to plan on the upcoming Department Service Officer (DSO) Symposium in October 2024.

Legislative Bill Reviews

- “H.R. xx - Coordinating Care for Senior Veterans and Wounded Warriors Act” *to require Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) to carry out a pilot program to coordinate, navigate, and manage care and benefits for veterans enrolled in both the Medicare program and annual enrollment of Veterans Health Administration (VHA).* – **Support.**
- “H.R. xx - VA Appeals Reform Act” *to amend title 38, USC, to improve the processes by which a veteran may appeal decisions affecting the provision of benefits under the laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA), and for other purposes.* – **No Position.**

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications received from TAL Departments	8
- Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office	8
- Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel	0

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

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days)	20
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared	196
- Memos generated	5
- Phone inquiries	216
- Internal quality reviews	8
- Individual training	2 hours
- Team training	0 hours
- Hearings	2
- Board dispositions	96
o Appeals granted	33 (34.4%)
o Remanded	42 (43.8%)
o Denied	17 (17.7%)
o Other	4 (4.2%)
- Total retroactive awards won for veterans	\$717,858

Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist

- Compensation & Pension Claims	19
- Other Issues	0
- Contacts	19

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims	22
- Supporting Submissions	3
- Sensitive Claims	4
- Rating Reviews/Audits	71
- Contacts	130
- Debt Notices Received	316
- Insurance Questions	7
- Waivers Granted	45
- Pension Notification Letters Processed	107
- Total debt waiver granted	\$771,097

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Director

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End of VA&R weekly update – 06/07/2024