

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 06/21/2024

Division Operations

Meetings:

- June 17: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) team met with National Adjutant Rodney Rolland to discuss the current state of The American Legion and ways in which to innovate the division.
- June 20: VA&R staff members attended an event celebrating the 80th anniversary of the passing of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the GI Bill.

Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations

Meetings:

- June 18: Health Policy Team (HPT) attended the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Coalition meeting with various Veteran Service Organizations (VSO). Discussed the new cancers on the presumptive list and Vietnam era herbicidal exposures removal for breast and renal cancers.
- June 18: HPT attended Optum Serve VSO/MSO Sharing Session.
- June 20: HPT met with the American Society of Anesthesiology (ASA) regarding support of H.R. 3347 – Lifesaving Anesthesia Care for Veterans Act of 2023. Discussed The American Legion resolutions, anesthesia care safety data, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policies.
- June 20: HPT attended a workshop by the VA Office of Healthcare Innovation on social isolation and how it affects health outcomes in veterans.
- June 20: HPT completed final confirmations for System Worth Savings trip to Raymond G. Murphy VAMC in New Mexico with VA, Vice-Chairman Cohen, and local Legionnaires.
- June 20: HPT completed travel arrangements for VA/DOD Suicide Prevention Conference in Portland, Oregon July 16-18.
- June 21: Met with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to discuss data on toxic exposures to United States soldiers deployed in the Vietnam War, specifically focused on burn pit exposure.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- **H.R. 8545 – Camp Lejeune Justice Corrections Act**
 - This bill addresses unforeseen consequences of the Camp Lejeune Justice Act by clarifying the right to jury trials, capping attorneys' fees, and expanding jurisdiction to alleviate the backlog of cases.

Position: **Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

- **Resolution No. 15: Oversight of Camp Lejeune Justice Act**

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 8

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

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days) 8
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared 200
- Memos generated 4
- Phone inquiries 151
- Internal quality reviews 3
- Individual training 0 hours
- Team training 14 hours
- Hearings 2
- Board dispositions 116
 - o Appeals granted 39 (33.6%)
 - o Remanded 55 (47.4%)
 - o Denied 16 (13.8%)
 - o Other 6 (5.2%)
- Retroactive awards won for veterans \$800,133

Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist

- Compensation & Pension Claims 111
- Other Issues 0
- Contacts 111

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims 24
- Supporting Submissions 31
- Sensitive Claims 5
- Rating Reviews/Audits 98
- Contacts 169
- Debt Notices Received 254
- Insurance Questions 17
- Waivers Granted 25
- Pension Notification Letters Processed 231
- Debt waiver granted \$553,125

Benefits Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- June 20: Benefits Policy Analyst attended the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Veterans Service Organization Meeting FY24 Q3. This meeting covered diverse topics. The two most notable were: (1) recent changes in Character of Discharge determination and (2) the VA Letters Working Group recent discussions. The working group continues to revise the language of VA letters and decisions. The workgroup scheduled a roundtable for June 27th to report the progress to the House Veterans Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA).
- June 19-21: Conducted a Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) site visit at the Fort Harrison, Montana, VA Regional Office.

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End of VA&R weekly update – 06/21/2024