



# Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, March 20, 2016**

**Volume 7, Issue 12**

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

This past week you might have noticed a drastic change in the newsletter layout. I do apologize as we are now using a more complex system which offers much more features, but it's a huge learning curve from the prior system. So please bare with me as we learn to use it properly.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced last week that it proposed disciplinary action against three Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) attorneys, and has filed a Complaint against two Board Veterans Law Judges. Accountability actions against the Board judges have been referred to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), which has direct jurisdiction over cases concerning administrative law judges.

But what I find amusing to say the least is with so much that is wrong in the VA healthcare system, how can they police themselves with all their rules and regulations which protect the very same people they're going after?

Another amusing tid bit, the two top executives at the Wounded Warrior Project were fired Thursday, after the release of a damning news report alleging massive amounts of waste and misused funds at the Veterans' charity.

The Board of Directors of WWP had to have known all along as they're provided financial statements at minimum quarterly, so why were they not being the responsible fiduciaries all along?

Scott Davis, a whistleblower and program specialist at the VA's Health Eligibility Center in Atlanta, noted that the VA's HealthResourceCenter is slated to take over the VA's suicide hotline. But according to data provided by Davis, the HealthResourceCenter is dropping hundreds of thousands of calls from Veterans each year.

In speaking with many Veterans this past week who were victims of a "dropped call" or routed to voice mail, and with this one whistleblower coming forward telling of hundreds of thousands of calls being "dropped" it's no wonder our daily suicide rate is so high!

And I still believe right along with many thousands of others who battle their PTSD daily, that even one life lost, is ONE TOO MANY!

And just goes one step further in proving that our countries Veterans are treated and thought of as second class citizens!

Any human being in the VA Healthcare System with any amount of self respect would and should want to take immediate corrective action, yet their standard action is to develop reports, "investigate" and basically wasting time when they know the facts, have the reports needed to take immediate corrective action, so what is their excuse?

The VA's unspoken and unwritten motto of "delay, deny, until they die" is working far better than I'm sure they could ever imagine! And why? In my humble opinion that answer is simple, reduce the Veteran population thereby reducing the amount of funds needed for proper medical care, and decent benefits.

While VFC and many other organizations fight all the wrongs in the VA, constantly hound the members of Congress and Secretary McDonald, really in fact, none of us are strong enough to accomplish much good as the resources are not there to provide a means for Veterans to speak out.

Yes, there are organizations out there that are massive in size, but touting membership numbers actually means absolutely nothing at all to the members of Congress. Why? They don't have to put up with faxes, phone calls or E-Mails from those very same numbers.

Now should those massive organizations put in place a means for their membership to actually help, then I could see no other answer but for Congress to take the appropriate and immediate action needed to correct many of the deficiencies within the VA.

But that does not stop those of us who are small organizations from fighting, doesn't stop of from informing as many Veterans as we can as to what is going on and where.

Although I have been swamped with Veterans across the country telling me of their specific issues and problems and I am a bit slow responding to each one which I will, we still want to hear from any Veteran or family member who have encountered problems.

This helps us to send that information on to the members of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees as well as all members of Congress. This way they can't say "I didn't know!"

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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### ***Brain Injury Awareness Month***

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month, a time to recognize and support the more than 5.3 million Americans who are living with traumatic brain injury-related (TBI) disabilities. Those suffering from traumatic brain injury can display a wide variety of symptoms based on the severity of the injury. Common signs and symptoms include headache or neck pain; memory loss; slowness in thinking, speaking, acting, or reading; getting lost or easily confused; fatigue and mood changes; blurred vision; and ear ringing. Signs and symptoms of TBI may be subtle and might not appear until days or weeks following the injury, while some symptoms can be missed altogether. For more information, visit the U.S. Army TBI webpage at [www.army.mil/tbi/](http://www.army.mil/tbi/), the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center website at [www.dvbic.dcoe.mil/](http://www.dvbic.dcoe.mil/), the

Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury website at [www.dcoe.mil](http://www.dcoe.mil), the Deployment Health Clinical Center website at [www.pdhealth.mil/TBI.asp](http://www.pdhealth.mil/TBI.asp), and the Health.mil website at [www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Conditions-and-Treatments/Physical-Disability/Traumatic-Brain-Injury?page=2](http://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Conditions-and-Treatments/Physical-Disability/Traumatic-Brain-Injury?page=2).

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### ***Oppose Harmful Provisions in DoD Budget!***

The Obama Administration's proposed FY 2017 Defense budget includes several changes to military pay and benefits that include a significant health care cost shift for retirees and their families. The proposed budget also for a fourth year in a row provides an insufficient pay increase for active duty and reserves. Please use the Action Center to ask your legislators to oppose these provisions.

[Take Action!](#)

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### ***VA Takes Steps to Reduce Vet Suicides***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced new steps it is taking to reduce veteran suicide. They include: (1) providing additional resources to manage and strengthen current programs and initiatives; (2) providing veterans with same-day evaluations and access by the end of calendar year 2016; (3) using measures of veteran-reported symptoms to tailor mental health treatments to individual needs; (4) using data on suicide attempts and overdoses for surveillance to guide strategies to prevent suicide; (5) increasing the availability of naloxone rescue kits; and (6) establishing three regional tele-mental health hubs. For information on VA initiatives to prevent veteran suicide, visit the [VA Suicide Prevention webpage](#).

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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!

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my e-mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from the kids too!

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

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## ***Help from the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society***

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) is a nonprofit organization that offers interest-free loans and grants for emergencies and tuition assistance for servicemembers and their families. The fund drive brings awareness to the importance of NMCRS's mission and provides an avenue for individuals to support the cause through financial donation or volunteer service. The active duty fund drive has two primary purposes: to increase awareness of the programs and services available to active duty Sailors and Marines and to raise funds. The NMCRS provides a host of other financial oriented services for servicemembers and their families including: education assistance, health education and post-combat support, budgeting for baby, and loans for emergency travel. For more information, visit the [Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society website](#).

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### ***VA Improves Payments***

To enhance veterans' access to care and eliminate delays in Choice provider payment, community providers under the Choice program will no longer be required to submit medical records prior to payment being made. To facilitate the change, VA has modified the [Choice Program](#) contract, making it easier for Health Net and TriWest to promptly pay providers. Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program or wanting to know more about it, can call 1-866-606-8198 to confirm their eligibility and to schedule an appointment. For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit the [Veterans Choice Program website](#).

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

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### ***Vets Given More Time to Apply for VA Health Care***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced it will extend the healthcare enrollment application period for one year to approximately 545,000 living Veterans that have pending incomplete enrollment applications. "Fixing the Veterans enrollment system is a top priority for VA. This is an important step forward to regain Veterans' trust and improve access to care as we continue the MyVA Transformation," said VA Deputy Secretary Sloan D. Gibson. "We've got a lot of work left to do, but this is a big step in the right direction to restore the data integrity of our enrollment system."

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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 **2,635,381** 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 **03/14/16 21** New Jobs and **1** New Job Fairs and **0** Business Opportunity)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,579** 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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### ***TRICARE: Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record***

The Military Health System's (MHS) Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Health Information Exchange (HIE) Initiative enables shared access to your health care information. The information exchanged is already part of your TRICARE benefit. If you do not want your information accessed by your doctors in VLER HIE, you can opt out. Once you opt out, the MHS will not be able to share your information, even in case of an emergency. To opt out, visit the [TRICARE VLER Health Information Exchange Initiative webpage](#), download and complete the VLER Opt-Out (In) Letter template, then mail it to the address provided on the letter. If you choose to opt out now and change your mind later, you may opt back in.

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### ***Women's History Month***

March is Women' History Month, which honors the hard work and contributions made by women in the past and present. Today, in the U.S. Military, there are not many jobs women cannot volunteer for. For more information about Women's History Month and the role of women in the U.S. military, visit the Library of Congress' Women's History Month website at [womenshistorymonth.gov](http://womenshistorymonth.gov), the Navy Personnel Command website at [www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/organization/bupers/WomensPolicy/Pages/WomensHistoryMonth.aspx](http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/organization/bupers/WomensPolicy/Pages/WomensHistoryMonth.aspx), the Women in the U.S. Army webpage at [www.army.mil/women/](http://www.army.mil/women/), the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force website at [www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/research/womenshistorymonth.asp](http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/research/womenshistorymonth.asp), the Soldiers Magazine website at [soldiers.dodlive.mil/tag/womens-history-month/](http://soldiers.dodlive.mil/tag/womens-history-month/), the Women in Army History webpage at [www.history.army.mil/html/topics/women/index.html](http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/women/index.html), and the National Women's History Project website at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).



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

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## ***Name the New B-21 Bomber***

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James recently announced the newest bomber addition to the Air Force's long history of aircraft, the B-21. The naming opportunity is only open to members of the US Air Force: active duty force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, and their dependents, members of the US Air Force Civil Service and US Air Force retirees. [Read the naming contest guidelines and submit a name.](#)

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## ***Eliminate Costs Left Behind by TRICARE***

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

Space Acquisitions: Challenges Facing DOD as it Changes Approaches to Space Acquisitions.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-471T>

Bee Health: USDA and EPA Should Take Additional Actions to Address Threats to Bee Populations.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-220>

Oil and Gas Management: Interior's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement Restructuring Has Not Addressed Long-Standing Oversight Deficiencies.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-245>

U.S. Secret Service: Data Analyses Could Better Inform the Domestic Field Office Structure.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-288>

Defense Infrastructure: More Accurate Data Would Allow DOD to Improve the Tracking, Management, and Security of Its Leased Facilities. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-101>

Federal Rulemaking: Opportunities Remain for OMB to Improve the Transparency of Rulemaking Processes.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-505T>

Aviation Forecasting: FAA Should Implement Additional Risk-Management Practices in Forecasting Aviation Activity.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-210>

Department of Homeland Security: Progress Made, but Work Remains in Strengthening Acquisition and Other Management Functions. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-507T>

Indian Affairs: Key Actions Needed to Ensure Safety and Health at Indian School Facilities.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-391T>

Unmanned Aerial Systems: Further Actions Needed to Fully Address Air Force and Army Pilot Workforce Challenges.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-527T>

Critical Defense Materials: Government Collected Data Are Sufficiently Reliable to Assess Tantalum Availability.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-335>

Federal Real Property: GSA Could Better Identify Risks of Unforeseen Conditions in Repair and Alteration Projects.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-273>

Private Health Insurance: Federal Oversight Premiums and Enrollment for Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans in 2015. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-326>

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: CMS Should Act to Strengthen Enrollment Controls and Manage Fraud Risk.  
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-506T>



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## Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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### Links to other Stories

- 1) [Awful: The VA's Suicide Hotline Dropped 1.4 Million Calls Last Year](#)
- 2) [Couple pays \\$4.99 for Purple Heart at Goodwill, finds rightful family](#)
- 3) [Former Director of Phoenix VA Pleads Guilty to Felony](#)
- 4) [Former Marine Partners With Rep. DeSantis on Bill to Match Veterans With Service Dogs](#)
- 5) [Officials admit to letting Veterans die before they would talk to Republicans](#)
- 6) [Sen. Klobuchar introduces bill to help Veterans exposed to burn pits](#)
- 7) [Soldier Who Shot at Police, Firefighters Now Eligible for VA Benefits](#)
- 8) [Top Wounded Warrior execs FIRED after damning report on waste](#)
- 9) [VA finally moves to fire disgraced Phoenix executives... but it could still take two more years](#)
- 10) [VA Responds to IG Report about Crisis Hotline](#)
- 11) [VA roundtable studies successes to combat Veteran homelessness](#)
- 12) [VA Takes Accountability Actions against Board of Veteran Appeals Personnel](#)
- 13) [VA's volunteer program celebrates 70th anniversary in 2016](#)
- 14) [War On Science: Bogus Human Carcinogens](#)

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 03/20/16 by 6pm PST**

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### ***Hunting Licenses for New Hampshire Vets***

Veterans in New Hampshire who like to hunt and fish but have trouble affording a license have a new place to seek help. The recently created New Hampshire Veteran Sportsmen Foundation will help New Hampshire veterans buy a license and is looking for applications. The offer is only open to veterans who are New Hampshire residents. A combined hunting fishing license costs \$56 a year for state residents who are not eligible for other discounts. Permits for certain species or seasons can increase the cost. For more information, email [nhveteransportsman@yahoo.com](mailto:nhveteransportsman@yahoo.com), or write N.H. Veterans Sportsman Foundation, 16 Swamp Road, Deerfield, NH 03037.

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### ***Free Bus Routes for New Mexico Vets***

Veterans can now ride for free on two North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) bus routes in New Mexico. One is the Mountain Trail route that runs between Santa Fe and Ski Santa Fe three times a day during the week. On the weekends, the bus runs seven times a day. The other affected route is between Taos, Española and Santa Fe. Drivers make two trips north and south daily. The tax-supported transit district operates 19 other routes that are fare-free in the counties of Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Taos. For more information, visit the [NCRTD website](#).

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#### ***Veteran Crisis Resources***

<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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### ***Two Veterans Law Judges Face Disciplinary Actions***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced it proposed disciplinary action against three Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) attorneys, and has filed a Complaint against two Board Veterans Law judges. Accountability actions against the Board judges have been referred to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), which has direct jurisdiction over cases concerning administrative law judges. The actions were taken for reasons of misconduct based on information received as part of an Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation that revealed a pattern of inappropriate emails that were racist and sexist in tone. VA is conducting a review of appeals handled by these individuals. At this time, VA has no indication that any veteran's appeal was unjustly influenced by their conduct.

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### ***Support Blue Water Navy Veterans Legislation***

The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015 (H.R. 969 and S. 681) was introduced by Representative Christopher Gibson and Senator Kristin Gillibrand, respectively. This legislation would expand presumptions for Vietnam Veterans to be awarded service connection for illnesses and diseases associated with exposure to herbicides containing dioxin, including Agent Orange. This legislation would extend eligibility to Vietnam veterans who served in the vicinity of Vietnam, including the inland waterways, ports, harbors, and waters offshore or territorial seas of Vietnam, as well as in the airspace above, during the period of war.

As of March 15, 2016, H.R. 969 has 305 cosponsors and has been referred to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. S. 681 has 39 cosponsors and is pending before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.



DAV supports these measures, which are in line with DAV Resolution No. 018, passed at our most recent National Convention. Please take a moment to send the prepared e-mail to your legislators to seek their support for this legislation.

Also, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association has [launched a petition](#) drive in support of this bill. We recommend you support this petition as a part of your advocacy to pass this important legislation.

As always, thank you for your support.

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

[https://www.voterveice.net/BroadcastLinks/cLfchx36OG8zxw-Hr\\_Gs\\_A](https://www.voterveice.net/BroadcastLinks/cLfchx36OG8zxw-Hr_Gs_A)

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### ***State of Emergency Declared in Texas***

Due to flooding, the governor of Texas has declared a state of emergency in the counties of Angelina, Erath, Gregg, Hardin, Harrison, Hood, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Newton, Orange, Parker, Sabine, San Augustine and Tyler.

Emergency Refill to Soon procedures are in place March 14, 2016 through April 09, 2016.

For more information, visit the [TRICARE](#) website.

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions).

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### **Proposed Rulemaking for State Veteran Cemeteries Monuments and Memorials (Adopt 12CCR §462)**

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](mailto:mark.george@calvet.ca.gov)

Comments must be received by 5 p.m. on March 31, 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](#).

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### ***State of Emergency Declared in Louisiana***

The governor of Louisiana has declared a State of Emergency for the entire state due to severe flooding. Emergency Refill to Soon procedures are in effect March 10, 2016 through April 09, 2016.

For more details, visit the [TRICARE](#) website.

Sign up for TRICARE e-mail updates at [www.tricare.mil/subscriptions](http://www.tricare.mil/subscriptions).

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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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### ***VA to Discipline Three More Employees in Phoenix***

The VA announced that it has issued notices of proposed removal to three senior officials at the Phoenix VA Health Care System.

The Department has proposed the removal of Lance Robinson, the facility's associate director; Brad Curry, chief of health administration service; and Dr. Darren Deering, chief of staff.

In January, Gibson changed VA policy to ensure that employees who were part of administrative investigations would not be placed on paid administrative leave, instead they would be moved into non-patient care functions and continue performing other duties as assigned.

The announced actions follow the appointment of a new medical center director for the Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS). On November 20, Deborah Amdur was named Health Care System director after serving as medical center director of the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont.

Source: NAUS

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

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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.

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

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### ***Defense Health Agency***

DHA is a joint, integrated combat support agency that enables military health systems to provide affordable and high quality health services to military members and their beneficiaries.

[Defense Logistics Agency \(DLA\)](#) Troop Support leaders recently welcomed DHA Director Navy Vice Adm. Raquel Bono and other agency leaders to Philadelphia to discuss the partnership between both organizations. Leaders from the

Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and Defense Health Agency met to discuss future collaboration to streamline the medical logistics process.

More on the visit this [website](#)

Source: NAUS

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### ***DoD and VA Not Close to Joint Operability***

Five years ago, Congress mandated the creation of the first medical center to be operated by both the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs as a model for joint delivery of health care across both agencies.

In its short history, however, the Chicago-based Federal Health Care Center has struggled with [costly IT](#) and [planning issues](#), according to [a new Government Accountability Office report](#).

The report suggests IT infrastructure problems, first identified in 2012 when a \$122 million project went over budget, have not been mitigated.

Both VA and DOD share resources at the facility, but to accommodate the agencies' different network security standards, they share resources over three networks -- not one. The resulting complexity has "impeded efficiency" for staff of both agencies to consistently access VA and DOD's electronic health records system, according to the report.

Through upgrades and expanded data sharing support, DOD and VA have tried to improve the health care center's IT infrastructure reliability. Aside from using a single network, there seems to be no clear-cut solution.

In responses to the GAO report, officials said a single-network IT infrastructure is not going to happen.

"VA and DOD officials told GAO that the departments do not plan to resolve differences in network security standards to the extent that the FHCC would be able to have a single-network IT infrastructure," the report stated. "According to VA officials, this is due, at least in part, to the departments' different missions."

The problems uncovered in GAO's latest report is, in one sense, a physical manifestation of the [massive struggle between VA and DOD](#) to seamlessly share electronic health records. The two agencies' respective systems each manage some 10 million beneficiaries. Pentagon officials [believe they are ready to certify](#) health records interoperability required by the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, but [Congress and its watchdogs](#) contend such interoperability is years away.

Last year, the Pentagon awarded Leidos and its partners [a \\$9 billion contract](#) to develop its next-generation electronic health records system. By 2022, Pentagon officials expect its commercial system to be "interoperable and running" with VA and other commercial platforms.

Source: NAUS



*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.***

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

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

*Serving those who served!*

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