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

**New Rules**

**Delayed Final Rule – Special Transportation Payments.** Payments to air ambulance services will NOT be decreased this year. The new effective date for this change is February 16, 2025. Efforts are underway in Congress to prohibit decreases in compensation for special transportation altogether.

**Final Rule – VR&E Repayment of Supplies.** This rule went into effect on December 5 and removes the regulatory authority of the VA to require repayment for books, supplies, or equipment under any circumstance where a veteran fails to complete a course of vocational rehabilitation.

**Final Rule - Bilateral Factor.** This rule went into effect on December 27 and fixes the issue with bilateral factor calculations for disability claims decisions.

**Final Rule – Active Service Pay.** This rule goes into effect on January 11 and allows the VA to adjust disability payments as close in time to the resumption of active duty service as possible to minimize overpayments. The rule also allows the resumption of payments based on information received from the DoD.

**Proposed Rule - Fee Reasonableness Reviews; Effect of Loss of Accreditation on Direct Payment.** This proposed rule addresses the VA’s process for reviewing, determining, and granting fees for claims representation and addresses what happens to direct payments when an agent or attorney loses their VA accreditation. Comments may be submitted on or before 20 FEB 2024.

**Notices and Meetings**

**18 JAN - Cooperative Studies Scientific Evaluation Committee meeting.** Via Zoom and open to the public from 1:00 to 1:30 pm EST, this committee provides advice on cooperative studies and multi-site research activity and will provide a program status update.

**31 JAN to 01 FEB - Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board (West LA).** Two sessions will be open to the public and may be accessed via WebEx. Details on comment submission and attendance are available here.

**Up for Consideration in the Senate**

H.R. 815 RELIEVE Act

**Up for Consideration in the House**

H.R. 5938 Veterans Exam Expansion Act

H.R. 5914 To improve the processes to approve programs of education for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs

H.R. 5890 Review Every Veterans Claim Act

H.R. 5785 To modify the requirements of the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

H.R. 4190 Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act

H.R. 4016 Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act

H.R. 3790 Justice for ALS Veterans Act

H.R. 3738 To establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration

H.R. 3722 Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide 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.

H.R. 522 Deliver for Veterans Act

**Received in the Senate**

H.R. 542 Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act

**Referred to a Senate SVAC Subcommittee**
H.R. 3848  Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively (HOME) Act

H.R. 3581  COPE Act

Referred to an HVAC Subcommittee

H.R. 6507  Mark Our Place Act

H.R. 6470  Restore Honor to Service Members Act

H.R. 6381  Veterans Visa and Protection Act

H.R. 6380  Wings for Veterans Act

H.R. 6373  Veterans STAND Act

H.R. 6353  Veterans HOPE Act

H.R. 6337  Saving Vet Halls Act

Referred to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

S. 3452  To determine the eligibility or entitlement of a member or former member of the Armed Forces described in subsection (a) to a benefit under a law administered by the Secretary solely based on alternative sources of evidence when the military service records or medical treatment records of the member or former member are incomplete because of damage or loss of records after being in the possession of the Federal Government

S. 3466  VA Medical Center Security Report Act

S. 3490  No VA Resources for Illegal Aliens Act

S. 3526  To require a lactation space in each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

S. 3546  To require a study on the quality of care difference between mental health and addiction therapy care provided by health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to non-Department providers

Referred to the House Veterans Affairs Committee

H.R. 6551  HEAL Act

H.R. 6656  Stuck On Hold Act

H.R. 6744  No VA Resources for Illegal Aliens Act

H.R. 6800  To codify the requirements for appointment, qualifications, and pay for therapeutic medical physicists of the Department of Veterans Affairs

H.R. 6873  To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include information relating to the rate of suicide among covered Reserves in each National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report of the Office Mental Health and Suicide Prevention of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 6874  To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to implement a system or process to actively monitor the veteran self-service and data transmission functions of the main internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs for certain adverse events