



# Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, March 13, 2016**

Volume 7, Issue 11



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

This past week there have been numerous articles on VA Software, Social Security number protections, and of course the never ending Wait List scandal all still in the news, and being bounced around VA Senate Committees, Veterans Affairs, and of Course Veterans.

While I do firmly believe that the VA has major security issues, now they want to spend billions to resolve this and claims and still they've not once even considered civilian software developers who just might have the right product they could use with some relatively easy modifications and WELL TRAINED programmers who know what they are doing. And they can do it a hell of a lot cheaper.

But in my opinion, they're not even considering this as it would FIX the problems, claims would be processed faster, appeals would be done faster, and not only would Veterans information including healthcare information would be strongly secured but better care would be provided as they would be able to redirect budget funding to where it really needs to be, provision of good healthcare.

IF the VA were actually trying to fix or repair all the bad in the system, why were there so many employee protections built into the rules and regulations? In civilian life much of what has been done in the VA would be immediate termination and most would be charged with fraud, theft or worse, murder!

And Obama only added to the problem by vetoing the bill that would have made it a heck of a lot easier to terminate VA employees.

I still believe that if Veterans banded together, called their reps in DC and DEMANDED immediate resolutions like civilians do with attorney's, things would change.

Politicians don't like their phone lines being tied up for hours, even days on end and would force them to take action to relieve the stress on their phone lines and allow them to get back to what they do best, fleece Americans.

As you know Easter is coming up fast, and we need your help!

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.

We desperately need your help with 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](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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### *Efforts to Restore GI Bill for Some Vets*

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan is pressing the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to restore the benefits of student veterans who have been defrauded by "deceptive for-profit schools." Madigan, along with the state attorney generals of California, Connecticut, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington, sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald demanding that the VA restore education benefits to vets who attended expensive and unaccredited schools, like the now-shuttered Everest College, which had six locations in Illinois that were operated by Corinthians Colleges, Inc. For more information on student veteran benefits or for-profit schools, Madigan encourages consumers to contact her Student Loan Helpline at 1 (800) 455-2456 (TTY: 1 (800) 964-3013). The letter signed by Madigan and other attorneys general is available on the [Illinois Attorney General website](#).

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### **Statement from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald on the Announced Retirement of House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller**

WASHINGTON – Today Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald announced the following on the retirement of House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller.

"Today I called Chairman Miller to congratulate and thank him for his 15 years of distinguished service as a Member of Congress, and his five years of determined leadership as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee.

"We talked about how much we can accomplish through the end of this year to leave in place necessary changes that will improve the delivery of care and benefits from VA to Veterans and their families. I look forward to that joint effort.

"Over the past two years, working together, I feel we have made a positive difference in the lives of millions of Veterans. I'm proud to be his partner in this effort and to call him a friend. I wish Jeff, his wife Vicki and their entire family all the best."

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### *Joint VA, DoD Effort to Ease Transition*

The Departments of Defense (DoD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) have announced their ongoing effort to ease the transition for servicemembers 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 servicemembers and veterans, who have suffered illnesses or injuries so severe as to require the expertise provided by multiple care specialties throughout both Departments. The hallmark of the effort is the implementation of the role of Lead Coordinator, who will be a designated member of a servicemember's care management team who will serve as the primary coordinator for that individual. It will be the job of the Lead Coordinator to guide servicemembers through the system, ensuring that they receive the care, benefits, and services they both require and to which they are entitled.

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## 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>

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### ***VA Peer Specialists Bill Introduced***

Senators Richard Blumenthal, Tammy Baldwin, and Ed Markey introduced S. 2210, the Veteran Partners' Efforts to Enhance Reintegration Act, also known as the "Veteran PEER Act."

If enacted into law this bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a pilot program of peer specialists to work as members of VA's patient-aligned care teams, for the purpose of promoting the integration of mental health services in VA primary care settings. Overall and ultimately, the bill would authorize the establishment of this pilot program in 25 VA sites, including no less than five of VA's polytrauma centers. The bill would require a series of reports, including a final report to recommend whether the program should be expanded beyond the pilot program sites.

Peer specialists are VA employees who promote recovery by sharing their own histories as consumers of mental health services. They provide encouragement and teach skills to other veterans to aid in their recoveries from mental health challenges. Peer specialists also serve as case management assistants, help others to gain access to the right mental health services, and teach coping and self-advocacy skills.

The VA currently employs peer specialists in its mental health programs, and in VA's Readjustment Counseling Centers (Vet Centers). These specialists have proven to be highly successful in aiding in veterans' recoveries and in reducing the stigma that dissuades veterans from seeking services.

DAV strongly supports this bill based on DAV National Resolution No. 103. This resolution urges improved outreach through general media for stigma reduction and suicide prevention; sufficient staffing to meet demand for mental health services; and enhanced resources for VA mental health programs, including Vet Centers, to achieve readjustment of new war veterans and continued effective mental health care for all enrolled veterans needing such services. This bill is consistent with the intent of Resolution 103.

Please write your Senators today to urge them to cosponsor and work for passage of S. 2210. A letter is prepared for this purpose, or you may write your own individual message. As always, thank you for participating in DAV's Commanders Action Network, and thank you for your support of DAV and our mission on behalf of America's wounded, injured and ill

veterans.

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

<https://www.votervoice.net/BroadcastLinks/6L0cXwaelBJQYWeu1abg2Q>

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## VA Expands Hepatitis C Drug Treatment

*Expanded funding now allows VA to provide increased drug therapy at VA facilities nationwide*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it is now able to fund care for all Veterans with hepatitis C for Fiscal Year 2016 regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease. The move follows increased funding from Congress along with reduced drug prices.

"We're honored to be able to expand treatment for Veterans who are afflicted with hepatitis C," says VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "To manage limited resources previously, we established treatment priority for the sickest patients. Additionally, if Veterans are currently waiting on an appointment for community care through the Choice Program, they can now turn to their local VA facility for this treatment or can elect to continue to receive treatment through the Choice Program."

VA has long led the country in screening for and treating hepatitis C. VA has treated over 76,000 Veterans infected with hepatitis C and approximately 60,000 have been cured. In addition, since the beginning of 2014, more than 42,000 patients have been treated with the new highly effective antivirals. In fiscal year 2015, VA allocated \$696 million for new hepatitis C drugs (17 percent of the VA's total pharmacy budget) and in fiscal year 2016, VA anticipates spending approximately \$1 billion on hepatitis C drugs. VA expects that with the expansion, many more Veterans will be started on hepatitis C treatment every week this fiscal year.

In addition to furnishing clinical care to Veterans with hepatitis C, VA Research continues to expand the knowledge base regarding the disease through scientific studies focused on effective care, screening, and healthcare delivery including to female Veterans and Veterans with complicated medical conditions in addition to hepatitis C.

For additional information on Hepatitis C treatments Veterans can log onto

<http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/hcv/index.asp>.

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

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## ***The Legion Responds to VA Disciplinary Actions***

On Feb. 24, American Legion National Commander Dale Barnett expressed disappointment over recent reversals of disciplinary actions handed down to VA employees who were found to have abused their positions. "Our disappointment only grew after additional hearings established wrongdoing, and punishments were imposed, only to be overturned in the appeals process," Barnett said. "Veterans do not see this as accountability." The American Legion's 2016 Legislative Agenda at the joint session and is available for reading or download from the [American Legion website](#).

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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 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,623,740** 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 **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 **03/06/16** **46** New Jobs and **4** New Job Fairs and **0** Business Opportunity)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,565** articles on-line)
- Polls Added **02/08/16**
- Web Links (**3,429** Active Links)(**Updated 03/07/16** 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](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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### ***5 Secrets to a Successful Military Transition***

There are five steps we recommend every transitioning service member consider as they contemplate the move out of uniform: plan, adjust, search wisely, network, and manage expectations. For more details and strategies for each step, see [this Military.com article](#).

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### ***SECNAV Issues Inclusion Policy Statement***

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus recently issued an updated Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement. Mabus also released a short video. The Department of the Navy last updated its Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement in 2010, and since then, the Department of Defense has made significant personnel policy changes including the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and rescinding the direct ground combat exclusion policy, which now allows women to serve in military occupational specialties that were previously closed to them. The Navy's new Department of the Navy Diversity and Inclusion Policy statement and Secretary of the Navy Mabus' video are available on the [Navy LIVE website](#).

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

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### ***Spotlight: Remanding an Appeal***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Board of Veterans' Appeals has the ability to remand (or send back) a case back to the regional office. A remand may be necessary if there has been a change in law, a worsening of a disability on appeal or the veteran introduces new evidence or theory of entitlement at the Board. Appeals are also remanded if the regional office did not process your claim correctly, usually the result of insufficient evidence gathering. If the Board remands your appeal, the judge will lay out clear steps which the regional office must complete before issuing another decision on your appeal. You will receive a supplemental statement of the case (SSOC), and your appeal will be returned to the Board for a final decision. The Board reviews your case again and renders another decision. For more information, read the VA [VAntage Point Blog](#).

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### ***VA Updates Crisis Lines***

Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson has announced improvements to enhance and accelerate progress at the Veterans Crisis Line. The Veterans Crisis Line will form a stronger bond with VA's Suicide Prevention Office and Mental Health Services. The Veterans Crisis Line will also be under the direction of VA's Member Services, which has many efforts underway to restructure portions of VA that have direct contact with Veterans. Veterans in crisis may contact the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1. They can also text 838255 or chat with trained professionals online at the Veterans Crisis Line [website](#).

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

Medicaid: Federal Guidance Needed to Address Concerns About Distribution of Supplemental Payments.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-108>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Information on Planned Changes to State Performance Reporting and Related Challenges. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-287>

Retirement Security: Better Information on Income Replacement Rates Needed to Help Workers Plan for Retirement.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-242>

Southwest Border Security: Additional Actions Needed to Assess Resource Deployment and Progress.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-465T>

Data Center Consolidation: Agencies Making Progress, but Planned Savings Goals Need to Be Established [Reissued on March 4, 2016]. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-323>

Credit Reform: Current Method to Estimate Credit Subsidy Costs Is More Appropriate for Budget Estimates Than a Fair Value Approach. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-41>

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



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

VA's Health Care Budget: Preliminary Observations on Efforts to Improve Tracking of Obligations and Projected Utilization. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-374T>

Federal Emergency Management Agency: Strengthening Regional Coordination Could Enhance Preparedness Efforts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-38>

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>

Federal Health Care Center: VA and DOD Need to Address Ongoing Difficulties and Better Prepare for Future Integrations. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-280>

Health Care Fraud: Information on Most Common Schemes and the Likely Effect of Smart Cards. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-216>

Medicaid: Changes to Funding Formula Could Improve Allocation of Funds to States. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-377T>

Medicaid: Efforts to Exclude Nonemergency Transportation Not Widespread, but Raise Issues for Expanded Coverage. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-221>

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>

Patient Safety: Hospitals Face Challenges Implementing Evidence-Based Practices. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-308>

Veterans' Health Care: Preliminary Observations on VHA's Claims Processing Delays and Efforts to Improve the Timeliness of Payments to Community Providers. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-380T>

DOD and Coast Guard: Actions Needed to Increase Oversight and Management Information on Hazing Incidents Involving Servicemembers. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-226>

Military Base Realignment and Closures: More Guidance and Information Needed to Take Advantage of Opportunities to Consolidate Training. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-45>

Defense Weather Satellites: Analysis of Alternatives Is Useful for Certain Capabilities, but Ineffective Coordination Limited Assessment of Two Critical Capabilities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-252R>

Emergency Communications: Actions Needed to Better Coordinate Federal Efforts in the National Capital Region. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-249>

Energy Employees Compensation: DOL Generally Followed Its Procedures to Process Claims but Could Strengthen Some Internal Controls. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-74>

Indian Affairs: Key Actions Needed to Ensure Safety and Health at Indian School Facilities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-313>

National Flood Insurance Program: Options for Providing Affordability Assistance. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-190>

National Institutes of Health: Additional Data Would Enhance the Stewardship of Clinical Trials across the Agency. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-304>

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Update on States Counting Third-Party Expenditures toward Maintenance of Effort Requirements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-315>

Troubled Asset Relief Program: Treasury Should Estimate Future Expenditures for the Making Home Affordable Program.

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## Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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### Links to other Stories

- 1) [1,000 Homeless Veterans Closer to Having Shelter, Courtesy \\$4M OK](#)
- 2) [Female World War II pilot proud to be a WASP](#)
- 3) [Former Department of Veterans Affairs Nurse Sentenced to 60 months in prison for Altering and Falsifying VA Computer Records](#)
- 4) [Her Mission Rescuing Phoenix Homeless Veterans](#)
- 5) [In our opinion: Homeless Veterans need help with new bill](#)
- 6) [INVESTIGATION: VA expands investigation of unqualified doctors](#)
- 7) [Milwaukee looks to renovate historic city buildings to house homeless Veterans](#)
- 8) [National 'Access Stand Down' Successful](#)
- 9) [San Diego City Council Starts Funding Homeless Veterans Program](#)
- 10) [Senator wants VA to stop using SSNs](#)
- 11) [Solutions for Grand Rapids Veterans home take on sense of urgency](#)
- 12) [Thousands of Vets Who Claim They Were Sickened by Tainted Water at Marine Base Denied Disability](#)
- 13) [VA wait-times still manipulated, whistleblowers say](#)
- 14) [Veterans Administration updates software to better protect SSN](#)
- 15) [Veterans With Incomplete Health Care Applications Receive Year to Enroll](#)
- 16) [Viral snapshot captures Texas police officer's kindness to homeless Veteran](#)
- 17) [Wounded Warrior Project rocked by fundraising scandal](#)

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)

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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.

***To be Updated by 03/12/16 @ 6pm PST***

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### ***Senators Ask SecDef Carter to Postpone TRICARE Benefits Cuts***

Four Senators wrote a letter to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter to postpone cuts to reimbursement rates for Applied Behavior Benefits (ABA) therapy for TRICARE beneficiaries with Autism Spectrum Disorder, which become effective March 30.

The cuts would result in ABA services being restricted for more than 26,000 children of military personnel who have autism.

The bi-partisan letter was sent to Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and is signed by Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS).

“We ask that the proposed ABA reimbursement rate reductions prescribed by the DHA be immediately postponed pending careful re-evaluation of the existing research on reimbursement rates, and consideration of additional rigorous study, particularly with regard to reimbursements for paraprofessionals,” the senators wrote. “We urge that (Carter) take this action immediately before providers leave the TRICARE ABA services market and begin to no longer accept new TRICARE eligible ABA therapy patients. The children of our service men and women deserve nothing less.”

Source: NAUS

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### ***Another Large VA Error***

The VA confirmed Monday that it failed to contact tens of thousands of the more than 800,000 veterans who have applications for health care pending, nearly 300,000 of whom died before getting a resolution.

VA is required by law to notify veterans of incomplete applications but could not verify that this had been done in the cases of 545,000 living veterans and 288,000 deceased veterans with pending claims.

In the report, the department calls the pending applications incomplete, putting the onus on the veterans to add information to their formal requests for health care.

Scott Davis, the whistleblower who first reported the problem of pending applications, said most of them were erroneously marked as incomplete because they called for an income test or were missing a military service record DD214, which the VA specifically told applicants not to include.

“When we’ve done reviews before we have found that a high (number) of these veterans were because of mistakes by the VA, not the veteran,” said Davis, a program manager at the VA’s national enrollment office with an inside view of the enrollment system.

“It’s not because it can’t work, it’s because they don’t want it to because it’s going to cost a lot of money,” he said.

Part of the problem is software that erroneously calls for the income test and an outdated requirement for a physical signature. Without those elements, applications are automatically listed as "incomplete" and the VA is working to overhaul its system.

However, the VA doesn't have the legal authority to simply override the system and enroll veterans affected by those technicalities.

The VA will be reaching out by mail and phone to every veteran on the pending list and some of them likely will qualify for compensation.

"While I'm glad VA is finally doing something to address this problem, I'm baffled as to why it took the department so long to acknowledge it," said House Veterans' Committee Chairman Jeff Miller in a prepared release.

"Whistleblowers have been complaining about this issue and others at the department's Health Eligibility Center for years, and at (the committee's) request VA's inspector general confirmed a huge backlog of pending health care applications in September of 2015."

A VA official acknowledged there was a failure of leadership in the enrollment center and said VA is examining evidence to determine which officials, if any, should face disciplinary action for their roles with the enrollment problems.

The department will contact living veterans on the pending list to explain what is missing from their applications and determine whether they are still interested in enrolling in VA health care, according to a department news release. Veterans will have one year after being contacted to complete their applications, though they can reapply at any time.

"Fixing the veterans enrollment system is a top priority for VA," VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson said in the release. "This is an important step forward to regain veterans' trust and improve access to care as we continue the MyVA Transformation."

Source: NAUS

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<b>Veteran Crisis Resources</b>	
<a href="#">Veterans Crisis Line</a>	1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
<a href="#">Military Crisis Line</a>	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
<a href="#">National Call Center for Homeless Veterans</a>	1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)
<a href="#">VA Caregiver Support Line</a>	1-855-260-3274

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### ***No RX Co-Pays with the TRICARE Supplement Plan***

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](#).

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### ***VA Announces Additional Steps to Reduce Veteran Suicide Because even one suicide is one too many***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced new steps it is taking to reduce Veteran suicide. The steps follow a February 2 Summit, "[Preventing Veteran Suicide – A Call to Action](#)," that brought together stakeholders and thought leaders to discuss current research, approaches and best practices to address this important subject.

"We know that every day, approximately 22 Veterans take their lives and that is too many," said VA Under Secretary for Health, Dr. David Shulkin. "We take this issue seriously. While no one knows the subject of Veteran suicide better than VA, we also realize that caring for our Veterans is a shared responsibility. We all have an obligation to help Veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of military service that lead them to think suicide is their only option. *We must* and *will* do more, and this Summit, coupled with recent announcements about improvements to enhance and accelerate progress at the Veterans Crisis Line, shows that our work and commitment must continue."

Several changes and initiatives are being announced that strengthen VA's approach to Suicide Prevention. They include:

- Elevating VA's Suicide Prevention Program with additional resources to manage and strengthen current programs and initiatives;
- Meeting urgent mental health needs by providing Veterans with the goal of same-day evaluations and access by the end of calendar year 2016;
- Establishing a new standard of care by using measures of Veteran-reported symptoms to tailor mental health treatments to individual needs;
- Launching a new study, "Coming Home from Afghanistan and Iraq," to look at the impact of deployment and combat as it relates to suicide, mental health and well-being;
- Using predictive modeling to guide early interventions for suicide prevention;
- Using data on suicide attempts and overdoses for surveillance to guide strategies to prevent suicide;
- Increasing the availability of naloxone rescue kits throughout VA to prevent deaths from opioid overdoses;
- Enhancing Veteran Mental Health access by establishing three regional tele-mental health hubs; and
- Continuing to partner with the Department of Defense on suicide prevention and other efforts for a seamless transition from military service to civilian life.

For information about VA initiatives to prevent Veteran suicide, visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/).

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### ***Women Veterans Virtual Career Fair***

On March 9th, Verizon is teaming up with WomenVeterans.com to host a Women Veterans Virtual Career Fair, a global event that is designed by veterans for veterans. During this virtual fair, women in the active-duty military, the reserves, and veterans, can log on to [womenveterans.com](http://womenveterans.com) to connect and chat live with recruiters about jobs available in Customer Service, Retail, network engineering, and IT at Verizon. In addition to the Career Fair, Verizon recently announced that it eliminated the minimum plan requirement for active, former and retired members of the military to receive a 15% discount on monthly wireless service and automatically applied the discount to more than 100,000 accounts. To learn more about this Virtual Career Fair and the Military Discount, visit the [Verizon website](#).

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### ***This month please remember these women who died during March while serving our country in or during war times***

Mar 1918: CIVILIAN YMCA Volunteer Marion G. Crandall, WW I  
Mar 1918: CIVILIAN YMCA Volunteer Winona Martin, WW I  
Mar 1918: CIVILIAN American Red Cross Ruth Landon, WW I  
28 Mar 1918: ANC Patricia Byron, died at Camp McArthur, TX  
7 Mar 1943: WASP Margaret C. Sanford Oldenburg, WW II  
21 Mar 1943: WAFS Cornelia Fort, WW II  
27 Mar 1944: WASP Frances Fortune Grimes, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Jane M Blevins, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Evelyn Burton, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1 LT Catherine Marie Larkin, 30, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 1LT Genevieve R Monaham, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Julia S Barnes, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Rita F Erard, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Evelyn M Gerdrum, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Lyndell A Glisson, 25, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Ethel L Harris, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Helen J Henley, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Kathryn Lucille McCarthy, 25, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Ann L Merrill, plane crash India, WW II  
4 Mar 1945: USA ANC 2LT Mayo C Onken, 25, plane crash India, WW II  
31 Mar 1945: USA PFC Emma Jane (Burrows) Windham from TX, B-17 hit by another plane landing in England  
4 Mar 1963: CIVILIAN Janie A. Makil, baby with missionary, VIETNAM  
30 Mar 1965: CIVILIAN Barbara Robbins, secretary CIA, VIETNAM  
1 Mar 1991: USA MAJ Marie Therese (Rossi) Cayton, 32, helicopter crash in Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM  
10 Mar 1991: USA PFC Pamela V. Gay, 19, DESERT STORM  
12 Mar 1991: USA 2LT Kathleen M Sherry, 23, DESERT STORM  
14 Mar 1991: USA PFC Cindy Deanna Jane "DJ" Bridges, 20, DESERT STORM  
19 Mar 1991: AZARNG PVT Dorothy Fails, 25, accident in Saudi Arabia, DESERT STORM

23 Mar 2003: USA PFC Lori Ann Piestewa, 23, IRAQ  
 23 Mar 2003: USAF 1LT Tamara (Long) Archuleta, 23, AFGHANISTAN  
 1 Mar 2004: USA ANC LTC Francis Liberty, Veteran of 3 wars, passed away  
 7 Mar 2004: USA CPT Gussie M. Jones, 41, IRAQ  
 9 Mar 2004: CIVILIAN Fern L. Holland, 33, lawyer DoD,IRAQ  
 15 Mar 2004: CIVILIAN Karen Denise Watson, 38, missionary, IRAQ  
 15 Mar 2004: CIVILIAN Jean (Dover) Elliot, 58, missionary, IRAQ  
 17 Mar 2004: USA ANC CPT Chris Banigan, Vietnam Nurse, passed away suddenly  
 1 Mar 2005: USA SPC Lizbeth Robles, 31, IRAQ  
 4 Mar 2005: USA SPC Adriana N. Salem, 21, IRAQ  
 1 Mar 2006: USA PFC Tina Priest, 20, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ  
 11 Mar 2006: USA PFC Amy A Duerkson, 19, non-combat gunshot, IRAQ  
 16 Mar 2006: USA SPC Amanda Pinson, 21, non-combat incident, IRAQ  
 3 Mar 2007: USA SGT Ashly L Moyer, 21, IRAQ  
 27 Mar 2007: CIVILIAN Carolyn C Edwards, 38, contractor, IRAQ  
 1 Mar 2008: USA SGT Randi Miller, 25, Iraq Vet, murdered in Seattle  
 2 Mar 2008: SGT Randi Martin, 25, murdered along with her husband at Ft Lewis  
 7 Mar 2008: USAFR SrAirman Blanca Luna, murdered at Sheppard AFB, TX  
 1 Mar 2009: ILARNG SPC Simone A Robinson, 21, IED died at BAMC from burns  
 3 Mar 2009: USA PFC Jessica Y Sarandrea, 22, mortar, IRAQ  
 7 Mar 2009: USA PFC Ashley C Barnes-Lambert, 18, murdered by her husband at Clarksville, TN while home on leave from AFGHANISTAN  
 11 Mar 2009: USA CPT Agnes "Irish" Bresnahan, 58, died from Agent Orange complications following her VA Appeals Hearing while in Washington, DC  
 27 Mar 2009: USN LT Florence B Choe, 35, nurse, AFGHANISTAN  
 8 Mar 2010: USA SPC Lakeshia M Bailey, 23, rollover accident in IRAQ  
 13 Mar 2010: USA PFC Erin L McLyman, 26, mortar fire, IRAQ  
 13 Mar 2010: US Consular Employee Lesley Enriquez, 35, murdered, Juarez, Mexico  
 4 Mar 2011: USA PVT Galina Klippel, 24, suicide, Hawaii  
 3 Mar 2012: USA SPC Shardae (Wright) Durant, murdered by husband in Clarksville, TN  
 11 Mar 2013: USA CPT Sara M Knutson, 27, helicopter crash, AFGHANISTAN  
 11 Mar 2013: USN LT (jg) Valerie Cappelaere Delaney, 26, died in plane crash near Spokane, WA  
 21 Mar 2013: USMC L/CPL Sara Castromata, 19, murdered at Quantico, VA

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### **USO Program Focuses on Military Family Transition**

A new program from the USO focuses on connecting [transitioning troops](#) and their spouses with resources that can help them tackle life in the civilian world. The USO's RP/6, known in the past as Rally Point 6, is a series of one-stop-shop transition centers at major military bases in the U.S. that focuses on helping veterans and their families move out of the military world and into the civilian one. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).

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<b>To Contact your Members of Congress</b>	
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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### **New Vet Reintegration Program in Ohio**

The company ViaQuest is bringing its new Recovery and Reintegration of Veterans (RRVT) program to Ohio. The program will focus on getting veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injuries help with employment, a place to live and mental and physical health services. ViaQuest, a healthcare company that provides services for veterans, home health, hospice and mental and behavioral health, among others, has been helping connect veterans with employment, residential and behavioral health services for years. The RRVT program is available to veterans and reservists at no cost. Or access RRVT services call Zach Asman, U.S. Air Force veteran and assistant director of ViaQuest Veteran Services, at 937-243-3881, or visit the [ViaQuest website](#).

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### ***Senator blasts military pay plan, retirement changes***

Leo Shane of Military times reports that at a hearing this week the Senate's top military personnel lawmaker blasted next years' service member pay raise and the proposed changes to military retirement as "shortchanging" troops instead of rewarding their sacrifice.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), who chairs the Senate Armed Services personnel subcommittee, stopped short of promising a pay hike larger than the 1.6 percent planned for troops in 2017, but did hint that his panel will look for ways to change that figure.

"The department's proposal that would continue to suppress military pay raises misses the mark," he said during a hearing Tuesday. "For the last three years, this administration has failed to allow service members' pay to keep up with private-sector wage growth. This is the fourth year in a row where the department is shortchanging service members."

Graham's comments mirror those made last month by House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, and stand in opposition to Pentagon comments that the pay raise should be recognized for being the largest for the force in four years.

Source: NAUS

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### ***Virginia DMV Goes Mobile to Help Vets***

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles' five mobile customer service centers, called *DMV 2 Go*, are traveling across the state providing services to military members, veterans, and their families. Each full service office provides all DMV transactions. DMV staff can assist with services specific to veterans including applying for the Virginia veterans ID card. DMV also offers more than 30 military-themed license plates. To find the location most convenient for you, see the above attachment. Check the [public calendar](#) for more stops near you. To connect with *DMV 2 Go* on Twitter, use [@VirginiaDMV](#) or [#DMV2Go](#).

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*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~

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

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