



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, February 28, 2016

Volume 7, Issue 09



This-N-That

I'm not sure how many remember how the Catholic Church shuffled Priest from one church to another to hide the fact of pedophilia years ago, but now seems the VA has been doing the same thing.

Over one hundred VA Administrators/Directors have been shuffled to no less than three states each to hide the fact they had committed or allowed grievous errors in their facilities, and still allowed to collect enormous benefits.

Add to that another 600 licensed professionals had also been shuffled to other VA Hospitals to hide their errors.

The Veterans Choice program was specifically designed to assist Veterans in obtaining medical care in a timely fashion through outside sources. Fact is VA Directors are using this enormous amount of funds to give them an excuse to cut services and staff, again to produce a better bottom cost line and a better bonus when bonuses come due. So again cooking the books!

Then we had Rima Nelson in the St Louis VAMC who was personally responsible for the possible contamination of 1,800 patients with HIV/AIDS.

She was not suspended, nor was she fired! She was merely relocated to the Philippines to a scarcely used clinic at the US Embassy in Manilla, provide a VA paid for Condo and still collect her \$160,000.00 salary allowing her to live like royalty as the average person in the Philippines collect \$2,500 per year.

So it seems that Ms. Nelson was not only relocated, provided a free home, escaped termination and still allowed to practice.

Then we have Dr. Barbara Temeck who has several allegations against her and several pending charges against her for collecting two salaries from the VA, illegally prescribing medications to family members of staff, illegally diverting discretionary funds in her budget and the list goes on and on but of course she is still working for the VA, still collecting over \$400k per year and chances are will receive if anything a slap on the wrist and of course relocated like everyone else.

And still I see nothing coming from any of the nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations, nothing coming from the House Veterans Affairs Committee nor the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and certainly nothing coming from any other member of Congress.

Then if all this isn't bad enough, we have Richard Piere a registered nurse who marched into the Wilkes-BarreVA medical center in Pennsylvania loaded with booze.

He was so intoxicated he could barely login to one of the computers in the operating room. When he did manage, he screwed up the timestamp listing when the emergency surgery began and when it finished. A co-worker noticed Piere's difficulties and alerted authorities.

At least Richard will face driving while drunk, recklessly endangering another person and public drunkenness.

But there is no mention of his immediate termination from the VA Medical Center.

If this isn't grounds enough, I truly would like to know what is. Why are all these people allowed to retain their jobs, and still endanger the lives of our Veterans?

Who will speak up, who will demand better care?

I try to bring these issue to you in the hopes Veterans will literally wake up and begin to be involved in their own healthcare. Make noise, scream, holler, Call, E-Mail and fax your reps in DC and DEMAND better care and immediately.

Since it appears Secretary McDonald and under Secretary Gibson can't seem to handle their jobs, can't seem to get people terminated, and can't seem to force the hiring of honest, caring, compassionate and dedicated staff.

We need to flood every member of Congress with phones calls, E-Mails, faxes and get the word spread to help in this effort to get the proper care, expedite claims processing and more.

We've recently added polling back to our website and we've activated all 60 survey questions, and I have one little bug to fix today, but the polls are working, so please help us to help you and visit the [VFC website](#) and take the time to answer as many of the poll questions as you can!

The majority of our readers are Veterans, and most if not all of you have served on foreign soil at one point in your career and I'm sure that when it came time for mail call you witnessed one or more fellow soldiers in your unit whose names were never called.

Operation Mail Call is designed to address that problem and a little more!

Betty Hidalgo who is the director of VFC's Operation Mail Call Program does her level best to bring a little joy to all those on foreign soil by sending them care packages which she is working all the time to fill them with a little bit of home with cards, letters, baked goods, candies, and sometimes little gag gifts, anything she can find to bring a little joy to their daily lives where they are.

Where we need help most are cards and letters letting them know all those here at home appreciate them, and support them.

A little further down in this newsletter there is a web link which will take you to the information on where you can send cards and letters which will be included in many of the boxes that go out weekly.

We'd appreciate anything you can do to help us bring a little joy to them, maybe even put a smile on their faces even if only for a few moments.

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

Tips for Filing VA Appeals

Once a VA office issues its decision on your claim, you have one year from that date to file an appeal. Read the decision letter closely: it will tell you why VA made the decision it did. If you disagree with VA's decision for any reason, you should file a Notice of Disagreement (NOD). If VA included VA Form 21-0958, Notice of Disagreement, with its decision, you must use that form to file your NOD-- it is mandatory. The NOD is the start of your appeal. File your appeal right away. When you file your NOD, submit any new evidence you have. Also, when you file your NOD, state if you want a Decision Review Officer (DRO) review or a traditional review.

SBP Annuities Available for Disabled Children

The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2015 now gives retirees the option of having Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity payments go directly into a special-needs trust for a disabled child. This irrevocable decision may be made during the life of the retiree through a written statement that designates future SBP payments go into the special-needs trust. There must be a written statement requesting the annuity be paid to the trust along with an attorney certification letter verifying that the trust is a special-needs trust created for the benefit of the disabled dependent child. Examples of both statements are available on the [Air Force Retiree Services website](#). For more information, Airmen can call 1-877-353-6807 to contact the SBP or casualty assistance representative at the nearest Air Force base.

Give the Vietnam Blue Water Navy Veterans their presumptive rights

https://www.change.org/p/u-s-house-of-representatives-give-the-vietnam-blue-water-navy-veterans-their-presumptive-rights?recruiter=493795146&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=autopublish&utm_term=des-lg-share_petition-reason_msg&fb_ref=Default

Please sign the petition to help all our Blue Water Navy Veterans get their just benefits and medical care!

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!

Operation Mail Call has successfully moved into it's new location:

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

Fisher Houses Offer Home Away from Home

The Fisher House Foundation supports the construction of homes near military or VA medical centers where family members can stay -- at no cost -- while supporting a servicemember or veteran receiving treatment. These homes are located at major military and VA medical centers nationwide, close to the medical center or hospital they serve. Fisher Houses have up to 21 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a dining room and a living room. Fisher House Foundation ensures that there is never a lodging fee. For more information and to locate a house, visit the [Fisher House website](#).

Vet Employment Initiative in North Carolina

North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory's Veterans Employment Initiative is a public-private partnership launched in early 2015 to help veterans find employment in North Carolina. The initiative has now expanded to include the North Carolina Department of Information Technology. Military servicemembers interested in working with the Department of Information Technology after they separate from their branch of service should consult with their Transition Readiness Office or the North Carolina Department of Information Technology Human Resources Office. For more information about the North Carolina Department of Information Technology, veterans can visit the department's [website](#), or connect on [Twitter](#).

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

HIRE YOURSELF TODAY

**Don't wait for the phone to ring.
Start building your own
home-based business today.
It's easy and affordable.**

As a retired USAF LtCol I hit the wall when I tried to re-enter the work world. Since then I have found a new mission in life ~ Helping others discover a new way to make part-time and full-time residual income.

Six years ago I went back to school to obtain my Doctorate in Business. At the same time I started a home-based business. In the end, I found I could have saved the nearly \$100,000 I had spent on my education because through simply parlaying my military experience and network I have been able to build a legacy business that is will-able to my children.

I would be honored to help you do the same. Join me in a power-filled business model.

Roger Sorrell 518-569-7274
rsorrell24@gmail.com

www.rbsorrell.hotsystem.com

Electricity and/or Natural Gas in
CA, NY, NJ, CT, MA, TX, OH, IL, IA, DC,
PA, CT, RI, ME, DE, & VA.

Solar in CA, Souther NY, LI, NJ, CT,
MA, & MD. \$500 Referral Fee /
Customer



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 **2,603,942** 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 (**1,662** on-line now) (**Updated 02/20/16**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 02/22/16 **51** New Jobs and **2** New Job Fairs)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,541** articles on-line)
- Polls Added 02/08/16
- Web Links (**3,428** Active Links)(**Updated 02/07/16** added **1** New Links)

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.

Four Changes Eyed for 'Blended' Retirement Plan

As many as 1.8 million active duty and reserve component members, roughly 75 percent of the Total Force, will be invited in 2018 to switch to the new "blended" military retirement plan that Congress approved last year. To prepare for that "open season" year, to strengthen force retention and to bolster retirement savings, Defense officials are asking Congress to make four significant changes to the new retirement plan.



<http://veterans-for-change.org/>

Proposed Rulemaking for State Veteran Cemeteries Spousal and Dependent Fees and Fees for Disinterment (Amend CCR §461 and Adopt CCR §463 and §464)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) proposes to adopt regulations described in the Notice of Public Rulemaking available on the CalVet website at the link below. This notice is to make known that changes were made to the originally proposed regulations and documents incorporated by reference are posted on the CalVet website at the link below. CalVet is accepting public comments.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any interested person, or his or her duly authorized representative, may submit written comments relevant to the proposed regulatory action to:

California Department of Veterans Affairs
Northern California Veterans Cemetery
Attention: Mark George
11800 Gas Point Road
Igo, CA 96047
Telephone: 530-396-2429
Fax: 530-396-2523

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail to mark.george@calvet.ca.gov. Comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on March 10, 2016. CalVet will only consider comments received at the CalVet offices by that time.

The Public Notice and proposed rulemaking package are also available for viewing in the California Department of Veterans Affairs lobby at 1227 O Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 and online [here](#).

Survivor Benefit

QUESTION: I have been divorced from my first wife for seven years and have since remarried. My first wife will get part of my retirement as part of our divorce decree. If she remarries before she turns age 55, would she lose her share of my retirement?

ANSWER: The loss of benefits upon remarriage prior to age 55 is usually associated with eligibility for survivor benefits. A court order awarding your former spouse with a portion of your monthly federal annuity, unless otherwise specified in the order itself, is payable until your death or the death of your former spouse.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Hardrock Mining: BLM and Forest Service Have Taken Some Actions to Expedite the Mine Plan Review Process but Could Do More. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-165>

Health Care Fraud: Information on Most Common Schemes and the Likely Effect of Smart Cards.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-216>

Military Enlisted Aides: DOD's Report Met Most Statutory Requirements, but Aide Allocation Could Be Improved.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-239>

Unaccompanied Children: HHS Can Take Further Actions to Monitor Their Care. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-180>

Nuclear Nonproliferation: Preliminary Observations on IAEA's Role in Verifying the Iran Agreement.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-417>

Department of Energy: Observations on Efforts by NNSA and the Office of Environmental Management to Manage and Oversee the Nuclear Security Enterprise. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-422T>

Unaccompanied Children: HHS Can Improve Monitoring of Their Care. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-429T>

Federal Vehicles: Composition and Management of Agency Fleets. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-455T>

Financial Audit: U.S. Government's Fiscal Years 2015 and 2014 Consolidated Financial Statements.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-357R>

Homeland Security: Oversight of Neglected Human Resources Information Technology Investment Is Needed.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-253>

Patient Safety: Hospitals Face Challenges Implementing Evidence-Based Practices.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-308>

Homeland Security: Weak Oversight of Human Resources Information Technology Investment Needs Considerable Improvement. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-407T>

NASA: Preliminary Observations on Major Acquisition Projects and Management Challenges.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-461T>

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: CMS Should Act to Strengthen Enrollment Controls and Manage Fraud Risk.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-29>

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Navy Implements New Postal System

The U.S. Navy is assisting mail facilities with the installation and implementation of a new system to process transferring Sailors' mail quickly. The Navy Postal Directory System will be on line for all ships as of March 1 and all shore based facilities and mail rooms by March 31. NPDS is a Microsoft Access program that automates the mail processing and record keeping for a command. It stores individual personal address data for current personnel assigned to a command and also stores new data for personnel when they transfer so that mail received by the command may be readdressed and forwarded. NPDS also prepares and prints address labels for readdressing mail and automatically purges files for transferred personnel. The new system will simplify mail redirect services for all Navy commands, which can be a significant manpower savings in time taken to process redirect mail.



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 02/27/16 @ 6pm PST

| Veteran Crisis Resources | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Veterans Crisis Line | 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 |
| Military Crisis Line | 1-800-273-TALK (8255) |
| National Call Center for Homeless Veterans | 1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838) |
| VA Caregiver Support Line | 1-855-260-3274 |

VA Celebrates 70th Anniversary

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) this year is celebrating the 70th anniversary of its partnership with the nation's medical and health professional schools. Since 1946, VA has worked with academic institutions to provide state-of-the-art health care to America's veterans and to train new health professionals to meet the rapidly evolving health care needs within VA and the nation. Today, VA conducts the largest education and training programs for health professionals in the United States. For more information, visit [VA's Office of Academic Affiliations webpage](#), [VAs 70th Anniversary of Academic Affiliations webpage](#).

Support the SEALs – Project Valor 2016

We need your help! Project Valor is the annual weeklong spring philanthropy event for the Alpha-Eta Chapter of Kappa Sigma Fraternity at George Washington University. Now in its third year, Project Valor has raised \$31,000 since its inception and hopes to raise \$30,000 this year alone. All money raised will be donated to the SEAL Legacy Foundation. For details, visit www.seallegacy.org.kintera.org/ProjectValor2016.

Credentialing Helps Transfer Military Skills

Many civilian jobs have certain professional and technical standards. Credentials show prospective civilian employers that your skills are on par with your civilian peers. Employers may choose to hire only employees who have certain credentials, or to pay those employees more. Federal, state, or local law may require specific credentials to legally perform some jobs. Obtaining credentials – certifications and licenses – shows that you meet these standards.

Take the Fleet Reserve Association Survey

As part of our mission to fight for the concerns of America's service men and women on Capitol Hill, the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) is conducting an online survey to determine which military and veterans' benefits are most important to active duty and Reserve personnel, retirees, veterans and their families. The brief survey asks current and former members of the uniformed services and their spouses to rate the importance of various benefits and quality-of-life programs associated with their service to our nation. FRA shares the survey results with elected officials on Capitol Hill, key committee staff, and leaders within the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Veterans Affairs -- ensuring these crucial decision-makers understand your perspective. Visit www.fra.org/survey to let FRA know which military and veteran benefits are most important to you.

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Chillicothe VA Medical Center Announces New Director](#)
- 2) [Department of Veterans Affairs takes action against Barbara Temeck, Jack Hetrick at Cincinnati VA](#)
- 3) [Exclusive: Feds outsource Vet benefit processing to Philippines](#)
- 4) [Homeless Veterans find permanent housing in 2015](#)
- 5) [Military's Paid Maternity Leave Now 12 Weeks: Feds Still At Zero](#)
- 6) [OPM director nominee can't serve as acting agency head, inspector general says](#)
- 7) [Reward for screwing up a major VA hospital? Plush job, free house in the Philippines](#)
- 8) [Second Marine beaten, left for dead in D.C. the night of McDonald's attack](#)
- 9) [Unhinged nurse chugs multiple beers before operating on Veteran](#)
- 10) [VA hides failed hospital chief on the other side of the world](#)
- 11) [VA Inspector General sitting on wait-time reports](#)
- 12) [VA's carrot-and-stick plan: Raise salaries, limit appeal rights for its executives](#)
- 13) [Veterans Choice program used to reduce crucial services at VA hospital](#)
- 14) [Veterans Choice Program: A breakdown of the basics](#)
- 15) [Wait-time probes at Montrose, Castle Point VA centers not released](#)
- 16) [Who Loses VA Musical Chairs? Vets Do.](#)
- 17) [Why Do Skeletons Follow Cincinnati VA's Dr. Barbara Temeck?](#)

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 |

No Co-Pays for RX with the MBA TRICARE Supplement

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

The American Legion Post 127

February 2016 Newsletter

Fellow Legionnaire,

Twenty-five years ago this month, February 27, 1991 - Desert Storm, the 100-hour ground war ended as Allied troops entered Kuwait just four days after launching their offensive against Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces. Let us keep in mind those who continue to serve in America's longest conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thanks to all who are now active and to those who have ever served in the defense of freedom.

Honoring those who serve, The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization and focuses on service to veterans, active duty service members and local communities. The American Legion is one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. As a member, you continue your association with over 2.4 million legionaries in 14,000 posts around the world.

Post 127 has gone through numerous changes over the years. Our history is rich. In recent years we were once recognized as the fastest growing post in Texas and were the first post in recent 8 District's history to sponsor American Legion Baseball. We have been an active participant in the Legion Oratorical contest, and this past year sent seven high school boys to Boy's State. Our goal for this year is to send ten. Our post members have coordinated donations valued in the thousands of dollars to the DeBakey VA Hospital in Houston. We have a strong friendship with and receive the mutual support of our comrades at the Tomball VFW Post 2427. We are most fortunate to celebrate several dual American Legion and VFW Post members.

It has been a busy year and much more is planned. In August of this year we participated in Tomball Night to celebrate our community's rich heritage. In addition to signing up new members, we sold patriotic T-shirts, dolls made by the Auxiliary, and passed out patriotic stickers to the kids. We also participated in Tomball's 50th annual Christmas parade. We offered the opening prayer at the Tomball city council during Veteran's week. Our annual Post Christmas party was a time of good cheer for all.

Next weekend, February 27th, we will hold a community outreach during the Cy-Fair Home and Garden show: <http://www.cyfairhomeandgarden.com/>. Please stop by our booth to say hello if you attend. The last weekend of April and the first weekend in May we will participate in the annual Old Town Spring Crawfish Festival. If you've never attended, you've missed a lot. The food and live music in one of America's great historic down towns are hard to beat.

American Legion Baseball is right around the corner. Legion Baseball is free for the participants. Numerous major league Hall of Famers including the Astro's own Jeff Bagwell played American Legion Baseball as a youth. We already have a commitment for one third of the amount it will cost our post to sponsor a team. Each year, our team has made it to the division finals. Many other events are being scheduled for this year.

Our most important activities are our service to community, state, and nation. We have an active relationship with area high schools and each year present awards to high school J.R.O.T.C. students. In addition to our association with the DeBakey VA hospital and clinics, we coordinate with the Houston Bar Association and support the Veteran's Legal Initiative. Additional information about our post can be found at http://www.txlegion127.org/post_minutes.html.

We look forward to seeing at our next post meeting on March 17th. Post 127 regular monthly meetings are held the third Thursday of each month in the "Bunker" at VFW Post 2427 located at 14408 Alice Rd, Tomball, TX 77377. A free dinner is served at 6:30 pm and the meeting commences at 7:00 pm.

For God and Country,

Jim Poe
Post Adjutant

2016 National Veterans Day Poster Contest

The Department of Veterans Affairs is seeking artists to submit their entries to the 2016 National Veterans Day poster contest. Submissions must: (1) be 18" x 24" at 300 dots per inch, scale down submissions to 9"x12"; (2) represent veterans from all branches of service; (3) reflect the diversity of our Veteran and military population in terms of race, gender and disability status; and (4) include sufficient information to demonstrate that the image is the work of the artist and is not copyrighted material. To enter, submit electronic versions as JPG images or PDF files by email to vetsday@va.gov or send copies of artwork on a CD with artwork files. The deadline for submissions is Apr. 15, 2016. For more information, contact the Veterans Day Coordinator at vetsday@va.gov.

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

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.

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

Vets Don't Need 20% Down with the VA Loan Benefit

Don't waste this great benefit. Rates are near historic lows but they will rise this year and you don't have to pay PMI or have a large down payment. Plus you can get financing up to \$417,000. [Use your VA Loan Benefit today.](#)

DoD and VA Announce Effort to Ease Transition from DoD to VA Health Care

The Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) announced an ongoing effort to ease the transition for service members who require complex care management as they transition from the DoD system of health care to VA or within each system.

The effort is designed to ease the burden for service members and veterans, who have suffered illnesses or injuries so severe as to require the expertise provided by multiple care specialties throughout both Departments.

"More than a decade of combat has placed enormous demands on a generation of service members and veterans – particularly those who have suffered wounds, injuries, or illnesses which require a complex plan of care," said Dr. Karen Guice, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, and co-chair of the DoD-VA Interagency Care Coordination Committee (IC3). "These individuals require the complex coordination of medical and rehabilitative care, benefits, and other services to successfully transition from active duty to veteran status, and to optimally recover from their illnesses or injuries."

The hallmark of the effort is the implementation of the role of Lead Coordinator. The Lead Coordinator will be a designated member of a service member's care management team who will serve as the primary coordinator for that individual. The Lead Coordinator will offer personal guidance and assist the service member and their families in understanding the benefits and services to which they are entitled. Service members, veterans, and their families, working with their Lead Coordinator, will have someone to whom they can turn when they have a question or issue as they actively participate in their care. The first phase of Lead Coordinator Training was completed in November. It is expected that a total of 1,500 DoD staff and 1,200 VA staff will serve as Lead Coordinators.

This effort comes as a result of the work of the DoD-VA IC3, established in 2012 to implement a joint, standard model of collaboration for the most complex cases of care that will require a warm handoff from the DoD to the VA system of care, as well as within the Departments, and is based on many of the best practices of collaboration that have been created

over the last decade. This effort was enacted as policy by both departments in 2015, aligning more than 250 sub-policies to one, overarching policy that will govern the coordination of complex care cases that transition between the two departments.

Coordination efforts are synchronized through the IC3 Community of Practice (CoP), a group representing more than 50 DoD and VA programs that provide specialty care, including rehabilitation services for the visually impaired and polytrauma centers. It will be the job of the Lead Coordinator to guide service members through the system, ensuring that they receive the care, benefits, and services they both require and to which they are entitled.

Source: NAUS

VA Takes Action on Allegations of Wrongdoing in Cincinnati

Network Director Proposed for Removal, and Acting Chief of Staff Reassigned Pending Further Action

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today actions against two senior leaders in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Based on preliminary results of a joint VA Office of Medical Inspector (OMI) and Office of Accountability (OAR) review conducted February 9-11, 2016 at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Sloan D. Gibson, has proposed the removal of Jack Hetrick, the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN 10) director, from Federal Service. Today, Mr. Hetrick submitted his retirement.

Additionally, VA's Undersecretary for Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin, has detailed the Cincinnati VA Medical Center Acting Chief of Staff, Dr. Barbara Temeck, out of her current duties pending appropriate administrative action.

Hetrick received a notice of pending removal today. As of today, Shulkin has summarily suspended Temeck's privileges and detailed her to non-patient-care duties while he considers appropriate additional actions.

"We are committed to sustainable accountability," said Gibson. "We will continue to use VA's statutory authority to hold employees accountable where warranted by the evidence. That is simply the right thing to do for Veterans and taxpayers."

The VA joint team conducted the site visit to investigate allegations of professional misconduct on the part of Temeck along with allegations that she directed the referral of Veterans for care in the community as a cost-shifting mechanism, resulting in poor quality of care.

The team did not substantiate any impropriety with respect to community care referrals or quality of care for Veterans. However, the team did substantiate misconduct by both Hetrick and Temeck related to Temeck's provision of prescriptions and other medical care to members of Hetrick's family. VA OIG has accepted VA's referral of the substantiated allegations for potential criminal investigation.

VA Caribbean Healthcare System Lauded for Medical Education

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' Caribbean Healthcare System (VACHS) today was awarded the prestigious Accreditation Council for Graduate Education and Gold Foundation's [DeWitt C. Baldwin, Jr. Award](#). The award recognizes institutions with accredited residency/fellowship programs that are "exemplary in fostering a respectful, supportive environment for medical education and the delivery of patient care." The award was presented during a ceremony in National Harbor, MD.

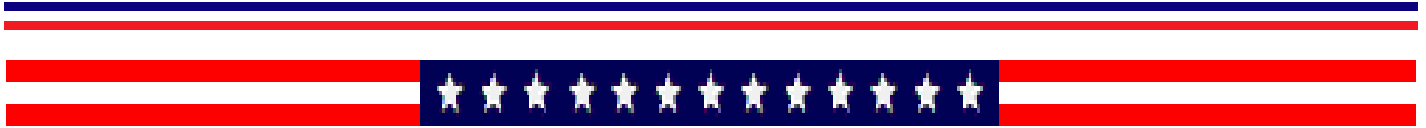
"It is a great honor to receive this award," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "We are able to provide top-notch care for our Veterans, in large part, because of our partnerships with organizations like Accreditation Council for Graduate Education. On behalf of our Caribbean Healthcare System and the men and women who care for our Veterans there, we are proud of this recognition."

For VA, this award comes at a time when it is celebrating the **70th anniversary** of its partnership with medical and health professional schools. Since 1946, VA has worked with academic institutions to train new health professionals to meet the rapidly evolving health care needs within VA and the nation. VA is the largest single provider of medical training in the country, where more than 40,000 residents and 20,000 medical students receive clinical training each year.

VACHS (formerly known as the San Juan VA Medical Center) has sponsored graduate medical education since 1957 and now sponsors 106 physician resident positions in a variety of medical specialties and sub-specialties. It is one of only three VA facilities nationwide that directly sponsor its own Graduate Medical Education.

“This award proves that VA is an important national contributor to medical education,” said Dr. David Shulkin, VA’s Under Secretary for Health. “The VA healthcare system is a unique national asset for physician workforce development. I am extremely proud of the VA Caribbean Health Care Center for earning this prestigious award.”

Information about the Accreditation Council for Graduate Education and awards may be found [here](#). Information about the VA Caribbean Healthcare System can be found [here](#).



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



America is a passionate idea or it is nothing. America is a human brotherhood or it is chaos.

~Max Lerner, Actions and Passions, 1949~

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