



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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# Service Bulletin

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## **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**

<http://www.va.gov/>

### **VA Deploys New Operating Model for Disability Claims**

VA has announced the national deployment of claims transformation initiatives to 12 regional offices in the remaining months of fiscal year 2012 to improve benefits delivery to veterans, families and their survivors. The 12 regional offices to begin the deployment of the transformation initiatives include: Huntington, WV; Hartford, CT; Portland, OR; Houston, TX; Cleveland, OH; Des Moines, IA; Boise, ID; Phoenix, AZ; New Orleans, LA; San Juan, PR; Atlanta, GA.; and, Newark, NJ. This deployment follows four pilot programs at Indianapolis, IN, Wichita, KS, Milwaukee, WI, and Fort Harrison, MT.

During the national deployment, VA will track and gauge the integrated effects of the transformation plan to reduce the backlog of disability claims and provide more timely and accurate claims decisions. VA expects to deploy the transformation plan to the remaining 40 regional offices throughout calendar year 2013. The major components of the transformation plan include:

- Intake Processing Center, which adds a formalized process for triaging claims documents and other mail, and drives faster and more accurate association of mail with veterans' claims files;
- Segmented Processing Lanes, which allow claims that can be more easily rated to move quickly through the system and the more complex claims to be processed by VA's more experienced and skilled employees;
- Cross-Functional Teams, which support a case-management approach to claims processing that minimizes rework and reduces processing time; and
- The Veterans Benefits Management System, which is a new electronic claims processing system that employs rules-based technologies to improve decision speed and quality.

### **VA Releases Gulf War Task Force Report**

[http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/2011\\_GWVI-TF\\_Report.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/2011_GWVI-TF_Report.pdf)

VA has released the second in a series of annual reports from its Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force, outlining how the department will address the concerns of veterans deployed during the Gulf War of 1990-1991.

The report focuses on efforts to improve the delivery of health care for Gulf War Veterans. One of the most substantial additions is the launch of a prototype clinical care model specifically for Gulf War Veterans. There are also efforts underway to create better links between specialty knowledge on Gulf War health issues and subject matter experts for health care providers serving these veterans at the point of care.

Veterans can subscribe to receive future updates from the VA Gulf War illnesses website at [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/index.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/index.asp).

### **VA Releases More Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQ's)**

<http://benefits.va.gov/disabilityexams>

VA has released 68 new forms that will help speed the processing of Veterans' disability compensation and pension claims. The new forms bring to 71 the number of documents, called disability benefits questionnaires (DBQs) that guide physicians' reports of medical findings, ensuring VA has exactly the medical information needed to make a prompt decision.

When needed to decide a disability claim for compensation or pension benefits, VA provides veterans with medical examinations for gathering the necessary medical evidence. Veterans who choose to have their private physicians complete the medical examination can now give their physicians the same form a VA provider would use. It is very important that physicians provide complete responses to all questions on the DBQs. VA cannot pay for a private physician to complete DBQs or for any costs associated with examination or testing.

Veterans may file a claim online through the eBenefits web portal at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov>. The Department of Defense and VA jointly developed the eBenefits portal as a single secure point of access for online benefit information and tools to perform multiple self-service functions such as checking the status of their claim.

Servicemembers may enroll in eBenefits using their Common Access Card at any time during their military service, or before they leave during their Transition Assistance Program briefings. Veterans may also enroll in eBenefits and obtain a Premium account in-person or online depending on their status.

## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DoD)**

### **Army Website Offers Resources for Servicemembers, Retirees and Veterans**

<https://www.hrc.army.mil/>

The U.S. Army Human Resources Command website has expanded to provide a primary entry point for military-related human resource inquiries, and to provide services to servicemembers, retirees, veterans, and their families. The site includes resource information concerning entitlements and benefits for active duty, reserve, National Guard members and veterans. It also serves as a portal with links to other agencies that provide veteran services.

## **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DoL)**

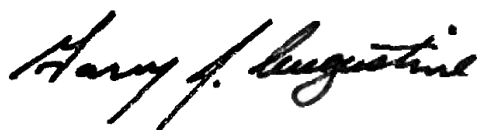
<http://www.dol.gov/vets/>

### **Grants to Assist Approximately 9,000 Homeless Veterans**

The U.S. Department of Labor has announced the availability of \$15 million in grants through the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) to provide job training services to help homeless veterans succeed in civilian careers.

The department anticipates awarding at least 50 grants to serve approximately 9,000 veterans. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to state and local workforce investment boards, local public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and community organizations. Grantees must be familiar with the areas and populations to be served, and have demonstrated they can administer effective programs.

Grantees will provide homeless veterans with occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, including follow-up services. HVRP is the only federal program that focuses exclusively on employment of veterans who are homeless. Grantees will coordinate their efforts with other local, state and federal social service providers. The grant applications are available at <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp/main2012.htm>.



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