

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 10/04/2024

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- September 30: Health Policy Team (HPT) attended the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Resolutions Screening Committee Meeting. HPT staff recommendations on proposed resolutions were provided to Committee members for further study, approval, or rejection.
- October 1: HPT attended the monthly Veteran Service Organization (VSO) Mental Health and Suicide Prevention meeting to discuss organizational, legislative, and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updates.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- **H.R. XXXX – Women Involuntarily Separated Earning Remittance Act of 2024**
 - To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense to carry out programs to provide to certain veterans who are women a compensation benefit and an upgrade to the discharge status of such veterans, and for other purposes.

Position: **Support with changes**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 147](#): Women Veterans
- [Resolution No. 377](#): Support for Veteran Quality of Life

- **H.R.9438 - No Wrong Door for Veterans Act**
 - To amend and reauthorize the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Position: **Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 116](#): Post-Traumatic Growth
- [Resolution No. 115](#): Outdoor and Adaptive Sports Programs for Veterans
- [Resolution No. 364](#): Department of Veterans Affairs to Develop Outreach and Peer to Peer Program for Rehabilitation

- **S.XXX – SVAC Mental Health Bill**
 - To improve mental health services of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes

Position: **Support with changes**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 20](#): National Standards of Practice
- [Resolution No. 17](#): Continuum of Care and Mental Health Supports
- [Resolution No. 130](#): Vet centers expansion to rural communities
- [Resolution No. 147](#): Women Veterans

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

| | |
|---|----|
| - Applications received from TAL Departments | 23 |
| - Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office | 23 |
| - Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel | 16 |

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

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|--|------------|
| - AMA Appeals Pending (125+ days) | 0 |
| - Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared | 240 |
| - Memos Generated | 4 |
| - Phone Inquiries | 133 |
| - Internal Quality Reviews | 3 |
| - Individual Training | 10 hours |
| - Team Training | 0 hours |
| - Hearings | 0 |
| - Board Dispositions | 54 |
| o Appeals granted | 10 (18.5%) |
| o Remanded | 28 (51.9%) |
| o Denied | 14 (25.9%) |
| o Other | 2 (3.7%) |

Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans \$980,278

National Veterans Service Office

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| - Phone Calls | 90 |
| - Emails | 16 |
| - Referrals | 27 |
| - Discharge Upgrades | 2 |
| - Written Correspondence | 0 |
| - Claims Submitted | 8 |
| - Evidence Submitted | 0 |
| - POA Submitted | 4 |
| - Training Hours | 0 |

Pension & Debt Management

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|--|-----------|
| - New Claims | 28 |
| - Supporting Submissions | 2 |
| - Sensitive Claims | 1 |
| - Rating Reviews/Audits | 173 |
| - Contacts | 252 |
| - Debt Notices Received | 230 |
| - Insurance Questions | 0 |
| - Waivers Granted | 20 |
| - Pension Notification Letters Processed | 73 |
| - Debt Waiver Granted | \$372,204 |

Benefits Policy Team Operations

Meetings & Activities:

- September 30: Benefits Policy Team queried various American Legion state departments to address resolutions being submitted during the fall NEC.
- September 30: Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims (DDBC) attended Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Work group meeting on Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) issues.
- September 30: DDBC and National Veterans Service Officer attended VBA meeting on mail distribution and claims upload issues.
- October 1: In response to an inquiry from Rep. Luttrell, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, the Benefits Policy team conducted a planning session with the Legion's Indy/D.C. Board of Veterans' Appeals teams on legislative revisions, policies, and practices to advocate for improving the Veterans Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) of 2017.
- October 1: DDBC attended VBA VSO Partnership meeting addressing issues of mutual concerns with other VSO organizations.
- October 2: DDBC virtually attended a panel discussion with VE&E staff at the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) Veterans Assistance Program Conference addressing VA benefits and claims issues.
- October 3: DDBC had a lunch meeting with Associate Director of Legislation from Paralyze Veterans of America to discuss AMA-related legislation issue.

Legislative Bill Reviews

- Oct 2: Reviewed petition letter for House Energy and Commerce Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers concerning the need to address claim sharks' deceptive practice on social media platform.

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End of VA&R weekly update – 10/04/2024