

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 01/24/2025

Division Operations

Meetings:

- January 13: Division Director attended the Quality of Life Foundation and the Military Officers Association of America's Caregiver and Veteran Experience Roundtable discussion on the 119th Congress legislative caregiving priorities.
- January 14: Director attended the farewell function for VA Under Secretary for Benefits Joshua Jacobs.
- January 15: Director participated in a discussion regarding the VA Community Care Network (CCN) and related community care efforts with Third Party Administrators and community providers.
- January 15: Director attended the American Legion National Headquarters Briefing with the Department Adjutants.
- January 16-17: DC Office forced to close due to the Inauguration preparations prohibiting access to roads leading to office.
- January 20: Director attended the 2025 Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball hosted by the American Legion and the Veterans Inaugural Committee as a tribute to America's Medal of Honor recipients.
- January 21: Director virtually attended the nomination of the Honorable Douglas A. Collins to be the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- January 21: Director and Deputy Director for Health Policy (DDHP) previewed a demonstration of the CCN scheduling solution that is being developed by WellHive.
- January 22: Director virtually attended the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HVAC) subcommittee on Health Oversight Hearing titled, "[*Restoring Focus: Putting Veterans First in Community Care.*](#)"
- January 23: Director attended the Veterans Travel Program Quarterly Update.

Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations

Meetings:

- January 13: HPT, Division Director, and Legislative Associate attended Veterans Service Officer (VSO) roundtable on Military Caregivers.
- January 14: HPT virtually attended the Women Veterans VSO working group that discussed future committee breakdowns.
- January 14: HPT attended the House Veterans Affairs Committee majority VSO check in.
- January 15: HPT attended a VSO work group meeting on the VA Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers proposed rules.
- January 15: The HPT attended an in-person meeting with Maxim to discuss how the American Legion can assist with informing veterans about home health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- January 16: HPT attended a VSO work group meeting on the VA Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers proposed rules.
- January 20: HPT attended the Veterans Inaugural Ball – Salute to Heroes and assisted with VIP escorting throughout the event.
- January 21: DDHP held an introductory meeting to discuss WellHive, an external provider scheduling system designed to improve efficiency in community care network scheduling.
- January 21: HPT virtually attended the Senate Confirmation Hearing for Mr. Doug Collins as the next VA Secretary.
- January 21: HPT virtually attended the monthly TEAM Coalition where various incoming legislation was discussed.
- January 22: HPT attended a VSO work group meeting on the VA Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers proposed rules.
- January 23: HPT virtually attended the MST Subsequent Development Letter Review that will discuss MST development letters for VA disability claims.
- January 23: HPT met with the Veteran Mental Health Leadership Coalition, a veteran-led organization committed to ending the epidemic of veteran suicide through increased access to safe and affordable psychedelic-assisted therapy.
- January 23: HPT virtually attended the Future of VA Healthcare monthly working group held by the DAV where recent changes made by executive orders were discussed and how to address these changes.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- **H.R. X – H.R. 220 Veterans Infertility Treatment**
 - To direct the VA to provide coverage for infertility treatment and standard fertility preservation services.Position: **Support**
Supporting Resolutions:
 - [Resolution No. 162: In Vitro Fertilization](#)
 - [Resolution No. 16: Reproductive Assistance and Pregnancy Counseling](#)
- **H.R. X – Improving Menopause Care for Veterans Act**
 - To direct the comptroller of the US to conduct a study on menopause care furnished by the VA.Position: **Support with changes**
Supporting Resolutions:
 - [Resolution No. 147: Women Veterans](#)
- **H.R. X – Caring for Survivors Act**
 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes.Position: **Support**
Supporting Resolutions:
 - [Resolution No. 48: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for Surviving Spouses | Digital Archive](#)
- **H.R. X – ACCESS Act**
 - To improve the provision of care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposesPosition: **Support**
Supporting Resolutions:
 - [Resolution No. 14: Access to Care](#)
 - [Resolution No. 17: Continuum of Care and Mental Health Supports](#)
- **Letter of Support – HR 3649 Veterans National Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act introduced by Congressman Murphy (NC)**
Supporting Resolutions:
 - [Resolution No. 5: Emerging Therapies to Address Veteran Suicides](#)

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications Received from TAL Departments	26
- Certifications Submitted by TAL Washington Office	27
- Certifications Approved by VA's Office of General Counsel	21

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

- AMA Appeals Pending (125+ Days)	0
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) Prepared	404
- Memos Generated	7
- Phone Inquiries	228
- Internal Quality Reviews	3
- Individual Training	5 hours
- Team Training	15 hours
- Hearings	2
- Board Dispositions	83
o Appeals Granted	15 (18.1%)
o Remanded	45 (54.2%)
o Denied	18 (21.7%)
o Other	5 (6.0%)
Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans	\$1,721,023

National Veterans Service Office

- Phone Calls	143
- Emails	18
- Referrals	15
- Discharge Upgrades	2
- Written Correspondence	0
- Claims Submitted	21
- Evidence Submitted	0
- POA Submitted	10
- HLR Informal Conference Calls	3
- In-Person Conferences	2

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims	36
- Supporting Submissions	2
- Sensitive Claims	4
- Rating Reviews/Audits	238
- Contacts	379
- Debt Notices Received	349
- Insurance Questions	1
- Waivers Granted	56
- Hearings	0
- Misc Notification Letters Processed	55
- Debt Waiver Granted	\$843,377

Benefits Policy Team (BPT) Operations

Meetings:

- January 10: BPT attended the briefing on how VBA was getting in compliance with a recent Supreme Court Rudisell decision for veterans who had two eligible enlistment periods and elected the Montgomery GI Bill (MGBIB) v. post-911 GI Bill benefits.
- January 13: Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims (DDBC) met with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office Director in St. Paul, MN, as well as leadership from Pension Management Center and Debt Management Center, to discuss mutually concerned issues related to veterans and families.
- January 13: BPT had meeting with PVA representative to discuss policy and budget issues in preparation for 119th Congress.
- January 14: BPT attended roundtable with House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Disability Assistance & Memorial Affairs (DAMA) and other organizations to discuss 2nd amendment rights.
- January 16: DDBC met with VA Philadelphia Regional Office Director and leadership team and briefed with recent rule changes with the VA insurance policy.
- January 21: BPT monitored Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) nomination hearing for Secretary of VA nominee Doug Collins.
- January 21: DDBC attended a group meeting with Disabled American Veterans (DAV) national staff and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) staff to discuss unaccredited claims companies' issues.
- January 22: DDBC and Policy team had meeting with Stop Soldier Suicide, discussing potential partnership.
- January 23: DDBC and policy team met with VA San Juan Regional Office to discuss upcoming Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) trip in March 2025.

Projects:

- BPT is working on Post Service Officer resolution to redefine the role of accredited v. nonaccredited service officers and their limitations on how they can serve veterans.
- ROAR year-end report being peer reviewed.

Legislative Activities:

- Benefits & Claims drafted a Statement for Record (SFR) on behalf of Director Lyle addressing HAVC Chairman Bost's Second Amendment Bill. **The American Legion supports Chairman Bost's bill to protect Veterans' Second Amendment Rights.**

American Legion Accreditation & Training School:

- Informed all Department Adjutants, Commanders, and POCs for upcoming Service Officer 101 School and instructions on how to nominate candidates for course.

Cole Lyle

Director

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

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End of VA&R weekly update – 01/24/2025