



# Veterans-**For**-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, August 23, 2015**

Volume 6, Issue 34

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## ***This-N-That***

Once again a VA Medical Center is caught red handed shredding Veterans Claims, this time it's at the West Los Angeles Medical Center which has been in the news many times over the past five plus years.

They've been in the new on and off for refusing to help Homeless Veterans, to provide housing and medical care, leasing out Veteran land to private Brentwood Elitist's and then supposedly to be renovating buildings to begin to provide housing and care for Homeless Veterans and now this with shredding of claims documents.

A statement from the WLA VA Hospital was:

*"Although we cannot quantify or identify claims-related documents that the VARO may have shredded prior to our review, we found nine claims-related documents that VARO staff incorrectly placed in personal shred bins for non-claims related documents. Eight of the nine documents had the potential to affect Veterans' benefits and one had no effect on the Veteran's benefits."*

And it doesn't matter if it was one or a thousand! If a document was in the claims file there is no acceptable reason to pick and choose what stays and what is destroyed.

The only exception to this I could see is when a Veteran or his/her VSO provides a document with the instruction sheet(s). I could see removing and destroying the instruction sheets, but that is about all I could truly accept as a document to be shredded.

This also gives further reason why Obama should sign the bill that gives the VA more power to terminate employees on the spot, yet Obama has said it's not fair and he would veto the bill.

The shredding of these documents would have prevented the documents from becoming part of the Veterans' permanent record and potentially affect Veterans' benefits.

Then we have the wait times at most if not all VA Medical Centers where there are one in three job positions are left vacant leaving ad nine major facilities Veterans waiting weeks to get care.

Nationwide there are 41,000 job positions vacant! Why? Is it because people know the history of the VA and don't want to be involved with others providing low grade poor quality care, the scandals of cooking the books on appointments or other reasons?

Who really knows, all we know is you, the Veteran are forced to deal with the lack of care, the long wait times for appointments, then being canceled for no reason, and having to wait even longer.

Some of the highest vacancy rates are for psychologists. In 13 regional healthcare systems, 40 to 64% of psychologist positions are vacant. Nationally, about 21% of such positions are vacant.

And all these wait times affect your personal health and yet it seems no one really gives a damn!

Then we have the announcement that the VA has amended it's rules on service dogs. Making it easier to have your service dog with you during appointments at the VA.

Although this change is new, we'd like to hear from you if you have had problems in the past, and if you still have problems today.

We'd like to find out just how well this change has kicked in, and is it working or not.

Betty, our Director of Operation Mail call is prepping more packages to go our, and we need people to write cards and letters to be included in goodie boxes being shipped out weekly to our troops on foreign soil. We're not asking for anything special, just cards and letters to include and trust me this excites them more than the goodies we send.

And if you have children, even hand made cards from the children makes their day!

More information and a link to where you can send cards and letters to be included in each week's shipments are further down in this newsletter.

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder & CEO

[Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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### ***Secretary Issues Message***

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald issued a statement recently about the radical transformation the VA is going through to improve its relationship with veterans. This relationship is the cornerstone for all that VA does. Read Secretary McDonald's statement at [www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/21806/myva-a-message-from-sec-bob-mcdonald/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/21806/myva-a-message-from-sec-bob-mcdonald/).

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### ***VA Announces New Rules Regarding Service Animals in VA Facilities***

WASHINGTON – Today the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has revised its regulation regarding the presence of animals on VA property. The updated regulation will ensure VA practices remain consistent with applicable federal law. It will also assist individuals entering VA facilities in developing a clear and consistent understanding of the criteria governing facility access for service animals.

“As I have traveled to VA facilities throughout the country, I have heard from many Veterans about what a vital role their service animals play in their lives,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “The revised regulation will ensure Veterans and employees have clear guidance regarding the presence of service animals in our facilities. VA remains committed to ensuring America’s Veterans have access to the health care benefits for which they are eligible.”

Under the revised regulation, only dogs that are individually trained to perform work or tasks on behalf of an individual with a disability will be considered service animals. Other animals will not be permitted in VA facilities, unless expressly allowed as an exception under the regulation for activities such as animal-assisted therapy or for other reasons such as law enforcement purposes. The regulation further confirms that service animals may access VA property subject to the same terms that govern the admission of the public to VA property, and may be restricted from certain areas on VA properties to ensure that patient care, patient safety, and infection control standards are not compromised.

In accordance with required practices, the revised regulation was published in the Federal Register in November 2014, to obtain feedback from Veterans, advocacy organizations and other stakeholders.

Over the next thirty days, VA will provide training to frontline employees and ensure policies at all facilities are consistent with the new regulation.

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## ***Are TRICARE Co-Pays and Cost Shares Adding Up?***

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the MBA-sponsored [TRICARE Insurance Supplement Plan](#).

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### ***VFC's OPERATION MAIL CALL***



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/4727-operation-mail-call>

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### ***TRICARE: Avoid Urgent Care in Medical Emergencies***

If you are a TRICARE beneficiary and you have an emergency, be sure to go to an emergency room and **not an urgent care clinic** to ensure proper coverage. [Urgent care coverage](#) depends on your plan. You can also call the TRICARE Nurse Advice Line at 1-800-874-2273, option 1. By calling the Nurse Advice Line you can talk to a registered nurse who can give you healthcare advice, help you find a doctor or schedule a next-day appointment at a military hospital or clinic. There are even pediatric nurses who can assist you and will call you back to check on your child. For more information, visit the TRICARE Emergency Care webpage at [www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/EmergencyCare.aspx](http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/EmergencyCare.aspx) and the TRICARE Urgent Care webpage at [www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/UrgentCare.aspx](http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/UrgentCare.aspx).

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### ***TRICARE Dental Care***

Although dental coverage is separate from medical coverage, they are equally important. The American Dental Association, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Association of Pediatrics all recommend children have their first dental appointment before their first birthday and every six months after. TRICARE has three dental plans available, and the plan you get depends on your [eligibility](#). For more information, visit the TRICARE Dental Care webpage at [www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental.aspx](http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental.aspx).

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### ***Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports***

U.S. Savings Bonds: Future of Offering Paper Savings Bonds at Tax Time Is Uncertain, and Lower-Income Households Continue to Face Savings Challenges. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-563>

Unmanned Aerial Systems: FAA Continues Progress toward Integration into the National Airspace. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-610>

SEC Conflict Minerals Rule: Initial Disclosures Indicate Most Companies Were Unable to Determine the Source of Their Conflict Minerals. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-561>

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### ***Lock in a Low Rate Before Rates Rise***

Thinking of buying or refinancing? Don't wait until rates rise. Qualified borrowers can pay as little as \$0 down, no PMI payments, plus they can get financing up to \$417,000. [Use your VA Loan Benefit today.](#)

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

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### ***AAFES \$12,000 Electronics Sweepstakes***

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is partnering with Unilever to giveaway \$12,600 worth of electronics. Six Exchange winners will take home a laptop, tablet, portable digital music player and a \$25 gift card. Eligible shoppers simply need to enter at the Exchange website at [www.shopmyexchange.com/sweepstakes](http://www.shopmyexchange.com/sweepstakes) for a chance to win. Authorized shoppers 18 and older can enter the sweepstakes through Sept. 3, and the drawing will take place on or about Sept. 9.

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### ***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 2,800 and 5,000 visitors per day and have had **2,328,282** 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](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)**

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **12,953+** documents (**966** total New Docs)
- FAQ's (**1,567** on-line now)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 08/21/15 –26 **NEW** Jobs & 2 **NEW** Job Fairs)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,127** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,586** Active Links)(**Updated 08/16/15**)

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](mailto: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.

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## ***TRICARE Webinar on Health Care Options***

TRICARE and Military OneSource are co-hosting a webinar Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at noon EST to discuss health care options available to TRICARE beneficiaries once they are no longer eligible for any TRICARE health plan coverage. Visit [attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8355461906215583234](http://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8355461906215583234) to register. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited due to system capacity. There are a number of health care options available to servicemembers and their families when they lose TRICARE eligibility. It is important to know what these options are so that you will continue to meet the health care requirement of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.



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](mailto: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.

***26 New Jobs & 2 New Job Fairs have been Posted!***

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### ***Links to other Stories***

- 1) [A Simple Way to Reduce VA Waiting Lists](#)
- 2) [Admiral talks healthy aging](#)
- 3) [Air Force enlisted to medical degree prep program intent to apply due Oct. 2](#)
- 4) [At some VA hospitals, half of critical positions unfilled](#)
- 5) [Cobb Judge Visits Program for Homeless Veterans](#)

- 6) *DHA director discusses advances in trauma care*
- 7) *Durham trying to house 80 homeless Veterans*
- 8) *Fight Disease Before it Starts*
- 9) *Fired clerk says VA hospital in KC made her its 'waiting list' scapegoat*
- 10) *Free pets for Veterans*
- 11) *High-risk medical devices backed by few studies*
- 12) *Horry County laws support storage container housing village for Veterans, council consensus sought*
- 13) *Housing for Homeless Veterans Is Planned for Ex-Walter Reed Site*
- 14) *Lawyer: Bay Pines VA Health System faces scrutiny after lawsuit*
- 15) *Leaked Document: 35,000 Combat Vets Denied VA Health Care Enrollment Due To Computer Error*
- 16) *Let's Take Better Care of Our Veterans*
- 17) *Los Angeles VA was caught shredding Veterans benefits claims without processing*
- 18) *MHS Research Symposium: New tools for old problem of stopping the bleeding*
- 19) *Mindfulness-Based Therapy for PTSD Trumps Usual Care*
- 20) *New ASBP Deputy Director Ready to Make a Difference*
- 21) *Rep. Charlie Dent: Veterans deserve to choose their health care treatment*
- 22) *The Story Behind the POW/MIA Flag*
- 23) *VA amends access rules for service dogs at facilities*
- 24) *VA Healthcare Reform: Senators Propose Radical Changes To Give Veterans The Care They Need*
- 25) *VA hospital at fault in Marine Veteran's death*
- 26) *VA officials send Veterans' medical info to FBI, ATF to facilitate gun seizures*
- 27) *VA scandal fallout: federal employee groups fight over 'hit list' targeting managers*
- 28) *Vet wounded in Iraq, Afghanistan forced to FIGHT with cop over handicapped spot*
- 29) *Veterans Getting Two Official Visits*
- 30) *Whistleblowers blast new VA watchdog*

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](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

### **Commissaries "Back to School" Savings**

Your commissary is kicking off the "Back to School" sales event in August by focusing on healthy family breakfasts, fresh-packed school lunches and after-school snacks that children can prepare themselves. Certain commissaries are also scheduling local farmers' markets in August. Also, always check what's on the "end of the aisle" for themed items with extra-low pricing. Beginning mid-August through Sept. 30, commissaries will be offering their popular case lot sale events for stores in the continental United States as well as Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. And, Kraft is offering the Backpack of Savings promotion until Sept. 6. For more information, contact your local commissary.



### **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](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@yahoogroups.com](mailto:americas_veterans_united-subscribe@yahoogroups.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!

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### ***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 <b>FREE</b> Number:	866-272-6622

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***~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~***

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### ***Fly Fishing Lessons for Injured Troops and Vets***

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is a non-profit organization that provides basic fly fishing, fly casting, fly-tying and rod-building classes to injured military service personnel and disabled veterans throughout the country. The organization has 178 chapters. During meetings, volunteers teach veterans how to tie flies to fish with and teach them how to cast. They also hold outings where they take the group fishing to apply the skills they have learned. For more information and to find a local program, visit the Project Healing Waters website at [www.projecthealingwaters.org](http://www.projecthealingwaters.org).

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### ***Veterans Access and Choice Act Anniversary***

The [Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014](#) (VACAA) is celebrating its one year anniversary. The legislation called for the establishment of one entirely new benefit program, implementation of 21 program modifications or expansions, the completion of three required assessments, and creation of 12 supporting reports. The Department of Veterans Affairs has since leveraged this law to further efforts to enhance its health care system and improve service delivery to better serve veterans. For more information, read VA's VAntage Point Blog at [www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/22053/one-year-later-progress-on-implementation-of-vacaa/](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/22053/one-year-later-progress-on-implementation-of-vacaa/).

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## ***Navy Conducts Carcinogen Exposure Review***

Naval Station (NS) Guantanamo Bay's Commanding Officer, Capt. David Culpepper, recently spoke at a town hall to keep personnel informed of the current public health review taking place as a result of a concern alleging that military and civilian personnel who worked at the Commissions area of Guantanamo Bay were likely exposed to carcinogens. The review includes an occupational and environmental health survey, a public health review, and a medical records check. It is not known when results will be available. For more information on the ongoing public health review, visit the Naval Station Guantanamo Bay webpage at [http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/ns\\_guantanamo\\_bay.html](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/ns_guantanamo_bay.html).

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## ***Free Legal Clinic in Colorado***

The Larimer County Bar Association in Colorado will offer veterans free legal advice from 11 a.m. To 1 p.m. Aug. 19. Veterans can receive confidential legal information and advice during the free clinic held at the VFW/American Legion building, 304 N. Cleveland Ave., Loveland. Appointments are not necessary, as participants will be served on a drop-in basis. The event is open to all U.S. Military veterans, and is one of several clinics put on by the Larimer County Bar Association each year.

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## ***Free Veteran Health Screening in Maine***

Veterans and their family members will have the opportunity to get free blood pressure and health screenings at the American Legion Post on South Main Street in New Auburn, Maine from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on August 22. Organizers for the event say Dr. Mike Ricci, also a veteran, will be in house to answer health related questions.

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## ***VA Seeks Caregivers***

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Foster Home Program helps veterans who no longer can live safely on their own into community caregivers' homes. The program coordinator searches for caregivers (who have safe homes that have passed many assessments), and caregiver back-up workers (who all must pass rigorous assessments, interviews, record reviews, and etc.). The caregivers supervise the veterans 24 hours every day. They supply meals, make sure the veteran is safe and takes his/her medications, take the veteran to specialty medical appointments and other various activities. For more information, visit VA's Medical Foster Home Care webpage at [www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/Medical\\_Foster\\_Homes.asp](http://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/Medical_Foster_Homes.asp) or contact your local VA medical center.

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## ***Reconstructing Lost Army Records***

A fire in 1973 destroyed 80 percent of Army personnel records for soldiers discharged between 1 Nov 1912 to 1 Jan 1960 and 75 percent of the Air Force records of Airmen discharged between 25 Sep 1947 to 1 Jan 1964 (with surnames beginning with *Hubbard* and running through the end of the alphabet). Veterans whose records have been lost can fill out a specific form at [www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/na-13055-info-2-reconstruct-medical-data.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/na-13055-info-2-reconstruct-medical-data.pdf) that authorizes the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) to search for other types of documents that would assist the veteran with their VA healthcare access or compensation claim, or for valuable research their family member's service history. For more information, visit the Department of Veterans Affairs website at [www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/NPRC1973Fire.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/NPRC1973Fire.asp).

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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](mailto: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.*



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



**A man who is good enough to shed his blood for the country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards.**

*~Theodore Roosevelt~*

## ***Veterans-For-Change, Inc.***

Riverside County, CA

**Visit our website today**  
[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

*Serving those who served!*

***Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!***

<b>Distribution</b>	
Express Mail:	14,431
Face Book Pages:	2,920
Yahoo:	102
Twitter:	28
Linked-In:	19,121,128
Other Social Media:	9,903
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
	<b>19,152,012</b>