



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter *A Voice of the Veterans*

Week Ending Sunday, July 24, 2016
Volume 7, Issue 27

This-N-That

Everyday we still see and hear more and more about Veterans being mistreated, misdiagnosed, not even diagnosed at all, benefits denied, the continued employment of administrative staff that have broken rules and profited from their actions.

Over the past ten plus days now we've seen mass shootings in Dallas and Boston, both actions having cost the lives of men and women in Blue.

Sadly, the actions of Veterans, but the one thing not one media outlet has touched on were these were Veterans in crisis. They tried to seek help and our wonderful VA Healthcare system in its infinite wisdom chose to deny benefits vs. actually looking at the person and seeing they need help, they cried out asking for help and were ignored.

And because of the mistakes made with these Veterans at the hands of the Veterans Affairs, lack of publishing the truth in media about these Veterans, I am more than sure that the VA will use these horrible incidents against ALL Veterans with their demand of surrendering any weapons you have in order to maintain your VA benefits and medical care.

They'd already been doing this on a smaller scale over the past two years, and there has been little in the media with the exception of a small handful of Veterans, but I'm sure these incidents will give the VA all that much more power to fully enforce this across the board with all Veterans, illegal as it is!

Also growing more and more, but still on a very small level are Veterans who want to dismantle the VA Healthcare System. To be allowed to seek private medical care but at the expense of the VA.

What most do not realize is that the problems with the VA are solely at the hands of the upper echelon, the Secretary, Under Secretary, and each VAMC Administrative Staff and old guard Medical staff who for years had pounded in their heads to find ways to deny claims.

If the bonuses were done away with, the ability to terminate any staff member for violations of rules and regulations, poor quality care being provided, forced to sign a morals clause in an employment contract and treated like civilian employees are, this would solve a majority of the problems.

Add to that the slashing of funds being provided to private organizations to handle various issues like homeless Veterans and actually put that money into mini homes which could be placed on many of the VAMC's properties that lay vacant and some have quite a bit of property, this also could save billions of dollars.

Restructuring the purchasing system and taking advantage of the largest buying power in the country by creating regional warehouse facilities responsible for monitoring supplies and equipment, again they could save billions annually making more funds available to pay on claims and provide benefits.

The VA and DoD have spent the last three decades wasting billions on a computer records system that neither agency ever sat down and created a list of what each wanted and would do vs. going out into the civilian sector and checking out programs that have been in use since 1990.

Most civilian software developers would calmer at the chance to bid on such a contract and would bend over backwards to create a much needed software program. In fact there is one program that has been out there since 1978 and with annual updates, improvements, added features has become a medical industry top standard.

One huge effective feature is that once notes are entered for a patient, no one, not even a hospital administrator could ever change the notes. Preventing fraud and deception on care actually provided.

We need to move forward in medical care for all those who are serving and have served, stop playing games with lives and families and get the job done. And this among other issues is what we've been fighting for, for many years now.

There is a lot of good in the VA, but it's over-looked due to all the bad. And still most of the Veteran Service Organizations are picking on small issues that really don't much matter to anyone when they should be focused on benefits, care, quality of life and saving lives.

If you have a beef with the VA, or had problems no matter in what area or department, please write to me and let me know. The more we know, the better we are able to push issues with Congress.

If you have not checked out the VFC Website, you might want to visit today. We're always adding a little more each week. Web Links and Documents on various issues. We also have many forums on various topics where you can post issues, questions, etc and share with those who served in the same era as you.

On behalf of myself and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

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VA Looks at Payments to Incarcerated Vets

An audit by the Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General of Veterans Benefits Administration's incarcerated veterans adjudications has found VA is failing to fulfill its duty to adjust payments in accordance with the law. The law requires VA to cut certain benefits payouts to veterans who are incarcerated for longer than 60 days. The audit found VA was not prioritizing these claims, which resulted in substantial overpayments. Once many of those veterans are released from their incarceration, they are then billed for the overpayment often resulting in hardship for the veteran. The Inspector General's audit report is available on the VA [website](#).

VA Not Sure How 24k Vets Were Diagnosed With TBI by Unqualified Personnel

The Department of Veterans Affairs told a House Veterans' Affairs subcommittee last week that they don't know how 24,000 veterans were diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) by "VA physicians considered unqualified to make such a determination," according to the Air Force Times. Officials also said that the department is working to resolve related disability claims problems.

From 2007 to 2015 roughly 24,000 veterans diagnosed with TBI by a VA health provider considered to be unqualified under VA policy, and some of them were denied disability benefits.

Dave McLenachen, deputy undersecretary for disability assistance at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) told the HVAC subcommittee last week that he was unable to "find a reason" why the exams were conducted in violation of VA policy at a number of VA facilities.

Apparently more than 14,000 affected veterans already are receiving disability compensation for service-connected TBI, "many at higher rates of evaluation." So telling these veterans that the VA is "going to schedule an exam without their choice, might have a significant impact on their benefits," according to McLenachen.

More than 327,000 troops were diagnosed with a brain injury from 2000 to 2015. Roughly 80 percent of those diagnoses were for mild TBI, or concussion.

Roughly 170,000 veterans with TBI have filed disability compensation claims and 75,000 have been approved.

Source: TREA

Are VA's Critics Ignoring MyVA Reforms?

According to the VA appointed 12 person advisory panel, known as the MyVA Advisory Committee, Trump and other politicians critical of the VA are missing the positive strides made by VA to implement the 'MyVA' healthcare system initiatives and reforms. According to a recent article by Tom Philpott, the MyVA committee members are concerned politicizing veteran's issues will derail reform efforts. [Read the full 'Military Update' article in the Military Advantage blog.](#)

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

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 kids too!

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

Government Accountability Reports

Military Personnel: DOD Needs More Complete Data on Active-Duty Servicemembers' Use of Food Assistance Programs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-561>

DHS Management: Enhanced Oversight Could Better Ensure Programs Receiving Fees and Other Collections Use Funds Efficiently. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-443>

IRS 2017 Budget: IRS Could Improve Presentation of Budget Data in Its Congressional Justification. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-695>

Oil and Gas: Interior Could Do More to Account for and Manage Natural Gas Emissions. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-607>

Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle: DOD Is Assessing Data on Worldwide Launch Market to Inform New Acquisition Strategy. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-661R>

Federal Research Grants: Opportunities Remain for Agencies to Streamline Administrative Requirements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-573>

DoD to Host Online Education Fair

The Department of Defense Voluntary Education Program will host its second Virtual Education Fair, August 11, 2016, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EDT, in an effort to help make higher education more accessible to service members, veterans and

family members. Registration is required to participate and is open [here](#). During the meeting you will be able to chat with admissions reps from selected colleges, watch videos on selecting the right school for you, connect with education counselors, and get your questions answered by financial aid and GI Bill experts from the VA.

Honoring the Fallen at World War II Memorial

A [recent article](#) at Military.com detailed the controversy over visitors wading in the fountain at the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. There posted signs posted that announce that wading is prohibited (Honor Your Veterans. No wading. Coins damage fountain), but tourists start to ignore the signs when the temperature climbs. What's your take on the situation? Weigh in in [this Sound Off post](#).

Korean War Memorial to Open in San Francisco

A Korean War Memorial will be dedicated on Monday, Aug. 1, at the Presidio in San Francisco. The dedication ceremony will run 10 a.m. to noon. The memorial will stand on high ground adjacent to the national cemetery facing west across the Pacific Ocean toward Korea. The spot was chosen because it was the embankment point for servicemembers who fought in the Korean War, and represented the end of the journey for those returning home.

Patriot PAWS

The mission of Patriot PAWS is to train and provide service dogs at no cost to disabled American veterans and others with mobile disabilities and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in order to help restore their physical and emotional independence. The organization currently only accepts applications from veterans who served during Desert Storm to present for fully certified Service Dogs. Pre-Desert Storm veterans can apply for a social companion dog. These dogs can be very helpful within the home but DO NOT have public access. For more information, visit the Patriot PAWS [website](#).

Rep. Mark Takano becomes Acting Ranking Member of HVAC

After House Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Rep. Corinne Brown (D-FL) was arraigned for 24- counts federal indictment for fraud and conspiracy she stepped down from being the Ranking Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. She is running for her seat in a Florida primary set for August 30th.

Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) was named the Acting Ranking Member of the HVAC. Rep. Takano responded by saying:” I am humbled to assume the role of Acting Ranking Member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, in accordance with the rules of the Democratic Caucus. I am committed to working with my colleagues to provide our nation’s veterans the care and support they deserve.”

TREA believes that there will be a contest for permanent Ranking (or Chairman depending on how the Congressional election plays out).

Source: TREA

VA Conducts Suicide Analysis

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has undertaken the most comprehensive analysis of veteran suicide rates in the U.S. The final report will be publicly released later this month. Key findings of the analysis will include: (1) 65 percent of all veterans who died from suicide in 2014 were 50 years of age or older; (2) veterans accounted for 18 percent of all deaths from suicide among U.S. adults; (3) since 2001, veteran suicides increased 32 percent; (4) since 2001, the rate of suicide among U.S. veterans who use VA services increased by 8.8 percent, while the rate of suicide among veterans who do not use VA services increased by 38.6 percent. If you are in crisis, or know a veteran who is, call the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1) or text 838255 or visit the Veterans Crisis Line [website](#).

WWII Veterans Sought in New York State

Western New York's World War II veterans can sign up now for the next Honor Flight. The flight is scheduled for Saturday, October 29. Veterans will leave early that morning from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport. The Honor Flight organization is looking for 40 to 45 veterans to sign up. It is free for veterans, and veterans are also encouraged to bring a guardian. Guardians pay their own expenses for the day. For more information, visit the Leatherstocking Honor Flight [website](#). If you sign up, be sure to specifically say you are from the Buffalo area, and you want to sign up for the Western New York flight.



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 Secretary Responds to CARE Report

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald has released a Statement on the Commission on Care final report. Read the statement on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [website](#). The report is available on the Commission on Care [website](#). Read the statement from the American Legion regarding the report on the American Legion [website](#).

Survey Says Most See Vets as Heroes

A new survey has found that the vast majority of Americans and employers see veterans as "heroes," but do not see them as "assets" within the community. This viewpoint can keep veterans from the jobs they want. The online survey of more than 2,000 veterans and non-veterans found that 84% of employers and 75% of civilians see veterans as heroes. But only 26% of employers and 22% of civilians think veterans are "strategic assets" in their communities. The numbers were almost identical to findings by Pew Research in 2011, when the same questions were asked. Survey results were released as part of a joint effort by Edelman; Give an Hour, a non-profit organization that provides counseling to troops and veterans, and the George W. Bush Institute.

Secretary Takes Action to Ensure Project ARCH Veterans Continue to Receive Care Closer to Home

Augusta, Maine – As the [Project ARCH](#) pilot program comes to an end next month, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert A. McDonald today announced that Veterans enrolled in the program will be able to continue receiving care closer to home. Taking advantage of options available under the [Veterans Choice Program](#), such as the “unusual or excessive burden provision” and Provider Agreements, Veterans receiving care under Project ARCH will continue care without interruption when the pilot program ends August 7.

“There is nothing more important to us than serving the Veterans who served our country,” said Secretary McDonald. “My commitment to those Veterans under Project ARCH is that we will do everything within our control to make sure they maintain continuity of care in their communities with the providers they know.”

Project ARCH operates in Maine, Virginia, Kansas, Montana and Arizona. In anticipation of the program’s end, Project ARCH providers have been contacted and invited to continue to provide health care to Veterans under the Veterans Choice Program.

“VA appreciates the Veterans and community providers who participated in the program,” said Dr. Baligh Yehia, Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Community Care. “VA is employing lessons learned and best practices from the program as we work to build one [consolidated program for community care](#) – a program that delivers the best of both VA and the community.”

Veterans transitioning to the Veterans Choice Program are being contacted regarding their individual care.

Veterans-For-Change Website

If you haven’t visited in a while, maybe you should visit today! Since we went back on-line in October 2012 average visitors have been around 1,700 per day and we’ve had a total of **2,886,527** visitors.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE** of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

We feel we have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available, and 100% user friendly.

There are era Forums, VA Forums, Mental Health Forum with a licensed clinical worker, and much much more!

www.veterans-for-change.org

- ◆ Documents Library with over 15,406 documents on-line (Updated: **07/13/16**)
- ◆ FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers (Updated: **02/20/16**)
- ◆ Multiple Forums
- ◆ Job Postings (Updated: **07/11/16**)
- ◆ Memorial Pages (Updated: **01/02/16**)
- ◆ News (Articles On-Line: **5,892**)
- ◆ Polls
- ◆ Web Links, more than 3,440, Added 1 New Links (Updated: **07/13/16**)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

Pentagon Announces Multibillion Dollar TRICARE Contracts

Patricia Kime of *Military Times* reports Humana Military and Health Net Federal Services are the big winners in the bid for TRICARE contracts worth potentially \$57 billion to manage the military health program over the next five years, announced by the Defense Department on Thursday.

With the change from three regions to two UnitedHealthcare, the nation's largest single health care company and official manager of the Tricare West Region since 2012 is now out of the TRICARE business.

According to the contract announcement Thursday, Humana, which now manages the Tricare South Region, will assume the contract for the new Tricare East Region, which encompasses 29 States and parts of two States and the District of Columbia.

That contract has an up-front value of \$67.5 million with an estimate of \$40.5 billion for the duration of the contract.

Health Net Federal Services, which manages the Tricare North Region, was awarded the contract for Tricare West Region, valued at more than \$49 million in the initial phase and up to \$17.7 billion over the five-year contract period. The West Region includes 19 States and portions of three States.

The Defense Health Agency has cut the number of Tricare regions from three to two in a cost-savings measure designed to streamline management oversight and cut administrative costs.

In the bidding process, companies were allowed to bid for both regions but could win only one contract and no single company would be selected to manage both regions.

Traditionally, the Tricare contract award has been a tumultuous decision, with the last contract award process started in July 2009. The Tricare North region contract was given to Aetna, the South region contract was awarded to UnitedHealth Military & Veterans Services and the West region went to TriWest Healthcare Alliance.

But HealthNet Federal Services, which originally held the North region contract, protested and eventually won the contract for that region while Humana, which held the South region, also protested and won back the contract.

A protest of that decision was then filed by UnitedHealth that was denied by the Government Accountability Office, after which the company made a case that it should be able to compete for the West region contract.

The government agreed, and in a follow-on competition for the West region, UnitedHealthCare won the contract for the Tricare West Region in March 2012.

In a statement released Thursday, a UnitedHealthCare spokesman said it was “evaluating the next steps and looks forward” to hearing the government’s explanation for its decision.

“We remain committed to serving the health care needs of our country’s military service members, retirees and their families in the TRICARE West Region,” Bruce Jasurda said. “UnitedHealthcare will continue to look for opportunities to support the Defense Health Agency to bring quality and innovative solutions to meet TRICARE beneficiaries’ health care needs.”

As is customary, the TRICARE contracts provide five, one-year options exercisable by the DoD. Final disposition of the contract award is, however, subject to the resolution of any protests that may be filed by unsuccessful bidders.

Source: NAUS

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Links to Other Stories

- 1) [*25 arrested for fraud related to TRICARE and compound drugs*](#)
- 2) [*A invites Women Veterans to Chat Online*](#)
- 3) [*Army Veteran receives Medal of Honor for heroic actions in Vietnam*](#)
- 4) [*Atomic Veterans battle against illnesses and for recognition*](#)
- 5) [*Attacks on police in Dallas, Baton Rouge show deadly combination of struggling Veterans and guns*](#)
- 6) [*For Suicidal Veterans, a Frayed Lifeline*](#)
- 7) [*Former stowaway and WWII Vet decorated by France*](#)
- 8) [*I've treated Veterans with PTSD. It's time to make them eligible for the Purple Heart*](#)
- 9) [*Merger of TRICARE offices provides more efficiencies in care management*](#)
- 10) [*Nevada Man Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison for Perpetrating a Nationwide Multimillion-Dollar Fraud Scheme*](#)

- 11) [Palm Beach County Resident Found Guilty of Defrauding Federal Agencies](#)
- 12) [Rubio, Miller Team Up Again on VA Reform](#)
- 13) [Secretary Takes Action to Ensure Project ARCH Veterans Continue to Receive Care Closer to Home](#)
- 14) [Senator: Veterans chief should resign after sexual harassment verdict](#)
- 15) [Some Veterans Outraged By New VA TBI Examination Letter](#)
- 16) [Temecula Sailor takes home gold at the 2016 DoD Warrior Games](#)
- 17) [VA Announces New Partnerships and Collaboration](#)
- 18) [Veterans Worry Baton Rouge and Dallas Shootings Will Spread Stereotypes](#)
- 19) [Walz seeks ranking member seat on House Veterans' Affairs Committee](#)
- 20) [When bureaucracy tops the charts](#)
- 21) [Why Veterans groups are speaking out against 'Orange is the New Black'](#)

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



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

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

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

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send and E-Mail to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

~We Proudly Support our Military Personnel & Families~

DoD Consolidates TRICARE Regional Offices

On July 1, 2016, TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) North and TRO South became TRO East. TRO West is continuing as before covering the western United States.

The move was made in advance of the pending award of the TRICARE-2017 (T-2017).

Current TRO North staff in Falls Church, Virginia, and TRO South staff in San Antonio, are functioning under the new TRO East business model. Some staff rebalancing occurred to eliminate redundancies, but each office will continue to provide management and support services in their respective geographic areas covering 33 States.

Ken Canestrini, chief operating officer for TRO East, Canestrini said having two major regional offices hits the right balance of combining operations for efficiencies while making sure not all of the eggs are in one basket.

“With just one contractor for all stateside areas, if you had any issues with a contractor or service, it would likely affect all our beneficiaries,” said Canestrini. “This way you’ll continue to have two major sectors of terrain, while still capitalizing on best practices from the different regions.”

TRO East will handle the lion’s share of those enrolled in TRICARE, with about six million beneficiaries – about two-thirds of all TRICARE beneficiaries.

Under the future T-2017 Managed Care Support Contracts, one government business partner will manage the network of civilian medical providers for the entire East Region where previously, two business partners split that responsibility in eastern geographic regions designated as North and South.

The TRICARE Regional Offices provide essential government oversight and coordination for those civilian contractors.

Canestrini said this move is one of many initiatives in the Defense Health Agency to improve the Military Health System and ensure active-duty, retirees and family members receive the highest-quality health care services for years to come.

Source: NAUS

If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.

<https://gem.godaddy.com/signups/193302/join>



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Riverside County, CA

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Boston	71,288
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	11,685
DoD	12,239
Face Book Pages	3,289
Google	7,764
Los Angeles	123,710
Microsoft	3,192
National Guard	753
New York	141,449
Other Social Media	26,682
San Francisco	72,357
Twitter	32
US House of Reps & Staff	829
US Senators & Staff	98
University of So. California	3,699
US Air Force	30,078
US Army	37,304
US Marines	22,221
US Navy	21,377
Veterans	19,065,723
Washington DC	138,209
Yahoo	134
	19,942,125

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