



Disabled American Veterans Department of Florida Newsletter

By Al Linden, Executive Director



April, 2017

As of April 30, 2017 our membership was 62,959 needed 614 to make goal are life members.

State Commander Jack Johnson Message

I am currently attending National Commander David Riley's testimonial in Mobile, Alabama. If your chapter has not met their membership goal you still have time. Many chapters are conducting fundraisers which is an excellent time to recruit. Members can be signed up for as little as \$10.00 per month reoccurring payment on a credit or debit card. Be sure to have applications on hand. Better yet, have the DAV membership app installed on your phone and iPad.

All chapters should be electing new officers. Send your officers report to national and department as soon as you elect. You do not have to wait until they are installed. Department convention will be held in lake Mary, June 14-18. You also need to elect delegates for department and national convention. National membership chairman Doug wells will be our guest, and everyone is encouraged to attend all meetings. National convention will be in New Orleans, July 28 thru August 2nd. We would like all chapters to be represented. See you soon.

DAV Department Convention

The Annual State Convention to be held June 14-18, 2017 at the Lake Mary Marriott in Lake Mary, Fl. Individual attendees must make their own reservations. Room rate is \$87.00 per night. Please call 1-800-380-7724 to make your reservations before June 2, 2017. A schedule of events will be published later. Delegate slips must be sent to Department headquarters by June 2, 2017. Group code is "DIS".

[VA Considering Software-as-a-Service Model for VistA HER System.](#) The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) issued two requests for information (RFI) this week related to potentially replacing or enhancing its aging electronic health record (EHR) system, called the Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) system.

Also be reminded that **Chapter Annual Financial Reports are due by September 30 each year.** **Chapter Officers Reports** are due within 10 days after installation each year or when changes are made. ALL chapters make \$50,000 and less and do not file any other IRS form must file a N990 by November 15 each year. Last year 4 chapters failed to do so and their tax exempt was removed and it cost them over \$400 to get it

BALANCE SHEET		
As Of March 31, 2017		
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,243,282	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$248,383

TOTAL LIABILITIES&FUND BALANCES	\$1,243,282	

Bay Pines VAVS	\$2304
Gainesville VAVS	\$1000.00
Tampa VAVS	\$1950
Lake City VAVS	\$2225
WPB VAVS	\$1000
Miami VAVS	\$2200
Orlando VAVS	\$7550
Eglin CBOC	\$0



about
Disabled
American
Veterans

on your next
drivers license application,
then they know you care!

VA Secretary Praises Congress for Extending Choice Program

Calls legislation major step toward increasing access to care

WASHINGTON — Today, following the U.S. Senate’s passage by unanimous consent this week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation that extends the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) until the funding dedicated to the program is exhausted. The VCP is a critical program that increases access to care for millions of Veterans. Without this legislation, the ability to use VCP funding would have ended abruptly on Aug. 7 of this year. Secretary of Veterans Affairs [Dr. David J. Shulkin](#) released the following statement of support:

“Congress has once again demonstrated that the country stands firmly united when it comes to supporting our nation’s Veterans,” Secretary Shulkin said. “The Department of Veterans Affairs truly appreciates the quick bipartisan resolution Congress provided with the extension of the Veterans Choice Program.

“I want to thank Chairman Johnny Isakson, Ranking Member Jon Tester, Chairman Phil Roe, Ranking Member Tim Walz and all the members of our committees for their leadership as we continue to make improvements to increase Veterans’ access to care,” Secretary Shulkin continued. “I also want to thank Senator John McCain, who has championed choice for Veterans and whose work on this issue allowed for swift and successful resolution.

“VA looks forward to continued bipartisan support as we partner with Congress to not only develop a long-term solution for community care, but also work toward other critical legislation, such as accountability and appeals modernization to ensure Veterans receive the highest quality of care, benefits and support they have earned.”

VA REACH VET Initiative Helps Save Veterans Lives *Program Signals When More Help Is Needed for At-risk Veterans*

WASHINGTON — Suicide prevention is one of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA) highest priorities. As part of VA’s commitment to put resources, services and all technology available to reduce Veteran suicide, VA has launched an innovative program called Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health – Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET).

Recent research suggests that 20 Veterans die by suicide each day, putting Veterans at even greater risk than the general public. Using a new predictive model, REACH VET analyzes existing data from Veterans’ health records to identify those at a statistically elevated risk for suicide, hospitalization, illness or other adverse outcomes. This allows VA to provide pre-emptive care and support for Veterans, in some cases before a Veteran even has suicidal thoughts.

“One Veteran suicide is one too many,” said [Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin](#). “This cutting-edge program is saving lives by identifying at-risk Veterans and connecting them with the specialized care and support they need.”

Once a Veteran is identified, his or her VA mental health or primary care provider reaches out to check on the Veteran’s well-being, review their condition(s) and treatment plans to determine if enhanced care is needed. The program began as a pilot in October and is now fully implemented across VA.

INCOME / EXPENSES VS BUDGET
April 30, 2017

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income			
Accounts receivable-Orange City	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donation fr Service Fd-interest	0.00	0.00	0.00
jcmo-16	0.00	0.00	0.00
JMCO-13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lakeland Mortgage income	0.00	0.00	0.00
1202 - DAV events income	0.00	0.00	0.00
6001 - Convention Income	3,043.00	5,680.00	-2,637.00
6030 - Midwinter Income	6,615.00	8,700.00	-2,085.00
6050 - Dues from National	245,159.49	140,000.00	105,159.49
6060.1 - Department Arcade Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
6075 - Donated Funds for Vans	0.00	0.00	0.00
6100 - Donation fr Service Fd-Principi	50,000.00	383,695.00	-333,695.00
6140 - National Fund Raisers	93,607.50	180,000.00	-86,392.50
6200 - Chapter & Unit 10%	53,667.14	40,000.00	13,667.14
6300 - Department Publication	0.00	0.00	0.00
6303 - National Candidate Fun	0.00	0.00	0.00
6310 - Chapter Closeouts	0.00	4,000.00	-4,000.00
6311 - Donations	0.00	5,000.00	-5,000.00
6315 - Orange City Income	15,000.00	0.00	15,000.00
6330 - Lake Panosofkee	3,416.80	4,000.00	-583.20
6331 - Lakeland Bldg Mortgage	13,647.00	12,000.00	1,647.00
6332 - Sarasota rent	0.00	0.00	0.00
6333. - Orange City Mortgage	0.00	13,000.00	-13,000.00
6334.1 - Sarasota Bldg Mortgage Payment	0.00	0.00	0.00
6350. - Drivers License Income	30,104.28	50,000.00	-19,895.72
6410 - 2015 Service Officer's	12,625.00	10,000.00	2,625.00
6411 - Service Program Donations	1,131.98	100.00	1,031.98
6412 - NSO Office Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00
6413 - Service Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
6450 - VAVS Donations	32,915.50	20,100.00	12,815.50
6480.2 - Donations to HSC by Cha	0.00	0.00	0.00
6700 - Int. Earned	0.00	0.00	0.00
6701 - Dividends on Investment	0.00	0.00	0.00
6710 - Securities Income	0.00	0.00	0.00
6720 - Unrealized Gain/Loss on Invest	0.00	0.00	0.00
6750 - Realized Gain/Loss on Invest	0.00	0.00	0.00
6760 - Gain/loss on sale	0.00	0.00	0.00
6800 - Miscellaneous	34,819.24	1,000.00	33,819.24
6901 - Reduction of Liability	0.00	0.00	0.00
6990 - Preparing way Ministry	0.00	0.00	0.00
80005.4 - Commanders Testimonial Inc	0.00	0.00	0.00
JMCO-12 - JMCO-Lake Pan Mortgage Receivab	0.00	0.00	0.00
JMCO-15 - Interest on mort rec-Lakeland	0.00	0.00	0.00
JMCO-17 - Mort Rec Int - Orange City	0.00	0.00	0.00
JMCO-19 - Interest on GMAC Demand Note	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Income	595,751.93	877,275.00	-281,523.07
Cost of Goods Sold			
50000 - Cost of Goods Sold	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total COGS	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gross Profit	595,751.93	877,275.00	-281,523.07
Expense			
Printing & Publication-admin	0.00	0.00	0.00
Testimonial Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
6 - JMC)-20 Prepaid Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
66900 - Reconciliation Discrepancies	0.00	0.00	0.00
7000.2 - Convention Expense	4,205.00	16,100.00	-11,895.00
7030.1 - Midwinter Expenses	11,830.71	19,700.00	-7,869.29
7040.1 - Service Expenses	698,438.99	686,800.00	11,638.99
7570.1 - Legislative Expenses	981.15	5,100.00	-4,118.85
7800.1 - Telephone & Telegram	0.00	0.00	0.00
8000.3 - VAVS Expenses	16,440.00	28,250.00	-11,810.00
8260 - Headquarters Expense	39,992.11	120,600.00	-80,607.89
8545 - chapter 30 trustee legal	0.00	0.00	0.00
8562.2 - National Convention Expense	15,893.82	0.00	15,893.82
9300.2 - Arcade Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
9400.1 - Orange Service Office Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
9410 - Organge City Property Write dow	0.00	0.00	0.00
9450.1 - Lakeland Building expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
9470.2 - Sales expense Sarasota property	0.00	0.00	0.00
9475.2 - Loss on Sale of Sarasota prop	0.00	0.00	0.00
9500.1 - Foundation expenses	792.84	725.00	67.84
Total Expense	788,574.62	877,275.00	-88,700.38
	-192,822.69	0.00	-192,822.69
Other Income			
11001.4 - Testimonial Income	4,615.00	5,000.00	-385.00
Total Other Income	4,615.00	5,000.00	-385.00
Other Expense			
11000.4 - Testimonial Expenses 2015	5,373.29	5,000.00	373.29
9999 - Suspense	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Other Expense	5,373.29	5,000.00	373.29
	-758.29	0.00	-758.29
	-193,580.98	0.00	-193,580.98



MEMBERSHIP

FOR

April 30, 2017

Chanter	Last yr	trial	part life	full life	total	Goal	% goal	needed	chanter name 2/23/17	
001		1,906	8	155	1,740	1,903	1,779	97.81%	-39	JACKSONVILLE #1
002	G	11,402	1,891	984	8,728	11,603	8,705	100.26%	23	EVERGLADE STATE #2
004		2,567	3	144	2,434	2,581	2,463	98.82%	-29	JOHN C MCCARTHY II #4
005		583	1	63	529	593	548	96.53%	-19	THE TALLAHASSEE #5
006		291	1	27	267	295	274	97.45%	-7	ST AUGUSTINE #6
007		849	2	247	647	896	741	87.31%	-94	W WASHINGTON #7
011		1,681	1	78	1,556	1,635	1,574	98.86%	-18	CLEARWATER #11
012		1,497	1	90	1,402	1,493	1,420	98.73%	-18	CORAL GABLES #12
013		2,503	1	107	2,380	2,488	2,396	99.33%	-16	BAY PINE HLDY ISL #13
016		2,777	1	174	2,584	2,759	2,629	98.29%	-45	CENTRAL #16
017	G	761	0	38	742	780	738	100.54%	4	PANAMA CITY #17
018		1,780	2	168	1,668	1,838	1,682	99.17%	-14	MANATEE COUNTY #18
020		356	1	21	334	356	343	97.38%	-9	LAKE CITY #20
022		309	0	13	290	303	296	97.97%	-6	JACKSON COUNTY #22
023		2,151	3	93	2,046	2,142	2,056	99.51%	-10	AL GRAY #23
029		617	1	50	581	632	590	98.47%	-9	PEMBROKE PINES-MIRAMAR #29
030		1,303	0	98	1,203	1,301	1,228	97.96%	-25	SEMINOLE #30
032		1,361	2	103	1,232	1,337	1,244	99.04%	-12	J L GOLIGHTLY #32
038		1,502	1	199	1,321	1,521	1,388	95.17%	-67	ORANGE PARK #38
042		1,834	0	83	1,758	1,841	1,772	99.21%	-14	WEST PALM BEACH #42
049		322	0	22	299	321	305	98.03%	-6	RIDGE #49
057	G	445	5	32	415	452	413	100.48%	2	CRESTVIEW #57
063		164	0	8	153	161	155	98.71%	-2	TRI-COUNTY #63
065		555	0	34	516	550	524	98.47%	-8	ZEPHYRHILLS #65
067		1,249	0	57	1,179	1,236	1,190	99.08%	-11	HERNANDO COUNTY #67
070		597	0	39	546	585	560	97.50%	-14	GERALD A SHONK #70
073	G	367	3	23	344	370	343	100.29%	1	TAMARAC #73
078		1,205	0	54	1,134	1,188	1,141	99.39%	-7	NEW PORT RICHEY #78
082	G	1,120	0	52	1,084	1,136	1,082	100.18%	2	R L COCHRAN JR #82
083		1,042	2	138	940	1,080	969	97.01%	-29	C W BYERS SR #83
084		1,282	3	69	1,208	1,280	1,213	99.59%	-5	GREATER DAYTONA #84
085		1,141	0	40	1,073	1,113	1,080	99.35%	-7	SOUTH MARION #85
086		632	0	77	560	637	587	95.40%	-27	JIM BOOE #86
087	G	759	2	36	724	762	723	100.14%	1	SGT WM E HILL #87
090		891	1	75	816	892	845	96.57%	-29	GATOR #90
094		1,059	0	32	1,008	1,040	1,021	98.73%	-13	C GUSTAFSON #94
097		564	0	40	513	553	518	99.03%	-5	BEE RIDGE #97
098		243	1	12	230	243	233	98.71%	-3	EUCHEE VALLEY #98
101		809	0	54	764	818	774	98.71%	-10	VENICE GULF #101
108		658	0	68	628	696	633	99.21%	-5	JAMES D RADER #108
109		509	0	34	486	520	488	99.59%	-2	TITUSVILLE #109
110	G	507	0	31	492	523	490	100.41%	2	SUN CITY CENTER #110
112	g	790	6	37	761	804	760	100.13%	1	BAY AREA #112
113		710	1	38	666	705	673	98.96%	-7	PORT ST LUCIE #113
119		368	0	15	355	370	357	99.44%	-2	ANTHONY P DADDI #119
122		540	0	74	475	549	493	96.35%	-18	MARATHON #122
123	g	637	0	24	603	627	596	101.17%	7	SPACE COAST #123
125		548	2	26	533	561	536	99.44%	-3	CPL P D LYON JR #125
126		179	0	8	170	178	173	98.27%	-3	SUWANNEE MEM #126
129		358	0	18	342	360	343	99.71%	-4	SO BREVARD BCHS #129
133		951	0	84	898	982	909	98.79%	-11	THE GOLD COAST #133
144	g	99	0	8	91	99	91	100.00%	0	LA BELLE #144
148		834	4	80	781	865	795	98.24%	-14	AGNES M TAYLOR #148
150	g	945	0	39	1,009	1,048	961	104.99%	48	ORANGE BLOSSOM GDNS #150
152		708	0	43	673	716	674	99.85%	-1	SOUTH PALM BEACH #152
155		367	0	14	349	363	350	99.71%	-1	SEBASTIAN RIVER AREA #155
158		201	0	31	199	230	202	98.51%	-3	CRYSTAL RIVER #158
159		20	0	22	1	23	11	9.09%	-10	MIAMI DORAL #159
160	g	0	0	23	3	26	0	0.00%	3	POLK COUNTY #160
Dept		62,405	4,546	56,463	62,959	57,077	98.92%	98.92%	-614	



**Legislation
FOR
April 30, 2017**

VA Makes Wait Times for Patients Transparent for Veterans

New online tool first of its kind

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking unprecedented steps to increase transparency. Today, VA launched a new Access and Quality Tool that provides Veterans with an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand way of accessing patient wait time and quality of care data. This tool not only provides Veterans with more information about VA services, it increases accountability and ensures VA is held to a higher standard.

“Veterans must have access to information that is clear and understandable to make informed decisions about their health care,” said [Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin](#). “No other health-care system in the country releases this type of information on wait times. This allows Veterans to see how VA is performing.”

The tool allows Veterans to access the average times patients are waiting to be seen in their local area; how Veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary- and specialty-care appointments at specific VA facilities; timeliness of appointments for care needed right away; and the quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers compared with local private-sector hospitals. The Access and Quality Tool is the most transparent and easy to understand wait time and quality data website in the health-care industry.

“This tool is another example of VA leading the way,” said Acting Under Secretary for Health Dr. Poonam Alaigh. “No one in the private sector publishes data this way. This tool will instill a spirit of competition and encourage our medical facilities to proactively address access and quality issues while empowering Veterans to make choices according to what works best for them and their families.”

VA will continue to make improvements to this tool based on the feedback it receives from Veterans. The Access and Quality Tool can be found at www.accesstocare.va.gov. Watch this [video](#) to learn how the tool can be used.

VA REACH VET Initiative Helps Save Veterans Lives
Program Signals When More Help Is Needed for At-risk Veterans

WASHINGTON — Suicide prevention is one of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) highest priorities. As part of VA's commitment to put resources, services and all technology available to reduce Veteran suicide, VA has launched an innovative program called Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health – Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET).

Recent research suggests that 20 Veterans die by suicide each day, putting Veterans at even greater risk than the general public. Using a new predictive model, REACH VET analyzes existing data from Veterans' health records to identify those at a statistically elevated risk for suicide, hospitalization, illness or other adverse outcomes. This allows VA to provide pre-emptive care and support for Veterans, in some cases before a Veteran even has suicidal thoughts.

“One Veteran suicide is one too many,” said [Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin](#). “This cutting-edge program is saving lives by identifying at-risk Veterans and connecting them with the specialized care and support they need.”

Once a Veteran is identified, his or her VA mental health or primary care provider reaches out to check on the Veteran's well-being, review their condition(s) and treatment plans to determine if enhanced care is needed. The program began as a pilot in October and is now fully implemented across VA.

“REACH VET is a game changer in our effort to reduce Veteran suicide,” said Dr. Caitlin Thompson, National Director of VA's Office for Suicide Prevention. “Early intervention can lead to better recovery outcomes, lessen the likelihood of challenges becoming crises and reduce the stress that Veterans and their loved ones face.”

VA's suicide prevention resources include the [Veterans Crisis Line](#), which provides confidential support from specially trained and experienced responders to Veterans, even if they are not enrolled in VA health care. Veterans and their families and friends may call 800-273-8255 and press 1; chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](#) or text to 838255.

For more information about VA's suicide prevention efforts, visit these resources:

- Veterans Crisis Line website: [VeteransCrisisLine.net/BeThere](#)
- Suicide prevention outreach toolkit: [VeteransCrisisLine.net/SpreadTheWord](#)
- “Be There” public service announcement: <http://bit.ly/BeTherePSA>
- Suicide prevention fact sheet: <http://bit.ly/2axW88D>
- **Make the Connection** website: <http://MakeTheConnection.net>
- VA Mental Health website: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>

VA Adds Veterans Health, Benefits Agencies as Exemptions in Federal Hiring Freeze.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has unveiled additional exemptions to the moratorium on federal hiring efforts following a previous move to lift restrictions for some professional fields in January. VA said Wednesday its latest guideline exempts medical and nonmedical positions, the Veterans Health Administration's medical facilities and the Veterans Benefits Administration's regional and field offices from the hiring freeze.

VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM LAW CHANGES

FACT SHEET

APRIL 19, 2017

On April 19, 2017, President Trump signed a law that removes the Aug. 7, 2017, expiration date and allows VA to utilize funding dedicated to the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) until it is exhausted. The VCP is a critical program that increases access to care for Veterans by authorizing millions of appointments for Veterans in the community. This fact sheet highlights the three changes made to the VCP.

Change 1 – Removal of Expiration Date:

The law removes the Aug. 7, 2017, expiration date for the VCP. The VCP will continue until the original \$10 billion is spent. Based on current estimates, funds for the VCP will last through January 2018, but could shift to fall 2017 if more Veterans use the program.

Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans eligible for the VCP will continue receiving care from providers in the community.

Impact to community providers:

- Community providers can continue delivery care to Veterans.

Change 2 – Primary Coordinator of Benefits:

VA is now the Primary Coordinator of Benefits for services provided to Veterans under the VCP. This common sense change VA requested from Congress more closely aligns the VCP with the other community care programs.

Impact to Veterans:

- Before this law change, some Veterans were required to pay the cost-shares/co-pays associated with their private health insurance. Now, those Veterans will not have to pay the cost-shares/co-pays to their private, health-insurance carrier.

Impact to community providers:

- Originally, some community providers had to bill the Veterans' private health insurance and the VCP. With the law change, community providers will now only have to bill the VCP.

Change 3 – Information Sharing:

Previously, VA had a restriction different from other health-care providers regarding the exchange of health information. This law removes these restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans, and brings VA in line with other health-care providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information. We emphasize that this does not create an exception to, or weaken in any manner, the protections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Impact to Veterans:

- Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have appropriate access to necessary medical records.

Impact to community providers:

- Community providers will now have access to all appropriate health information for Veterans.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Has eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program (VCP) changed?

No. The law did not change eligibility for the VCP. Please refer to the VCP website for information regarding eligibility here: <https://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/>

Did the law make the Veterans Choice Program permanent?

No. The law allows VA to use the remaining funds available for the VCP. VA has partnered with Congress to work through remaining legislative needs to build a single, community care program.

. It also means community providers will no longer have to bill a Veteran's private health insurance and the VCP; they will only have to bill the VCP.

.Continued on Page 11

Did the law provide VA the authority it needs to reform the Veterans Choice Program?

This law makes meaningful improvements for the VCP, but more needs to be done. The law is a bridge to allow VA time to partner with Congress and all of its stakeholders to create one community care program that is simple to administer, easy to understand and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers and VA staff.

Does the information-sharing provision in the law put my health information at risk?

No. This law does not put any health insurance information at risk. Previously, VA had restrictions different from other health-care providers regarding the exchange of Veterans' health

Do Veterans still have to provide VA their private health insurance information?

Yes.

Did the law provide VA the authority it needs to reform the Veterans Choice Program?

This law makes meaningful improvements for the VCP, but more needs to be done. The law is a bridge to allow VA time to partner with Congress and all of its stakeholders to create one community care program that is simple to administer, easy to understand and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers and VA staff.

Alternative Medicines at VA

Like other Americans, veterans have grown increasingly interested in alternative treatment options to enhance wellness or address symptoms that are not well managed with conventional medicine. A 2014 study found that service members experienced chronic pain post combat at a much higher rate (44%) than the general population (26%). They were also far more likely to be prescribed opioids (15% v. 4%) to manage pain. Many veterans view complementary and alternative treatment approaches as a means to limiting or avoiding the use of opioids and other pharmaceuticals that may have adverse side effects.

Based on these findings, Representative Julia Brownley (CA) introduced two bills aimed at expanding veterans' access to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in VA medical centers. The first measure, the Expanding Care for Veterans Act, H.R. 102, would require VA to develop a plan for expanding delivery and integration of CAM in at least 15 VA medical centers and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions for veterans with mental health issues, chronic pain and other debilitating conditions.

The Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act of 2017 (H.R. 103) would require VA to offer chiropractic care at every VA medical center by the end of 2019. VA currently offers chiropractic services as part of its medical benefits package. However, only about 65 VA medical centers have chiropractors who are integrated into primary care, rehabilitation and other specialized care teams.

Please write your Representative today to urge co-sponsorship and enactment of H.R. 102 and H.R. 103. As always, thank you for your advocacy by participating in the Commander's Action Network.

Click the link below to log in and send your message:

https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/_Qrcc8dKc8aQIkABzPyT-Q

VA explores new Veteran-centric treatments through Center for Compassionate Innovation

WASHINGTON – Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the launch of the Center for Compassionate Innovation (CCI), which will explore emerging therapies that may enhance Veterans’ physical and mental well-being.

In addition, VA is accepting proposals to fulfill CCI’s mission of finding innovative approaches to health care, which may support those Veterans who are unsuccessful with conventional treatment. Proposals may be submitted through <https://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships/> and will be evaluated through a rigorous algorithm that critically assesses the safety and efficacy of the innovation.

“VA is unique in our approach to health care,” said [Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin](#). “We are committed to offering Veterans cutting-edge and innovative care. That means carefully exploring every avenue that will promote well-being.”

CCI explores innovations in the health-care industry as well as innovative practices currently being piloted on a small scale within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). CCI is primarily interested in innovations that address post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, chronic pain and suicidality. However, CCI will explore any safe and ethical innovation intended to improve Veterans’ health and well-being.

CCI is not an implementation office intended to conduct research, clinical treatment or establish a vendor relationship. CCI is strategically positioned to spotlight cutting-edge therapies and treatment modalities emerging in private industry. CCI is an example of VA’s quest to continue as a leader in providing innovative and effective treatments for Veterans.

VA Modernization Initiative Reduces Processing Time for Veterans’ Claims, Saves Future Taxpayer Dollars

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently started digitizing older, inactive paper records, which will save taxpayer dollars through reduced, leased office-space that currently houses these records.

“This is just one of the ways in which we are modernizing our capabilities, not only to be more responsive to Veterans and their families, but also to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars,” said VA’s Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy.

This new “paper-extraction” process ensures that when a claim is filed, the Veteran’s electronic record is already available in VA’s computer systems, reducing processing time for benefit claims from Veterans and their survivors. In the past, when a Veteran filed a new or supplemental claim, if a medical condition had worsened, the retired paper files were boxed and shipped to a central site to scan into VA’s systems before work would begin on the new claim.

Nearly 2 million inactive files were housed in 33 regional offices across the country before the change. As of April 14, more than 500,000 files have been collected from eight regional offices for scanning. Once the records have been digitized, VA will archive and store them in less expensive long-term storage for safekeeping.

The agency plans to remove and scan paper claim records from the remaining regional offices by the end of 2018.

“This modernization initiative seeks to eliminate delays caused by shipping and digital conversion,” said Bradley Houston, director of VA’s Office of Business Process Integration, which oversees the initiative. “It will give claims processors nationwide the ability to instantly access millions of inactive claim records when needed.”

Over the past five years, VA has made concerted efforts to modernize the way it processes compensation and pension claims. Since 2012, 397 million records — consisting of 2.6 billion images — have been scanned, indexed and uploaded into the agency’s electronic-claims processing system, Veterans Benefits Management System. In fiscal 2016, VA provided compensation and pension benefits to more than 5.1 million Veterans and family members, totaling over \$80 billion. For more information about VA’s benefits, go to <http://benefits.va.gov/benefits/> or call 800-827-1000.

VA Secretary Makes Strides to Improve Veterans Experience

Selects Lynda Davis, PhD, as Chief Veterans Experience Officer

WASHINGTON — In an effort to elevate the Veterans Experience Office (VEO), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, [Dr. David J. Shulkin](#), today announced the appointment of Lynda Davis, PhD, as Chief Veterans Experience Officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VEO is dedicated to capturing, sharing and improving the experience of all those using the care and benefits of the VA. VEO listens to the voice of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors — aimed at enhancing their access to care, benefits and services. The Chief Veterans Experience Officer advises the Secretary and other senior leaders in VA to ensure the unique needs of Veterans and their families remain the ultimate focus of VA's modernization efforts. "It is critical that we create a seamless Veteran experience across the entire organization," said Secretary Shulkin. "VA must proactively engage Veterans and their families to ensure their voices are heard. Lynda brings the energy and expertise to develop Veteran-centric solutions that will allow VA to build trust with Veterans and the American public."

Dr. Davis has a wealth of experience serving the nation's Veterans, their families, as well as caregivers and survivors. Before joining VA, she served as: deputy undersecretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy; deputy assistant secretary for Military Personnel Policy for the Department of the Navy; the designated lead for the joint Department of Defense and VA response to the recommendations of Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors under President Bush; and executive vice president of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, where she was executive director of the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network.

"It is an honor to continue my service to our Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors, as the leader of the Veterans Experience Office," Dr. Davis said. "As a former Army officer and the mother of a Veteran, I am thrilled to be able to support Secretary Shulkin's efforts to make VA the organization our Veterans and their families deserve. Through state-of-the-art technology and innovative solutions, we can ensure Veterans are consistently provided a high-quality experience that earns their trust."

Secretary Shulkin added, "We need fresh ideas and strong leadership throughout the organization to modernize VA. Lynda is a trusted leader in the Veterans community and will elevate the Veterans Experience office to a new level."

Trump signs order creating accountability office at VA

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday created an office at the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve accountability and protect whistleblowers, calling it a "bold step forward."

Trump, who made improving veterans' care a prominent issue in his presidential campaign, said the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection will make clear "that we will never, ever tolerate substandard care for our great veterans." VA Secretary David Shulkin said the office will help identify "barriers" that make it difficult for the department to fire or reassign bad managers or employees.

Another function of the office will be to help shield whistleblowers from retaliation.

"With the creation of this office, we are sending a strong message: Those who fail our veterans will be held, for the first time, accountable," Trump said at the VA before signing an executive order to create the office. "And at the same time, we will reward and retain the many VA employees who do a fantastic job, of which we have many."

President Donald J. Trump Visits VA, Signs VA accountability executive order, Secretary Shulkin makes new key announcements

WASHINGTON — Today President Donald J. Trump visited the Department of Veterans Affairs to thank Veterans for their service, and VA employees for their work helping Veterans.

While at the VA, the President signed an Executive Order entitled, “Improving Accountability and Whistleblower Protection at the Department of Veterans Affairs,” and Secretary Shulkin made three new key announcements at the VA’s Central Office.

The Executive Order is focused on improving “accountability and whistleblower protection” at the VA by creating an office dedicated to that purpose and the position of Special Assistant to the Secretary who will report directly to the Secretary and serve as executive director of the office.

The new executive director “will report directly to me as Secretary so that we can identify barriers that are preventing us from removing employees and people that we have identified that should no longer be working at VA,” said Dr. David Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “We want make sure that we have employees who work hard and are committed to the mission of serving our Veterans.”

The VA will establish the office and appoint the executive director within 45 days of the signing of the Executive Order.

The executive director will advise and assist the Secretary in using all available authorities to discipline or terminate any VA manager or employee who has violated the public’s trust and failed to carry out his or her duties on behalf of Veterans. The executive director will also assist the Secretary in recruiting, rewarding, and retaining high-performing employees.

At the signing ceremony for the Executive Order, Secretary Shulkin also announced three new key initiatives at the Department.

A Partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services

Effective today, VA is entering a partnership agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services that will allow the assignment of medical professionals from the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps to provide direct patient care to Veterans in VA hospitals and clinics in underserved communities.

“My priority has been to improve access to care for our nation’s heroes,” said Dr. David J. Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. “By partnering with our colleagues at HHS, we will enhance the availability of clinical care in those areas most in need.”

The initial agreement enables up to 20 officers from the Commissioned Corps to treat Veterans in VA facilities that are most in need of staffing support. The agreement also allows up to 10 more officers to help support coordination for veterans receiving non-VA community care.

New Fraud, Waste and Abuse Taskforce

The Secretary announced a major new initiative to detect and prevent fraud, waste and abuse in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Effective today, this initiative has the potential to save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars currently at risk, for fraud, waste and abuse that can be redirected to better serve Veterans.

The initiative will include bringing in the leading thinkers from the private sector and other government organizations in an advisory committee to identify and leverage cutting-edge fraud detection tools and; and coordinate all fraud, waste and abuse detection and reporting activities across the Department through a single office.

The Department has identified potential savings in the area of improper payments to health care providers, major contracts, contracts for pharmaceuticals, and the delivery of benefits to Veterans.

2017 Florida Legislative Session

Bills Introduced in 2017 Florida Legislative Session

Please see below for the current list of active bills the agency is tracking. You can view the full bills on either the Florida House or Florida Senate website.

- **Senate Bill 8 - Relating to Gaming** (*Senator Galvano*)
- **Senate Bill 152 - Relating to Small Business Financial Assistance** (*Senator Garcia, CS Sponsors: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security*)
- **House Bill 179 - Relating to Veteran Identification** (*by Representative Combee, Co-Sponsors: Abruzzo, Ahern, Asencio, Baez, Burton, Caldwell, Clemons (C), Cortes (J), Daniels, Edwards, Fischer, Hager, Harrell, Harrison, Jacquet, Leek, Mariano, Massullo, Jr., Mercado, Pigman, Ponder, Porter, Raschein, Renner, Richardson, Roth, Sullivan, Willhite CS Sponsors: Transportation & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee*)
- **Senate Bill 188 - Relating to Vacation Rentals** (*Senator Steube, Co-Sponsors: Perry; CS Sponsors: Community Affairs, Regulated Industries*)
- **Senate Bill 330 - Relating to Local Business Taxes** (*Senator Steube; CS Sponsors: Community Affairs*)
- **House Bill 401 - Relating to Notaries Public** (*Representative Abruzzo, Co-Sponsors: Ponder, Silvers, Yarborough; CS Sponsors: Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee*)
- **House Bill 487 - Relating to Local Business Taxes** (*Representative Renner, Co-Sponsors: Antone, Eagle, Hahnfeldt; CS Sponsors: Government Accountability Committee, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee*)
- **House Bill 545 - Relating to Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles** (*Representative Payne, Co-Sponsors: Cortes (B), Latvala (C), Massullo, Jr., Newton, Slosberg; CS Sponsors: Government Accountability Committee, Transportation & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee, Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee*)
- **House Bill 557 - Relating to Controlled Substance Prescribing** (*Representative Duran, Co-Sponsors: Donalds, Edwards, Jacobs, Jenne, Jones, Mercado, Silvers, Silvers, Willhite, Nunez; CS Sponsors: Health & Human Services Committee, Health Quality Subcommittee*)
- **House Bill 619 - Relating to Consolidation of Medicaid Waiver Programs** (*Representative Pigman; CS Sponsors: Health Innovation Subcommittee*)
- **House Bill 959 - Relating to Honor and Remember Flag** (*Representatives Mariano, Burgess, Co-Sponsors: Abruzzo, Albritton, Baez, Leek, Ponder, Renner*)
- **House Bill 1123 - Relating to Fee and Surcharge Reductions** (*Representative Drake, Co-Sponsors: Daniels, Gruters; CS Sponsors: Ways & Means Committee*)
- **Senate Bill 1166 - Relating to Honor and Remember Flag** (*Senator Lee (T), Co-Sponsors: Galvano, Torres, Jr., Hukill*)
- **House Bill 1235 - Relating to Military and Veteran Support** (*Representative Latvala (C), Co-Sponsors: Nunez, Ponder; CS Sponsors: Appropriations Committee, Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee*)
- **Senate Bill 1374 - Relating to Transportation** (*Senator Perry, Co-Sponsors: Broxson; CS Sponsors: Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security*)