

# VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

## WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 11/15/2024

### *Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations*

#### **Meetings:**

- November 12: Health Policy Team (HPT) virtually attended the IVF Women's VSO meeting that discussed the NDAA.
- November 13: HPT attended an in-person meeting at VFW that discussed MST and the changes that the VA has made in the claims process.
- November 14: HPT attended the Toxic Exposure in the American Military research meeting to discuss improvements to the Individual Long Exposure Record (ILER).
- November 14: HPT conducted an interview with Earl Granville an amputee who lost his leg from a roadside bomb while on patrol in Afghanistan. The meeting covered Earl's journey of recovery and his passion for peer support.
- November 14: HPT attended the Women Veterans' Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Intimate Partner Violence Briefing hosted by the Women's Congressional Policy Institute.

#### **Statement for Record:**

- **Life After Limb Loss: Examining VA Amputee Prosthetics Care**

#### **Legislative Bill Reviews:**

- **H.R. 9996 – Patient Advocacy Program**
  - To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements to the laws relating to patient advocacy for patients who receive health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Position: **Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

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

- **H.R. 10000 – SANE Act**
  - This bill would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that sexual assault nurse examiners are employed at certain Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

Position: **Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 147: Women Veterans](#)
- [Resolution No. 67: Military Sexual Trauma](#)

## ***Claims & Appeals Team Operations***

### **Accreditations**

- Applications Received from TAL Departments	14
- Certifications Submitted by TAL Washington Office	14
- Certifications Approved by VA's Office of General Counsel	1

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

- AMA Appeals Pending (125+ Days)	0
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) Prepared	199
- Memos Generated	3
- Phone Inquiries	92
- Internal Quality Reviews	3
- Individual Training	1 hour
- Team Training	0 hours
- Hearings	1
- Board Dispositions	29
o Appeals Granted	8 (27.6%)
o Remanded	14 (48.3%)
o Denied	5 (17.2%)
o Other	2 (6.9%)
 Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans	 \$1,057,998

### **National Veterans Service Office**

- Phone Calls	69
- Emails	11
- Referrals	8
- Discharge Upgrades	0
- Written Correspondence	2
- Claims Submitted	0
- Evidence Submitted	0
- POA Submitted	3
- Training Hours	0

### **Pension & Debt Management**

- New Claims	17
- Supporting Submissions	5
- Sensitive Claims	2
- Rating Reviews/Audits	167
- Contacts	290
- Debt Notices Received	380
- Insurance Questions	0
- Waivers Granted	13
- Hearings	0
- Miscellaneous Notification Letters Processed	114
- Debt Waiver Granted	\$461,298

## ***Benefits Policy Team (BPT) Operations***

### **Meetings:**

- November 12: Veterans Benefits team met with Bergmann & Moore, LLC to discuss service officer training, and planning for 2025 American Legion Accreditation & Training School calendar.
- November 12: Veterans Benefits & Health Policy team met with Rep. Van Drew's (NJ-02) staff to provide feedback on their proposed veterans' Bill of Rights resolution.
- November 13: Veterans Benefits Team attended Veterans Service Organization meeting with VA Medical Disability Examination Office (MDEO)
- November 14: Benefits & Claims Section held Q4 Nationwide Service Officer Conference. National VA&R Commission Chair Jay Bowen delivered opening remarks. VA MDEO Executive Director Jeff London and VBA Compensation Services Deputy Executive Director James Smith spoke to more than 120 service officers and answered questions from the audience.
- November 15: Benefits Policy Team met with Air Force Review Board Agency to discuss discharge upgrades issues with Air Force veterans.

### **Legislative Activities**

- Preliminary review to H.R.xx- To amend title 38 USC, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide health care for family members and other individuals who resided at or worked at locations where there is a presumption of service-connection for certain illnesses and conditions, and for other purposes. – **Support**
- Preliminary review on H.R.xx- To amend title 38USC, to direct the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) to give priority to individuals with certain professional experience in recommending such individuals to serve as members of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. – **No Position**

#### **Proposed 2025 Legislative Priorities from Benefits Policy Team**

- Safeguarding Benefits earned by Veterans
- Ensuring Fully Implementation of the PACT Act
- Allowing Veterans to Switch Appeals Option without Penalty
- Bridging Gaps between CHAMPVA & TRICARE TYA
- Ensuring Equal Access to Healthcare for Permanent & Total Veterans Overseas

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End of VA&R weekly update – 11/15/2024