Governor’s Working Group Presentation

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Justice Involved Veteran (JIV) Outreach Initiative

- Currently working with Butner Federal Corrections Complex (FCC) and NC Department of Public Safety
- JIV-specific phone line which can be called from correctional facilities

Outreach Modernization Plan

- New avenues for outreach to Veterans
- Data driven, targeted outreach planning
- Storytellers X Program
- Upcoming Events
Character of Discharge Emergency Care Determinations

- Part of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ suicide prevention initiative
- Emergency mental health treatment for former service members with an Other than Honorable discharge
  - Provided by VHA for an initial period of 90 days
- Special VBA review for determination of future eligibility
  - Honorable or Dishonorable for “VA Purposes”
“As service members transition to Veteran status, they face higher risk of suicide and mental health difficulties. During this critical phase, many transitioning service members may not qualify for enrollment in health care. The focus of this executive order is to coordinate federal assets to close that gap.”

- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David Shulkin
Involves coordination between:

- Department of Defense
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Veterans Affairs

Provides treatment and access to mental health care for one year following separation

- 60-day deadline for plan of seamless mental health services
- 180-day status update of implementation and effectiveness
Requires VSO to submit Veteran’s claim
- Including private and federal medical records
- VSO will request a Compensation & Pension (C&P) exam if needed

Currently available for the following types of compensation claims:
- Direct Service Connection Claims
- Presumptive Service Connection Claims
- Secondary Service Connection Claims
- Increased Disability Claims
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims
- Pre-Discharge Claims
Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP)

- Initial phase of the Modernization Act signed August 23, 2017
- RAMP was launched November 2017
- Voluntary program with the aim of faster appeal resolution
- Allows claimants the option of Higher-Level Review or Supplemental Claim Lane
- Program runs through February 2019 - target for full implementation of the Appeals Modernization Act
Advantages of RAMP

• Early participation in the new, more efficient review process for VA benefit decisions
• Potentially faster decisions and early resolution of disagreements
• The same potential effective date for benefits regardless of the review option chosen
• The option to ask for a quick, fresh look at a VA decision by an experienced claims reviewer
• A new requirement for clear and convincing evidence to change any findings favorable to claimant in a VA decision
Topics:

- Disability Compensation
- Pension
- Benefits for Family Members
- National Work Queue (NWQ)
Disability Compensation

- Service-connected disability compensation
  - Tax-free benefit paid to Veterans for a chronic disability/disease (or disabilities) that either:
    - Arose during service
    - Was worsened or aggravated by service
    - Is presumed by VA to be related to military service

- Monetary compensation and entitlement to other benefits
  - Veterans must be at least 10% disabled
Disability Compensation, continued

- Service-connected disabilities
  - Physical conditions, such as a chronic knee condition
  - Mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Veterans may claim disability conditions at any time
  - VA Form 21-526
  - Recommend claim submission using in-service program or as soon as possible after release from duty
- Veterans may claim that a service-connected condition worsened and receive a re-evaluation from VA
- Veterans may establish entitlement to disabilities caused by, or worsened, by a service-connected condition
Additional entitlements

• Individual Unemployability (IU)
  • Veterans unable to maintain substantially gainful employment as a result of service-connected disabilities

• Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)
  • Additional level of compensation for various types of anatomical losses or levels of impairment due solely to service-connected disabilities
  • Aid and attendance or housebound status
VA offers two broad categories of pension benefit programs:

- **Veterans Pension**: Tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime Veterans.

- **Survivors Pension**: Tax-free monetary benefit payable to a low-income, un-remarried surviving spouse and/or unmarried child(ren) of a deceased Veteran with wartime service.

Veterans and survivors who are eligible for pension benefits and are housebound or require the aid and attendance of another person may be eligible to receive additional monetary amounts.
Benefits for Family Members

VA benefits and services for spouses, children, parents, and survivors of Service Members and Veterans include:

- Dependency benefits
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Home loans
- Life insurance
- Civil service preference
- Benefits for certain children of Vietnam veterans with disabilities
- Fiduciary services
- Memorial benefits, including pre-need eligibility determinations
An electronic system that allows claims to be routed or assigned across the nation

A progression of national workload strategies to balance workload needs and resources

Allows VBA to improve service to Veterans by routing claims more efficiently

Allows VBA to continue operations in the event of localized natural disasters or emergency situations
Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E)

- **Program**
  - Pathway to increased earning capacity through suitable career employment or increased independence in daily living for eligible Service members and Veterans with service-connected disabilities

- **Eligibility**
  - 12-year period of eligibility
  - Up to 48 months of entitlement
  - Veterans
    - Service-connected disability rating of 10% or more from VA
    - Other than dishonorable discharge
    - Employment handicap
  - Service Members
    - Automatic entitlement if discharged due to a disability or as part of the DOD/VA IDES program.
    - Otherwise 20% Memo Rating from Veterans Service Center (VSC).

- **Services**
  - Training, Job Placement, Independent Living Services, Career Testing, & Counseling
Benefits

- Wide variety of training programs (e.g., college, on-the-job training or OJT, self-employment)
- Payment of all tuition costs, books, required supplies plus a monthly stipend
  - Monthly stipend can be paid at the Post-9/11 GI Bill rate
- One-on-one case management
  - Counselors facilitate successful completion of planned services.
  - Employment Coordinator provides assistance with job placement.
- Eligible to expanded medical care at VAMC
- Educational and vocational counseling for transitioning Service members, recently discharged Veterans, and students receiving VA educational benefits
VR&E NC Geographic Locations
Key Statistics from FY2017

- Program participants’ monthly salaries increased on average from $531 to $3,466
- Assisted 583 Veterans meet Vocational Rehabilitation goals
  - Increase of 42% over FY2016
  - 71% who found suitable employment were unemployed when they applied for VR&E services
- Processed 5,325 applications (5th highest in the nation)
- 61% of applications received electronically
- Held 49 Job Search Workshops
- Top Employment Fields
  - Computer/Networking Techs, Medical Office Support, Accounting, Truck Driver, Nurse, Physician Assistant, Veterans Service Representative
- Employer partnerships
  - Ft. Bragg Human Resources, Cities of Fayetteville and Charlotte, Salisbury and Asheville VAMCs, Charlotte Hornets, Winston-Salem Veterans Service Center
VR&E Hot Topics

- Continued movement toward paperless environment
  - 26,000 VR&E files electronically scanned, improving access to the records from all locations in the country

- Partnered with North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NCDVR)
  - Emphasis on Independent Living assessment referrals

- Expanded partnership with US Department of Labor, State of North Carolina Workforce
  - Emphasis on Labor Market information and job opening referrals
G.I. Bill Education & Training Benefits

Differences between GI Bill and VR&E Benefits
- GI Bill is an educational program
- VR&E is an employment program

GI Bill Education Benefits
- Montgomery GI Bill (Old GI Bill)
  - Monthly stipend for educational costs
  - Paid to beneficiary
- Post-9/11 GI Bill
  - Full tuition and fees*
    - Paid directly to school
  - Book stipend
  - Monthly living stipend
    - E-5 with dependents BAH (basic allowance for housing) rate
  - Yellow Ribbon
  - Transfer of entitlement

* Eligible State schools; set amount for private schools
Forever GI Bill - Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act

- Eliminates previous 15-year time limit to use Post-9/11 GI Bill for those who left active duty on or after January 1, 2013
- Restores benefits to Veterans affected by school closures or disapprovals.
- Restores eligibility to Reservists under the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) with credit toward Post-9/11 GI Bill
- Permanently authorizes certain work-study
- Expands VetSuccess on Campus program
Dependents Educational Assistance

➢ **Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship (Fry Scholarship)**
  • Available for children and spouses of Service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001
  • Forever GI Bill removed the 15-year limitation for use

➢ **Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)**
  • Education program rated from Compensation and Pension
  • Eligibility
    o Dependents of Veterans
      o Permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, OR
      o Who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition
  • Additional services available for eligible spouses or children with a disability
Questions?
Resources
Helpful Information & Contacts

PHONE NUMBERS:
• Disability Compensation Inquiries: 1-800-827-1000
• Pension Inquiries: 1-877-294-6380
• Winston-Salem VR&E Office: Phone (336) 714-6099 Fax (336) 631-5054
• Life Insurance Inquiries: 1-800-669-8477
• Education Inquiries: 1-888-442-4551
• Home Loan Inquiries: 1-888-768-2162
• Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)
• Homeless Veterans Line: 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838)

WEBSITES:
• Health Care: www.va.gov/healthbenefits
• Applications and Forms: www.forms.va.gov
• eBenefits: www.ebenefits.va.gov
• Winston-Salem Regional Office homepage: https://vbaw.vba.va.gov/WinstonSalem/

PLEASE MAIL ALL EVIDENCE TO:
Evidence Intake Center
P.O. Box 4444
Janesville, WI 53547-4444
Fax Number: 1-844-531-7818
VR&E Process

Application
- Application received (VONAPP or 28-1900)
- Veteran’s eligibility established
- Schedule Veteran for initial counseling appointment if eligible

Entitlement Decision
- Work with Veteran to identify track
- Establish vocational or independent living goal
- Define services needed
- Develop written plan of services

Evaluation and Planning
- On-going case management (max of 18 months)
- Provide employment services
  - Veterans’ Employment Center (VEC)
  - Interview skills
  - Job placement assistance
  - Referral to DOL

Tracks
- Employment Services
- Rehabilitated

Employment Services

Re-Employment
- Rapid Access To Employment
- Self Employment (monitor 1 yr. min)
- Employment Thru Long-Term Services
- Independent Living (24 mo. max with 6 mo. Ext by VR&E)

Held suitable employment or improved ability to live independently

VRC meets with Veteran
- Conduct VR&E orientation to include Five Tracks Video (Individualized Path to Employment)
- Conduct vocational evaluation to assess skills, abilities & interests
- Determine employment handicap (VR&E entitlement criteria) and serious employment handicap
- Determine feasibility for employment
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<th>To Apply For:</th>
<th>Use VA Form:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Service Connected Disability Compensation</td>
<td>21-526 or 21-526ez</td>
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<td>Non-Service Connected Disability Pension</td>
<td>21-527 or 21-527ez</td>
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<td>Connected Disability Pension</td>
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<td>Burial Benefits</td>
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## Compensation & Pension Forms, continued

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<td>Individual Unemployability</td>
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<td>Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance</td>
<td>21-2680</td>
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<td>Dependency</td>
<td>21-686c</td>
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<td>Continued Dependency for School Attendance (dependent children over the age of 18)</td>
<td>21-674</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits for Certain Children of Vietnam Veterans with Disabilities</td>
<td>21-0304</td>
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To Apply For: | Use VA Form:  
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Application for Vocational Rehabilitation Services | 28-1900  
Application for VA Education Benefits (GI Bill) | 22-1990  
Request for Change of Program or Place of Training | 22-1995  
Dependents’ Application for VA Education Benefits | 22-5490  
Dependents' Request for Change of Program or Place of Training | 22-5495