

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 03/21/2025

Division Operations

Meetings:

- March 17: Division Director had Lunch with Emily Otto, a non-resident Fellow with the Tech Policy Program and Transatlantic Defense and Security Program at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA).
- March 17: Director attended a meeting with Lieutenant General Mike Dana, USMC (Ret.) an expert in strategic planning, logistics, and innovation.
- March 18: Director had lunch with Liz Banicki, Senior Director, Federal Government Affairs at ID.me to discuss ways ID.me might better support The American Legion (TAL) and its mission.
- March 19: Division Director attended the Legion/Pinkeston Connect.

Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations

Meetings:

- March 20: The Health Policy Team (HPT) virtually met with Lycos Therapeutics to discuss the status of research innovation.
- March 18: HPT met with the Toxic Exposure in the American Military Coalition to discuss coordinated efforts in the Veteran Service Organization community to address future toxic exposure policy.

Products

- HPT reviewed 1800 responses from veterans to the “American Legion Impacts to benefits Survey March 2025” to determine the degree of impact to American Veterans from recent policy shifts.

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications Received from TAL Departments	26
- Certifications Submitted by TAL Washington Office	5
- Certifications Approved by VA's Office of General Counsel	15

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

- AMA Appeals Pending (125+ Days)	0
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) Prepared	223
- Memos Generated	1
- Phone Inquiries	139
- Internal Quality Reviews	3
- Individual Training	6 hour
- Team Training	13 hours
- Hearings	1
- Board Dispositions	55
o Appeals Granted	11 (20.0%)
o Remanded	35 (63.6%)
o Denied	8 (14.5%)
o Other	1 (1.8%)
 Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans	 \$724,896

National Veterans Service Office

- Phone Calls	108
- Emails	57
- Referrals	10
- Discharge Upgrades	0
- Written Correspondence	4
- Claims Submitted	5
- Evidence Submitted	0
- POA Submitted	4
- Training Hours	2
- HLR Informal Conference Calls	4
- In -Person Conference	0

Pension & Debt Management

- New Compensation Claims	17
- New Pension Claims	9
- Supporting Claims	3
- Sensitive Claims	6
- File Review	199
- Phone Contacts/E-Mails/Inquires	313
- Debt Notices Received	205
- Insurance Actions	0

- Waivers Requested	12
- Waivers Granted	18
- Walk-Ins	9
- Hearings	0
- Misc. Notification Letters Processed	25
- Debt Waiver Granted	\$316,145

Benefits Policy Team (BPT) Operations

Meetings:

- March 13: Policy team attended a VBA-VSO Quarterly meeting at PVA HQ to learn about VA Office of General Counsel (OGC) involvement on attorney contingency claims fees, how the Rudisill decision affects housing rates for those who qualified for both Montgomery & Post 9/11 GI Bills, and how rollover enrollment into VA Life affects those previously on Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI).
- March 14: Benefits & Claims Policy teams hosted Legion's Monthly DSO Leadership Check-in to disseminate crossflow of information regarding claims. Additionally, National Organization of Veterans' Advocates (NOVA) provided a Social Security Administration (SSA) SSDI Claims workshop for veterans nearing Total Disabled and Individual Unemployability (TDIU) and approaching retirement age who cannot quite make it due to their medical/disability conditions.
- March 17: Policy team virtually attended a DAV-VSO Biweekly Meeting to discuss the incoming Administration's VBA Workgroups/Synch meetings, and the need for VA to engage more and solicit feedback from VSOs on PACT Act implementation. The group also discussed pending legislation concerning unaccredited claims agencies.
- March 18: Policy team and Administrative Coordinator attended a Fall DSO Symposium planning session with Bergmann & Moore.
- March 19: Policy team made initial contact with the National Conference Center (NCC) to make prearrangements for a fruitful site visit.

Projects

- Foreign Medical Program (FMP) resolution consultation with Departments of France and Latin America.
- Devised a VA Fiduciary Resolution to address beneficiary fraud and negligence.
- ROAR follow-up interviews with the San Juan Regional Office (RO)'s Change Management Agent and Public Affairs Officer as well as the Virgin Island's Chief Patient and Community Relations contact.

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End of VA&R weekly update – 03/21/2025