U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs

2018 Veteran Service Officer Information Session

Briefed by:

Cesar Romero, Assistant Director, Seattle Regional Office

September 2018

VBA Beneficiaries Served & Dollars Paid in FY2017

Education
- Paid nearly **$79B** in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to over **1.8M** individuals to date since program inception in 2009
- Provided **$12B** to **947K** beneficiaries for all EDU programs, processing over **4 million claims**

Compensation
- Paid **$72.4B** to nearly **4.5M** beneficiaries
- Completed **1.39M** claims, over **148K** in August 2017, highest production month ever
- Completed claims in an average of 113.3 days

Life Insurance
- Provides over **$1.2T** in coverage for service members, Veterans and their families
- Paid **$2B** in benefits

Home Loan Guaranty
- Over **2.89M** VA home loans on the books
- Guaranteed a **record** **740.3K** loans in FY17 (**5% more t**han FY16) totaling **$189B**
- Helped a **96.1K** Veterans avoid foreclosure

Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment
- Assisted over **15.5K** Veterans achieve a positive outcome an **8.2%** increase over FY18
- Over **132K** participants in FY17

Pension & Fiduciary
- Paid **$6.4B** to over **483K** beneficiaries
- Completed **89K** field claims, **8%** more than FY16

Benefits Assistance
- Over **8.7M** registered eBenefits users, nearly 1M more than FY16
- Provided over **63K** Transition Assistance services to more than **500K** Servicemembers, Veterans & families

" To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

A. Lincoln

Paul R. Lawrence , Ph.D.
Under Secretary for Benefits

Paul R. Lawrence, Ph.D. was nominated by President Donald J. Trump to serve as the 7th Under Secretary for Benefits and was confirmed by the United States Senate on April 26, 2018.

As Under Secretary, he leads more than 20,000 employees in the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) in the delivery of benefits programs for Veterans, including disability compensation, pension and fiduciary, education, home loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation and employment, life insurance, and the Transition Assistance Program. Through a nationwide network of 56 regional offices, special processing centers, and VBA headquarters, he oversees the execution of over $104B in direct benefits to Veterans and their dependents.

Prior to his confirmation, Dr. Lawrence served as Vice President at Kaiser Associates. He has 30 years of experience working closely with federal leaders as a senior management consultant, serving in leadership positions at such organizations as Ernst & Young, Accenture, the MITRE Corporation, IBM Business Consulting Services, and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

He has researched and written extensively on management and government. He is the co-author of Succeeding as a Political Executive: 50 Insights from Experience; What Government Does: How Political Executives Manage; and Paths to Making a Difference: Leading in Government. He is the co-editor of Transforming Organizations and Learning the Ropes: Insights for Political Appointees. He served on the Board of Advisors to the Economic Program at the University of Massachusetts and has served on the Board of Advisors of the Thomas Jefferson Public Policy Program at The College of William and Mary. He was twice selected by Federal Computer Week as one of the top 100 public service business leaders.

Dr. Lawrence served in the U.S. Army attaining the rank of Captain. He graduated from the Army's Airborne School and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. He earned a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Economics from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Customer Service

Financial Stewardship

Culture of Collaboration

Choose VA

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

DIGITIZATION *and* AUTOMATION ⬅

- **Centralized Intake of Claims Material**
- **Paper Extraction & Digitization of Inactive Claim Files**
- Decision Ready Claims
- Exam Management System
- **Quality Management System**

EFFICIENCY and SERVICE

- Update Performance Standards
- Expand Access to VA Systems
- Modernize the Appeals Process
- **Continue to improve customer service at National Call Centers**
- Improve Dependency Claims Processing
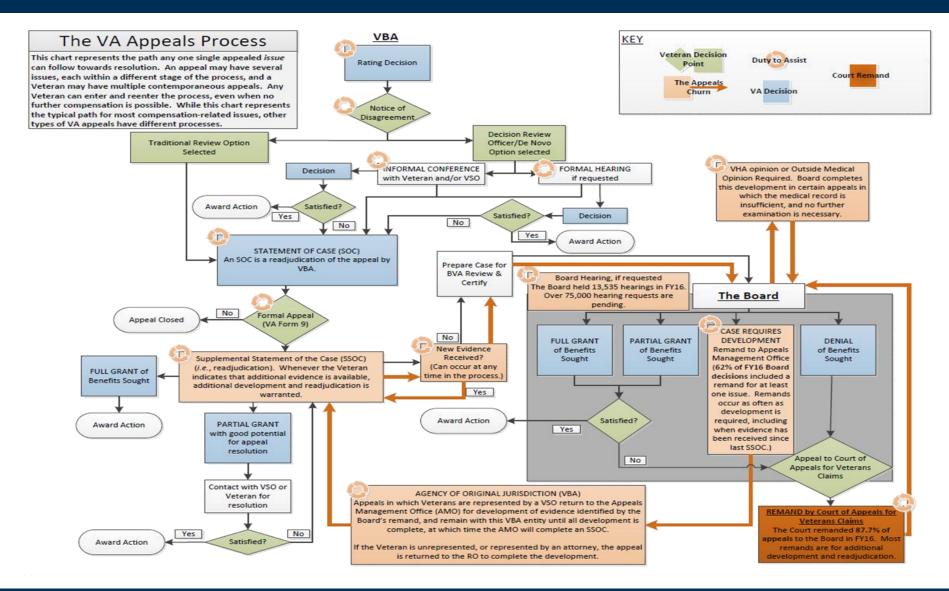- Update the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD)

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

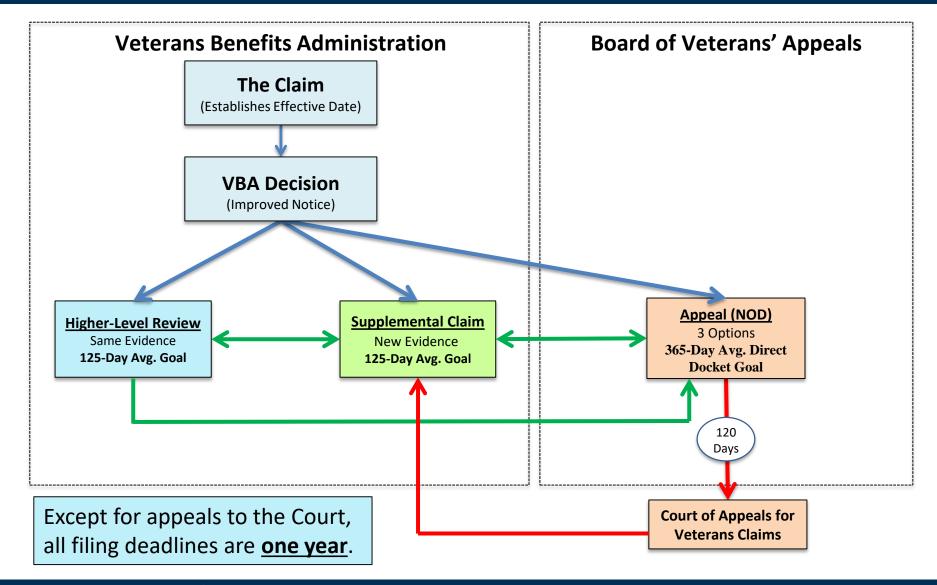- Warrior Training Advancement Course (WARTAC)
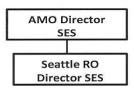
VA Appeals Process Today

New Decision Review Process

Decision Review Operations Center (DROC)
DROC SeaTac

DROCs Total FTE: 227
GS-15: 1
GS-14: 2
GS-13: 51
GS-12: 48
GS-11: 43
GS-10: 65
GS-09: 0
GS-07: 2
GS-06: 15
Highest pay level is shown

Onboard Appeals Team: 27
FTE FY19 Budget: 200
Total St Pete DROC: 227

AMO Director
SES

Seattle RO
Director SES

Title	Grade	QTY
Supv VSR (DROC Mgr)	GS15	1
Supv VSR (Asst DROC Mgr)	GS14	2
Supv VSR (Coach)	GS13	12
Supv VSR (Asst Coach)	GS12	8
DRO	GS13	31
DRO (RQRS)	GS13	7
VSR (Rating)	GS12	30
VSR (AQRS)	GS12	7
VSR	GS7/10	65
VSR (Authorizer)	GS11	40
Claims Assistant	GS6	15
Management Analyst	GS13	1
Management Analyst	GS12	1
Support Services Supervisor	GS12	1
Training Coordinator	GS12	1
Financial Admin Specialist	GS11	2
Financial Accounts Tech	GS6/7	2
HR Specialist	GS9/11	1
	Total	227

Approved by:

David R. McLenachen   8/22/2018

David R. McLenachen   Date
Director, AMO

New Process – VBA Lanes

Supplemental Claim Lane

- VA will readjudicate a claim if "new and relevant" evidence is presented or identified with a supplemental claim (**open record**)
- VA will assist in gathering new and relevant evidence (**duty to assist**).
- Effective date for benefits always protected (submitted within 1 year of decision)
- Replaces "reopening" claims with "new and material" evidence

Higher-Level Review Lane

- More experienced VA employee takes a second look at the same evidence (**closed record and no duty to assist**)
- Option for a one-time telephonic **informal conference** with the higher-level reviewer to discuss the error in the prior decision
- *De novo* review with full difference of opinion authority
- Duty to assist errors returned to lower-level for correction (**quality feedback**)

Choose VA
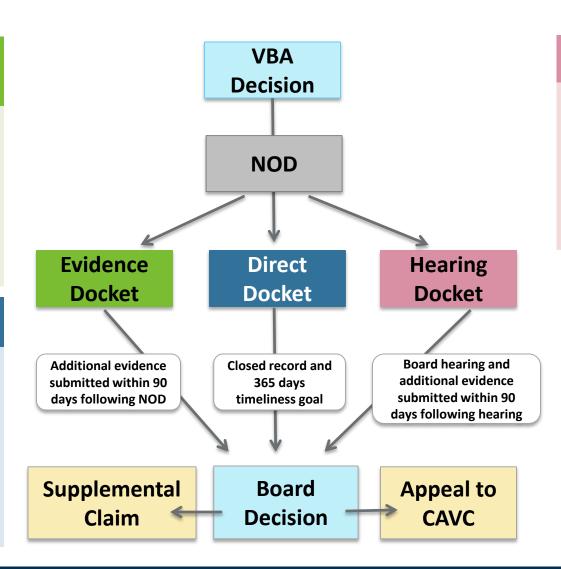
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

New Process – Appeal Lane

Evidence Only Docket

When this option is selected on the NOD, the appellant may submit evidence within the 90 day window following submission of the NOD. The Board does not have a duty to assist and the record is otherwise closed.

Direct Docket

When this option is selected on the NOD, the appellant receives direct review by the Board of the evidence that was before VBA in the decision on appeal. The Board has a 365-day timeliness goal for this docket. Quality feedback loop for VBA.

Hearing Docket

When this option is selected on the NOD, the appellant will be scheduled for a Board hearing. Additionally, the appellant may submit evidence within the 90 day window following the scheduled hearing. The Board does not have a duty to assist and the record is otherwise closed.

VBA Decision

NOD

Evidence Docket

Direct Docket

Hearing Docket

Additional evidence submitted within 90 days following NOD

Closed record and 365 days timeliness goal

Board hearing and additional evidence submitted within 90 days following hearing

Supplemental Claim

Board Decision

Appeal to CAVC