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

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

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

Home Loan Guaranty
- Over 2.89M VA home loans on the books
- Guaranteed a record 740.3K loans in FY17 (5% more than 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

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

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

“...To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan.”
- Abraham Lincoln

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VA

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
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.
USB Three Areas of Focus

Customer Service

Financial Stewardship

Culture of Collaboration
Where We’re Going:
VBA Priorities 2018 & Beyond

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)
New Decision Review Process

Veterans Benefits Administration

The Claim
(Establishes Effective Date)

VBA Decision
(Improved Notice)

Supplemental Claim
New Evidence
125-Day Avg. Goal

Higher-Level Review
Same Evidence
125-Day Avg. Goal

Except for appeals to the Court, all filing deadlines are **one year**.

Board of Veterans’ Appeals

Appeal (NOD)
3 Options
365-Day Avg. Direct Docket Goal

120 Days

Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
Decision Review Operations Center (DROC)

DROC SeaTac

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Total: 227

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

Approved by:
David R. McLenachen
Director, AMO

Date: 08/22/2016
# 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*).
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.

**VBA Decision**

**NOD**

**Evidence Docket**
- Evidence Only Docket
  - Additional evidence submitted within 90 days following NOD

**Direct Docket**
- Direct Docket
  - Closed record and 365 days timeliness goal

**Hearing Docket**
- Hearing Docket
  - Board hearing and additional evidence submitted within 90 days following hearing

**Supplemental Claim**

**Board Decision**

**Appeal to CAVC**

**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.