



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, November 29, 2015

Volume 6, Issue 48

This-N-That

Wait times is still a serious issue, and according to Secretary McDonald said the number of appointments that had not been completed within 30 days has grown from 300,000 to nearly 500,000.

So it would seem not only did his plan backfire on him, but it got much worse as I had predicted it would when he changed the appointment scheduling from seven to thirty days.

CNN recently reported that the Phoenix VA had 8,000 requests from veterans for care in August for which wait times exceeded 90 days. Veterans with cancer reportedly died waiting for care and medical treatment, while care for almost 1,500 others was delayed because of short staffing and mismanagement.

According to the Washington Post, senior officials at the Phoenix VA did virtually nothing to respond to the severe staffing shortage as recently as April of this year, a full year since the scandal broke.

From all reports we've received there are still some 1,400 vacant job positions for licensed medical professionals and we still see no real signs of action on the part of the VA to hire staff to fill those positions leaving more and more Veterans to suffer from inadequate medical care being provided, and the problem at the Phoenix VA Medical Center progressively getting worse.

In a Veterans Day speech two weeks ago, the President noted that the veteran disability claims backlog was at 76,000, an 88 percent reduction from its peak in March 2013.

However, what the president did not mention is the fact that while the backlog has been substantially cut, it may have been accomplished by rejecting a larger proportion of claims.

So it appears that the standard operating procedure for the VA is to delay, deny and wait till you die, and congress continues to sit back and do nothing.

Something we've never been able to find out and it would be very interesting to know, how many of the RO's and DRO's are there who are Veterans filling those positions.

And where are the checks and balances when it comes to reviewing the decisions before they are published, and did the RO or the DRO actually READ every single word on every single page before rendering his/her decision to DENY or remand?

We'll continue to dig as best we can to find the answers, if there are any

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

VA Docs May Recommend Rx Marijuana

Legislation passed November 10 by the U.S. Senate includes a provision that would allow Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) doctors to recommend medical marijuana to patients in states where it is legal. Some veterans groups have pressed Congress for years to allow the drug for patients suffering from [post-traumatic stress disorder](#). The so-called Veterans Equal Access Amendment would do so. The provision does not change current laws preventing the possession or dispensing of marijuana on VA property, but simply allows veterans to discuss all options that are legally available in their state with their VA doctor. The provision was inserted into the Military and Veterans Construction bill, which the Senate passed unanimously.

Beware of Retirement or Pension Advances

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently released a consumer guide and advisory about pension advances and pension loans. The pension-advance companies offer retirees and veterans either a loan or a cash advance in exchange for all or a part of their pension payments. Here are several tips: (1) do not give anyone access or control over your monthly pension payments; (2) if you are asked to sign up for life insurance with the pension-advance company as your beneficiary, be cautious; (3) do not be fooled by patriotic-sounding names, logos or claims of government backing; (4) do look at other options. If you are turning to pension advances because you are having financial difficulties, consider getting financial coaching or counseling from a professional. Many nonprofit credit counseling agencies charge sliding-scale fees. Remember that a military pension cannot legally be assigned to a third party.

Beware of Retirement or Pension Advances

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau recently released a consumer guide and advisory about pension advances and pension loans. The pension-advance companies offer retirees and veterans either a loan or a cash advance in exchange for all or a part of their pension payments. Here are several tips: (1) do not give anyone access or control over your monthly pension payments; (2) if you are asked to sign up for life insurance with the pension-advance company as your beneficiary, be cautious; (3) do not be fooled by patriotic-sounding names, logos or claims of government backing; (4) do look at other options. If you are turning to pension advances because you are having financial difficulties, consider getting financial coaching or counseling from a professional. Many nonprofit credit counseling agencies charge sliding-scale fees. Remember that a military pension cannot legally be assigned to a third party.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Medicare Part B: Expenditures for New Drugs Concentrated among a Few Drugs, and Most Were Costly for Beneficiaries. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-12>

Antideficiency Act Reports - Fiscal Year 2015 <http://www.gao.gov/products/D12252>

Biosurveillance: DHS Should Not Pursue BioWatch Upgrades or Enhancements Until System Capabilities Are Established. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-99>

Electronic Monitoring: Draft National Standard for Offender Tracking Systems Addresses Common Stakeholder Needs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-10>

Official Social Media Guidance and FAQs

In advance of the upcoming presidential election year, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) has revised its guidance regarding the Hatch Act and federal employee use of social media and email. The guidance is accessible in an online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) format at osc.gov/Pages/Hatch-Act-Social-Media-and-Email-Guidance.aspx. Under the Hatch Act, "political activity" refers to any activity directed at the success or failure of a political party or partisan political group or candidate in a partisan race. Generally, federal employees can avoid violating the Hatch Act if they (1) do not engage in political activity while on duty or in the workplace; (2) do not engage in political activity in an official capacity at any time; and (3) do not solicit or receive political contributions at any time.

VA Moves to Increase Local Partnerships

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced a partnership with the Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF) to further advance VA's outreach to veterans through deeper and more innovative local and community partnerships. VA will capitalize on BWF's strength and contacts to find unique ways to connect veterans, transitioning servicemembers and their families with resources right where they live. The partnership with BWF is one of many strategic alliances VA is forming and is an integral goal of the MyVA initiative, the largest reorganization in VA's history which reorients VA around the needs of veterans. For more information, visit the Bob Woodruff Foundation website at www.bobwoodrufffoundation.org.

Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!

VFC Website Update

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,468,220** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **14,417+** documents
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now) (**Updated 04/05/15**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 11/13/15 **21** New Jobs and **0** New Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,346** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,588** Active Links)(**Updated 10/23/15**)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

Gallop Poll Looks at Veteran Education

A new survey has found that higher education is failing U.S. military veterans despite expansions to the GI Bill, but some institutions are doing a better job than others. According to a Gallup-Purdue survey, less than a third of college graduates who had served in the military said that their university catered to their needs. Higher education enrollment for military veterans surged after the expansion of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 and again with the enactment of the Post-9/11 GI Bill version in 2008. A report on the survey is available on the [Gallup-Purdue website](#).

Questions and Benefits: Military Adoption

The good news is that the military does offer a military adoption reimbursement program. The bad news is that you have to wait for the adoption to be final or, if the child is adopted from overseas, for his or her citizenship to be finalized before you can apply for the money.

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>



Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

To be updated by 8pm PST 11/27/15

Navy Chaplain Corps Celebrates 240th Anniversary

Commemorating 240 years of providing religious ministry and pastoral care to the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, Navy chaplains, Chaplain Candidate Program Officers and enlisted religious program specialists recently gathered in Norfolk, Va. for a night of celebration and remembrance. Since its establishment in 1775 when the Continental Congress agreed that divine services should be performed twice a day on board ships and a sermon preached on Sundays, the Navy Chaplain Corps has grown to over 1,000 chaplains representing more than 100 faith groups. Chaplains and religious program specialists are embedded in and support commands at sea and ashore across the Sea Services. For more information, visit the Navy Chaplain Corps webpage at www.navy.mil/local/chaplaincorps/ and visit the Navy Chaplain Corps on DoDLive at chaplaincorps.navylive.dodlive.mil.

Veterans Jobs Mission

In 2011, eleven companies co-founded a coalition called the 100,000 Jobs Mission. The goal was to hire 100,000 U.S. Military Veterans between the participating companies. After reaching that goal in early 2014, they upped the number of jobs to 300,000. Now, with over 200 participating companies, the group has a new name, the Veteran Jobs Mission, and wants to hire 1 million veterans. The group represents every industry in the U.S. Economy. The group's website also offers a Transition Field Guide for veterans at www.veteranjobsmission.com/veterans/transitionfieldguide and a Tips and Resources webpage at www.veteranjobsmission.com/tips-and-resources/educational-tips. For more information, visit the Veterans Jobs Mission website at www.veteranjobsmission.com.

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Art therapy helps close the wounds of Air Force Vets](#)
- 2) [DoD Meets interoperability requirements for Electronic Health Records](#)
- 3) [Saving lives in chaos](#)
- 4) [Two Senior VA Officials Plead The Fifth Amendment At Hearing](#)
- 5) [VA Christmas tree ban causes Yuletide uprising](#)
- 6) [VA Execs Demoted, But Get To Keep Their Jobs And Fraud Money](#)
- 7) [VA is buried in a backlog of never-ending Veterans disability appeals](#)
- 8) [VA transfers demoted executive to Phoenix](#)
- 9) [Veterans Groups: Newest Debacle Shows Obama's VA Secretary Is 'Part of the Problem'](#)
- 10) [What are we waiting for?](#)

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

Check us out today: www.veterans-for-change.org

To Contact your Members of Congress

To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll FREE Number:	866-272-6622

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~



America's Veterans United

Is an advocacy group on Yahoo Groups developed to fight for the benefits, care, facilities, caring and compassionate fully licensed medical professionals, updated and properly operated VA Medical Facilities.

Are you sick and tired of the “business as usual” attitude, or the “delay, deny, until they die” attitude?

Are you able to give 30-60 minutes of your time per month to help develop and send letters to all 535 members of Congress each month in an attempt to force Congress into getting off their seats and actually doing something for Veterans vs. their usual lip service?

And are you sick and tired of all the other organizations who say they are fighting for you, but have shown decades of really not doing much for you?

Then join us, we do more than use membership numbers to fight, we actually have you working with us in the fight. Take control of your health and medical care and help us fight for you.

If interested, check out our page on Yahoo Groups:

https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas_Veterans_United/info

If you're not a member of any Yahoo Group, and not familiar with the system but want to join in the fight, you can do so via E-Mail as well:

americas_veterans_united-subscribe@yahogroups.com

One really good thing about America's Veterans United, it won't cost you one thin dime, no membership dues, no postage costs, just your time and your computer.

Help us to help you and your fellow Veterans in the fight!

Boulder Crest Retreat for Vets

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs estimates that up to 30 percent of veterans suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Boulder Crest Retreat for Military and Veteran Wellness is the nation's first privately-funded rural wellness center dedicated exclusively to solving the problem of combat stress. The Retreat is developing the nation's first comprehensive, evidence-based curriculum for combat stress recovery -- an effort called PATHH (Progressive and Alternative Therapies for Healing Heroes). The 37-acre retreat is a rural sanctuary that provides free accommodations, recreational and therapeutic activities in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Bluemont, Virginia, just 50 miles west of Washington, D.C. For more information, visit the Boulder Crest Retreat website at www.bouldercrestretreat.org.

VA Secretary to Announce VA-Bob Woodruff Foundation Partnership

Aim of Partnership is to Better Connect Veterans with Resources Close to Home

WASHINGTON – Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Secretary Robert A. McDonald this evening will announce a partnership with the [Bob Woodruff Foundation](#) (BWF) to further advance VA's outreach to Veterans through deeper and more innovative local and community partnerships. VA will capitalize on BWF's strength and contacts to find unique ways

to connect Veterans, transitioning Servicemembers and their families with resources right where they live. The partnership with BWF is one of many strategic alliances VA is forming and is an integral goal of the MyVA initiative, the largest reorganization in VA's history which reorients VA around the needs of Veterans.

"We believe that by working together we can create a 'single front door,' or a convenient community point of entry, to help Veterans gain access to the benefits they have earned in addition to the resources unique to their local communities," said Secretary McDonald. "This partnership creates a more robust integration of federal, state and local governments, non-profit organizations, businesses and other local partners at the community level. By combining and sharing our efforts and expertise, I believe this partnership can help us better serve our nation's Veterans – together."

"Our nation's transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans and their families each have unique needs, making the resources and services dedicated to overcoming their challenges all the more necessary," said BWF Executive Director Anne Marie Dougherty. "We are excited by this opportunity to work in partnership with VA to reach Veterans and their families where they live and to deliver high-impact programs to support sustainable success."

The Bob Woodruff Foundation is a nonprofit organization working on behalf of injured Servicemembers, Veterans and their families. Since 2006, BWF has invested nearly \$30 million in programs reaching more than 2 million injured Servicemembers, Veterans and their families in three key areas: Education and Employment, Rehabilitation and Recovery, and Quality of Life.

For more information about the Foundation, visit www.bobwoodrufffoundation.org. For more information about VA including the MyVA initiative, visit www.va.gov.

If you received this Newsletter as a forward or as a Courtesy Copy and would like to continue to receive this FREE weekly newsletter, click on link below:

<https://app.expressemailmarketing.com/survey.aspx?sfid=121170>

Complete all information, and select the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. You will then receive an automated authentication E-Mail, follow the instructions and you will then be added to the weekly distribution list.

Or if you prefer you can sign up to the Yahoo Groups VFC-News page and receive our weekly newsletter by sending an E-Mail to: VFC-News-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.

MOAA Offers Virtual Job Fair

The Military Officers Association of America will be holding a virtual job fair from Noon to 4:00 PM EST on November 18. The event is free to all transitioning and former (separating/retiring) military service members. The fair is an opportunity to communicate directly with employers nationwide who appreciate the leadership skills, work experience, and motivation you bring to the table. In addition attendees will be eligible for a free resume critique by a MOAA Career Management Counselor. All those interested in attending should register at www.moaa.org/careerfair. Employers who may be interested in participating can find more information at the same website.



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!



Our country is not the only thing to which we owe our allegiance. It is also owed to justice and to humanity. Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.

~James Bryce~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

Distribution	
Express Mail:	14,446
Face Book Pages:	3,043
Yahoo:	120
Twitter:	27
US Army	37,794
US Navy	15,354
US Marines	16,984
Dept of VA	11,350
DoD	1,131
Washington DC	119,245
New York	105,984
Los Angeles	94,040
University of So. CA	718
Boston	56,681
San Francisco	54,376
Veterans	19,025,968
Other Social Media:	12,995
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	760
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
	19,574,516