



Regulatory Updates Newsletter

March 2024

Hello Everyone, and welcome to the March 2024 edition of our Regulatory and Governmental Affairs newsletter.

Rules and Proposed Rules

Survivors Benefit Claims. In this proposed rule the VA is simplifying the application process for survivor benefits for families of deceased veterans. If someone qualifies for dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), they will not be considered for a survivor's pension. The only exception is for surviving spouses with no dependents, living in a nursing home, and receiving Medicaid, where a survivor's pension might be more helpful. The stated purpose of this change is to speed up claim processing and maximize financial support for veterans' families. Public comments may be made through May 10 and can be submitted [here](#).

Reproductive Health. Final rule effective April 3, 2024. The VA's medical regulations now permit abortion counseling and grant exceptions to the ban on abortions for veterans and CHAMP-VA beneficiaries in cases where there is a threat to the life or health of the patient and in cases of rape or incest.

Access to IVF. Final rule effective March 28, 2024. The VA has expanded IVF benefits to veterans, regardless

of marital status or ability to use their own eggs or sperm. This follows a change in DoD policy. To qualify, veterans must still have a service-connected disability that prevents them from having children without fertility treatment.

Changes to VASRD for Digestive Conditions. Final rule effective May 19, 2024. The VA is updating its disability rating schedule for digestive conditions. Moving forward, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) evaluations will use new (Rome IV) criteria, but the maximum rating remains 30%. Crohn's Disease also has revised criteria to reflect symptom severity and treatment impact. Lastly, Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is now assessed by measuring the narrowing of the esophagus.

Notices

Accelerated Enrollment Under the PACT Act. The VA is accelerating the timeline for healthcare enrollment for toxic-exposed veterans enumerated in the PACT Act. The initial timeline staggered enrollment eligibility, but all of these veterans may now file benefits claims online, by phone, by mail, or in person at a VA medical facility.

Meetings

10 - 11 April - Geriatric and Gerontology Advisory Committee Meeting. This committee advises the VA on meeting the medical, psychological, and social needs of aging veterans by ensuring that VA facilities and programs are adequately equipped. Attendance details (via WebEx) can be found [here](#).

01 May - Veterans' Family, Caregiver, and Survivor Advisory Committee Meeting. The agenda will include remarks from the Executive Director of the Caregiver Support Program, the Survivors' Assistance and Memorial Support Program (SAMS), the Veterans Health Administration, the Office of Survivor Assistance, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and

briefings from the subcommittee chairs. Attendance details (in-person or via MS Teams) can be found [here](#).

08 - 09 May - Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials Meeting. The Advisory Committee on National Cemeteries will hold a public meeting on May 8th and 9th, 2024. The meeting will include presentations by National Cemetery Administration leadership, briefings on cemetery operations and memorial innovation, and discussions on the status of committee recommendations. There will also be an opportunity for public comments. Attendance details (in-person or via WebEx) can be found [here](#).

Legislation Placed on the House Calendar

H.R. 4278 Restore VA Accountability Act

Reported Out of the House

H.R. 6342 MVP Act

Committee Hearings Held

H.R. 7738 TEF Improvement Act

Subcommittee Hearings Held

H.R. 7347 Directs the VA to report on whether it will include certain psychedelic drugs in the VA formulary.

H.R. 7342 Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act

H.R. 6947 Veterans Affairs Centennial and Heritage Act

H.R. 6538 VA Correct Compensation Act

H.R. 6531 TRAIN VA Employees Act

H.R. 6452 Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Act

H.R. 6373 Veterans STAND Act

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

H.R. 5794 Veterans Affairs Peer Review Neutrality Act

H.R. 5530 VA Emergency Transportation Access Act

H.R. 5247 Expedited Hiring for VA Trained Psychiatrists Act

H.R. 4424 Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act

H.R. 3649 Veterans National Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act

H.R. 3644 ACT for Veterans Act

H.R. 3584 Veterans CARE Act

H.R. 3303 Maternal Health for Veterans Act

H.R. 3225 BUILD for Veterans Act

H.R. 7732 ETS Act

H.R. 7703 Fair Access to Co-ops for Veterans Act

H.R. 7653 VERY Act

H.R. 7643 Veterans Congressional Work Study Act

H.R. 7613 Veterans Flight Training Responsibility Act

H.R. 7323 Requires the VA to disapprove tuition payments to institutions where they are not charging in-state tuition for veterans using their GI benefits under Title 10.

H.R. 6656 Stuck On Hold Act

H.R. 6225 Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act

Referred to Subcommittee

H.R. 7549 Gold Star Family Education Parity Act

H.R. 7543 Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act

H.R. 7514 WAIVER Act

H.R. 7504 Rural Veterans Transportation to Care Act

H.R. 7464 Sgt. Ted Grubbs Mental Healthcare for Disabled Veterans Act

Referred to Committee

H.R. 7777/S. 4047 Annual increase in disability and DIC compensation.

S. 4061 Requires the VA to maintain a toll-free helpline for veterans to obtain information about VA benefits and services.

S. 4046 Modifies collective bargaining authorities for VHA employees

S. 4009 Requires the VA to offer annual health evaluations for veterans with spinal cord injuries or disorders, and

	increases access to assistive technologies.	H.R. 7674	Establishes a VA Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Veterans
S. 3979	Codifies and makes permanent the pilot program using contract physicians for C&P examinations	H.R. 7657	Healthcare Freedom for VHA Volunteer Drivers Act
S. 3970	Requires the VA to repay service members for certain contributions they have made toward Post-9/11 educational assistance.	H.R. 7654	Rural Veterans Transportation to Care Act
S. 3958	Molly R. Loomis Research for Descendants of Toxic Exposed Veterans Act	H.R. 7596	Servicewomen and Veterans Menopause Research Act
S. 3938	Designates the VA CBOC in Lynchburg, Virginia the "Private First Class Desmond T. Doss VA Clinic".	H.R. 7591	National Patient Safety Board Act
S. 3911	Improves VA oversight of certain educational institutions	H.R. 7559	Military Family Leave Act
S. 3886	WAIVER Act		
S. 3885	Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act		
S. 3873	Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act		
H.R. 7816	Requires the VA to assess the quality and content of benefits claim notice letters with a federally funded R&D center.		
H.R. 7793	Provides more appellate options to individuals with VA benefits claims.		
H.R. 7773	Provides additional assistance to veterans and service members using Post-9/11 benefits where they need extra time to complete remedial and deficiency courses.		
H.R. 7765	Directs the VA to execute a pilot program for weapons screening technology at VA medical centers.		
H.R. 7734	Requires a notation in the personnel record file of certain VA employees who resign from Government employment under certain circumstances.		
H.R. 7729	Dennis and Lois Krisfalusy Act		
H.R. 7713	VA Political Performance Disclosure Act		