Hello Everyone, and welcome to the November 2023 edition of our Legislative, Regulatory, and Governmental Affairs newsletter.

**New Rules**

**Final Rule - Presumptive Connection for Cancers due to exposure to Fine Particulate Matter.** This rule, which took effect on November 3, applies to two categories of veterans suffering from specific cancers. The first are those who served in the Persian Gulf War (August 2, 1990, or later). The second are those who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti, or Uzbekistan during certain periods. The presumptive illnesses covered include:

- SCC of the larynx or trachea;
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea;
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea or lung;
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung;
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung;
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung; and
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

**Final Rule - VA Pilot Program on Graduate Medical Education and Residency (PPGME).** This rule, which takes effect December 13, 2023, will institute the PPGME, allowing the VA to assess alternative methods for funding residents outside of the VA’s current graduate medical education structure. Specifically, the VA will place residents in covered facilities, prioritizing placement of residents in facilities serving Native Americans (e.g. the Indian Health Service, tribe-operated facilities, etc.).

**Final Rule - Reevaluation of Claims for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.** Effective January 2024, the VA is implementing Section 204 of the PACT Act, which calls for the reevaluation of claims for dependency and indemnity compensation involving the Act’s new presumptions of service connection.

**Final Rule - Payments Under State Home Care Agreements for Nursing Home Care.** This final rulemaking changes the State Home per diem regulation by implementing a new formula for calculating the prevailing rate that is payable where State Homes are located for nursing home care furnished in those State Homes. The new formula will apply to both new and existing agreements, and VA will adjust rates annually to reflect changes made by CMS.

**Proposed Rule - Commemorative Plaques and Urns.** The VA is beginning its regulatory process to implement its new authority under the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act to furnish commemorative plaques and urns for qualified veterans whose cremated remains are not interred. Comments on the proposed regulatory change must be received by the VA on or before January 19, 2024, and may be submitted on regulations.gov.

**Notices and Meetings**

**NOTICE – Allowance for Private Purchase of Outer Burial Receptacles.** Effective January 1, the allowance payable for qualifying interments using these receptacles is $411.

**Dec. 6 - National Research Advisory Council (NRAC) Meeting.** This meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Eastern and will be open to the public. The NRAC advises the Secretary on research conducted by the Veterans Health Administration. Topics during this meeting include annual updates from the Sensitive Species Committee and updates on pathology specimen storage. To attend, either dial 1 (872) 701 - 0185 (meeting ID: 830 018 956#), or use this link.

**Dec. 11 - VA National Academic Affiliations Council Teleconference.** This meeting will be open to the public and will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Secretary on matters affecting partnerships between VA and its academic affiliates. To attend, dial 1 (669) 254 - 5252, enter meeting ID 161 511 8883#. The meeting passcode is 079818 then press #.

**Dec. 12 to 13 - Advisory Committee on Women Veterans Virtual Meeting.** These meetings will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday and 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern on Thursday. The purpose of this committee is to advise the VA Secretary on the particular needs of women Veterans with respect to healthcare, rehabilitation, compensation, and outreach.

To attend by phone, call 1 (404) 397 - 1596 (access code: 27611900779), or click this link.
Dec. 12 to 14 - Advisory Committee on U.S. Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States. This series of meetings will be held at the San Juan VA Medical Center (Room 2M240, 2nd Floor) and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Dates and times (Atlantic Standard Time) are as follows:

- December 12th, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.;
- December 13th, 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., and 4:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and
- December 14th, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The purpose of this committee is to advise the VA Secretary on how to improve VA programs and services to better serve Veterans residing in American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau.

To attend via phone, dial 285-717-370-382, or for telephone-only access, 1 (205) 235-3524 (meeting ID: 641 975 916#). To attend via Microsoft Teams, click this link.

**Bills Signed Into Law**

H.R. 366    Korean American VALOR Act
H.R. 1226   Wounded Warrior Access Act

**Bills on the House Calendar**

H.R. 542    Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act

**Bills Covered in Markups or Hearings**

S. 185 Native American Direct Loan Improvement Act
H.R. 5891 Veteran Appeals Decision Clarity Act
H.R. 5870 Veteran Appeals Transparency Act
H.R. 5559 Protecting Veterans Claim Options Act
H.R. 4190 Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act
H.R. 1753 To ensure that certain members of the Armed Forces who served in female cultural support teams receive proper credit for such service.

**Bills Cleared by HVAC Subcommittees**

H.R. 5938 Veterans Exam Expansion Act
H.R. 5890 Review Every Veterans Claim Act
H.R. 4306 Michael Lecik Military Firefighters Protection Act

**Bills Referred to HVAC Subcommittees**

H.R. 6380 Wings for Veterans Act
H.R. 6300 Veterans Education is Timeless Act of 2023
H.R. 6291 Have You Served Act
H.R. 6225 Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act
H.R. 6197 Establishing a program to provide grants to certain surviving spouses of veterans to pay for housing.
H.R. 6121 Filipino Veterans Fairness Act
H.R. 6023 Veteran Restitution and Justice Act of 2023
H.R. 5904 Helping Heroes Act
H.R. 5883 Honoring Civil Servants Killed in the Line of Duty Act
H.R. 5794 VA Peer Review Neutrality Act

H.R. 4634 Authorizing appropriations for the operation of the Southwest Montana Veterans' Home, located in Butte, Montana.

H.R. 4566 Providing Radiation Exposed Servicemembers Undisputed Medical Eligibility Act

H.R. 5913 Consolidating Veteran Employment Services for Improved Performance Act

H.R. 5702 Expanding Access for Online Veteran Students Act

H.R. 5190 Military Family Protection from Debt Act

H.R. 3816 Veterans Entry to Apprenticeship Act

Bills Referred to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

S. 3341 To improve the emergency management capabilities of the VA.

S. 3339 Prohibits former military members from accepting employment in positions involving training, consulting, advising, or instructing any government-associated individual or entity from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, or Syria.

H.R. 593 Renames the VA community-based outpatient clinic in Hinesville, Georgia, as the "John Gibson, Dan James, William Sapp, and Frankie Smiley VA Clinic".

S. 3295 Increasing Access to Military Service Records Act

S. 3290 Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act

S. 3288 Safeguarding Department of Veterans Affairs Dependent Education Benefits Act

S. 3287 Supportive Services for National Guard and Reserve Veterans and Families Act

S. 3285 Renames the VA community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Butte, Montana, as the "Charlie Dowd VA Clinic"

S. 3284 Veterans Emergency Care Reimbursement Act

S. 3282 VA Billing Accountability Act

S. 3257 Sgt. Isaac Woodard, Jr. and Sgt. Joseph H. Maddox GI Bill Restoration Act

S. 3256 Improving Veterans' Experience Act

S. 3249 Renames the VA outpatient clinic in Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas, as the "Captain Elwin Shopteese VA Clinic".

Bills Referred to the House Veterans Affairs Committee

H.R. 6470 Builds awareness among former members of the Armed Forces of the process established pursuant to section 527 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 for the review of discharge characterizations

H.R. 6452 Establishes a VA Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer

H.R. 593 Renames the VA community-based outpatient clinic in Hinesville, Georgia, as the "John Gibson, Dan James, William Sapp, and Frankie Smiley VA Clinic".

H.R. 6381 Veterans Visa and Protection Act

H.R. 6374 Veterans Health Care Stamp Act

H.R. 6373 Veterans STAND Act

H.R. 6362 Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2023

H.R. 6360 POW Priority Care Act

H.R. 6353 Veterans HOPE Act

H.R. 6343 Protecting our Veterans' Memories Act

H.R. 6342 MVP Act

H.R. 6340 Improving Housing Outcomes for Veterans Act

H.R. 6338 Veterans' Cancer Care Coordinator Act of 2023

H.R. 6337 Saving Vet Halls Act

H.R. 6336 Protect Veteran Students, Job Seekers, and Entrepreneurs Housing Act

H.R. 6333 Veterans Emergency Care Reimbursement Act of 2023
H.R. 6331  DOULA for VA Act

H.R. 6330  Veterans Sentinel Act

H.R. 6324  FY 2024 VA Major Medical Facility Authorization Act

H.R. 6315  VA Billing Accountability Act

H.R. 6294  Veterans Earned Education Act

H.R. 6269  Headstones for Honor Act

H.R. 6507  Authorizing the VA to furnish or replace a headstone, marker, or medallion for the grave of an eligible Medal of Honor recipient regardless of the recipient's dates of service in the Armed Forces

H.R. 6500  Establishes an Office of Prison Education

H.R. 6492  EXPLORE Act