

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 01/31/2025

Division Operations

Meetings:

- January 27: Division director attended Washington Conference planning meeting.
- January 28: Director attended the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Hearing titled, "[Protecting Veteran Choice: Examining VA's Community Care Program.](#)"
- January 28: Director reviewed and approved 4 bill reviews requested by members of Congress.
- January 29: Director prepared and presented a "Command Brief" to full VA&R Division to outline and set team expectations and goals for the year.
- January 29: Director attended Claims 101 training.

Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations

Meetings:

- January 27: HPT and Benefits Policy Team interviewed a veteran about her personal experiences with accessing community care and how it may be indicative of systemic issues.
- January 28: HPT attended a multi-Veteran Service Organization (VSO) roundtable discussion on proposed rules by the VA on the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.
- January 29: HPT virtually attended the VA's VSO Stakeholders Partnership Meeting to discuss the recently published 2024 suicide prevention report.
- January 30: HPT had a virtual meeting with Mr. Tony Cross (Be The One Program Manager) to discuss suicide prevention training.

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications Received from TAL Departments	35
- Certifications Submitted by TAL Washington Office	30
- Certifications Approved by VA's Office of General Counsel	23

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

- AMA Appeals Pending (125+ Days)	0
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) Prepared	230
- Memos Generated	5
- Phone Inquiries	162
- Internal Quality Reviews	3
- Individual Training	0 hours
- Team Training	7 hours
- Hearings	0
- Board Dispositions	93
o Appeals Granted	17 (18.3%)
o Remanded	54 (58.1%)
o Denied	19 (20.4%)
o Other	3 (3.2%)
 Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans	 \$901,418

National Veterans Service Office

- Phone Calls	91
- Emails	16
- Referrals	13
- Discharge Upgrades	2
- Written Correspondence	0
- Claims Submitted	5
- Evidence Submitted	0
- POA Submitted	7
- Training Hours	2
- HLR Informal Conference Calls	2
- In-Person Conference	0

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims	22
- Supporting Submissions	2
- Sensitive Claims	1
- Rating Reviews/Audits	123
- Contacts	174
- Debt Notices Received	376
- Waivers Granted	59
- Misc. Notification Letters Processed	29
- Debt Waiver Granted	\$1,182,313

Benefits Policy Team (BPT) Operations

Meetings

- January 23: Benefits Policy Analysts virtually observed House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) hearing entitled, “Correcting VA’s Violations of Veterans’ Due Process and Second Amendment Rights.”
- January 23: Benefits Policy Analysts and the Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims (DDBC) conducted a preparation meeting with San Juan Regional Office (RO) staff for the upcoming Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) visit.
- January 24: Benefits Policy Analysts virtually attended Veterans Travel Program 2nd Quarterly Update, where VA announced expanding its 2023 pilot ridesharing program to over 100 VA facilities nationwide for the year 2025. VA received feedback from VSOs on Uber/Lyft vendors refusing to accommodate service dogs and situations in which they are forcing veterans with complex specialty care needs to “rideshare” with others.
- January 29: DDBC attended a virtual meeting with Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff discussing the recent White House actions and how that would impact VA operations and personnel.
- January 30: Benefits Policy Analysts attended a meeting with other veterans service organization for a group huddle on the December VA PACT Enterprise Program Management Office meeting as well as other mutually concerned toxic-exposure issues.

Legislative Activities

- Bill Review for H.R.8312, “Combat Veterans Pre-Enrollment Act of 2025.”
 - **Support.**
 - To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to permit certain members of the Armed Forces to pre-enroll in the system of annual patient enrollment established and operated under section 175 of title 38, United States Code
- The Policy Team assisted in drafting two letters on the detriment of a “VA hiring freeze” on Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) operations.

Projects

- Benefits Policy team is preparing briefing materials including issue paper, talking points, and Commander’s Testimony for the upcoming **2025 Washington Conference**.
- Benefits Policy team is finalizing the latest version of *Service Officer Code of Procedures*.

Cole Lyle

Director

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

(202)-263-5759

End of VA&R weekly update – 01/31/2025