

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 11/22/2024

Health Policy Team (HPT) Operations

Meetings:

- November 15: HPT participated in the Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers (PCAFC) Veteran Service Organization (VSO) workgroup.
- November 18: HPT met with Congress House staffers as subject matter experts on the Importance of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act passage.
- November 19: HPT participated in the Toxic Exposure in the American Military VSO workgroup.
- November 19: HPT attended the Veterans Affairs (VA) listening Session on PACT Act progression of the process for PFAS “forever chemical” presumption inclusion.
- November 19: HPT completed Statement for the Record (SFR) used in “Life After Limb Loss: Examining VA Amputee Prosthetics Care” Hearing held by the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Health.
- November 20: HPT attended the House Congressional Servicewomen and Women Veterans Caucus as subject matter experts.
- November 20: HPT participated in HVAC Subcommittee on Technology Modernization Oversight Hearing “VA Cybersecurity: Protecting Veteran Data from Evolving Threats”.
- November 20: HPT participated in HVAC Subcommittee on Health Hearing “Life After Limb Loss: Examining VA Amputee Prosthetics Care”.
- November 20: HPT completed fact sheets on Hawaii and Guam VA medical care for National Commanders upcoming visit.
- November 21: HPT attended VSO discussion session about the implementation of the 2022 “Peer Support for MST Survivors Act.”
- November 21: HPT attended the VHA Fireside chat about The Impact of Intersectional Identities on Women Veterans Needs at the Library of Congress.
- November 22: HPT participated in the Program for Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers (PCAFC) Veteran Service Organization (VSO) workgroup.

Legislative Bill Reviews:

- **H. R. 9478: Veterans SPORT Act**

- To include adaptive prosthesis and terminal devices for sports and other recreational activities in the medical services furnished to eligible veterans by VA.

Position: **Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 15: Dept of Veterans Affairs Prosthetic Program](#)

- **PROTECT Act**

- To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide to Congress quarterly briefings on budgetary shortfalls of the Department of Veterans Affairs and to prohibit the provision of bonuses to Department of Veterans Affairs employees in Senior Executive Service positions in fiscal years with budgetary shortfalls, and for other purposes.

Position: **(tentative) Support**

Supporting Resolutions:

- [Resolution No. 16: Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protections](#)

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Accreditations

- Applications Received from TAL Departments 17
- Certifications Submitted by TAL Washington Office 17
- Certifications Approved by VA's Office of General Counsel 10

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

- AMA Appeals Pending (125+ Days) 0
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) Prepared 193
- Memos Generated 7
- Phone Inquiries 136
- Internal Quality Reviews 3
- Individual Training 1 hour
- Team Training 13 hours
- Hearings 1
- Board Dispositions 57
 - o Appeals Granted 11 (19.3%)
 - o Remanded 37 (64.9%)
 - o Denied 5 (8.8%)
 - o Other 4 (7.0%)
- Retroactive Awards Won for Veterans \$949,340

National Veterans Service Office

- Phone Calls 101
- Emails 17
- Referrals 13
- Discharge Upgrades 0
- Written Correspondence 7
- Claims Submitted 16
- Evidence Submitted 0
- POA Submitted 9
- Training Hours 0
- HLR Informal Conference Calls 4

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims 27
- Supporting Submissions 4
- Sensitive Claims 3
- Rating Reviews/Audits 151
- Contacts 334
- Debt Notices Received 208
- Insurance Questions 0
- Waivers Granted 19
- Hearings 0
- Miscellaneous Notification Letters Processed 22
- Debt Waiver Granted \$458,554

Benefits Policy Team (BPT) Operations

Meetings:

- November 15: Policy and Claims teams held an informational listening session with the Air Force Board of Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR) to hear about its Department Review Board (DRB) functions and process so that veteran services organizations (VSOs) are better aware of the discharge upgrade process.
- November 18: Policy team accompanied Legislative Division on Capitol Hill to advocate for and observe the vote passage of H.R 8371- Sen. Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act, in the House.
- November 18: Deputy Director for Benefits & Claims (DDBC) and Deputy Director of Media Division met with a New York Times journalist discussing insurance issues with veterans from WWI & WWII era.
- November 19: Benefits Policy Team participated PACT Act listening session with Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA).
- November 20: Policy and Claims teams held a hotwash meeting with Bergmann & Moore (B&M) to review feedback surveys and lessons learned from the recent inaugural National DSO Symposium held last month. Additionally, Policy and Claims teams attending B&M refresher training on mental health ratings.
- November 21: DDBC & Benefits Policy Team attended a round table hosted by Senate Veterans Affairs Committee with other VSOs and attorneys discussing possible legislation to improve Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC).
- November 21: DDBC met with Associate Legislative Director of Paralyzed Veterans of America to discuss VA budget issue.
- November 21: National Veterans Service Officer and Benefits Policy Analyst attended a meeting on VBA Equity Leadership Collaboration and their priorities briefing to Veterans Service Organizations.

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End of VA&R weekly update – 11/22/2024