



# **Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, November 15, 2015**

Volume 6, Issue 46

---

---

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

This week has been fairly quiet other than all those up for re-election were spinning their tales of how they support our troops and what they will do for Veterans all with the only purpose of getting elected or re-elected and it's just more of the same, lip service!

Over the past few years there have been all sorts of horror stories in the news about the VA, cooked books, wait lists, Veterans dying, doctors with faked credentials to fill jobs, a host of problems, but all we've seen is more and more money tossed at the problem, and no resolution what-so-ever.

While I will admit some VA Hospitals are providing truly top notch care, Veterans are being seen in a timely fashion there are far more Veterans waiting and waiting for proper care, benefits earned and due, and all the while an estimated 1,800 Veterans are dying every day!

I still see news pieces here and there and the VA touting only a 50,000 homeless Veterans nationwide. But I still have a very hard time believing this as it's hard as can be to determine how many Veterans are homeless by any standard no matter how good the idea of collecting the information is, it's truly damn near impossible to come up with a hard number.

But in California alone there are more than 12,000 homeless Veterans, which would mean 49 other states have resolved their problem, and that just can't be, not when we're seeing reports and hearing from other agencies that their swamped trying to get Veterans into shelters and enrolled into VA programs.

And we still have the West Los Angeles VA Medical Director Donna Beiter still not lifting a finger to do a thing for Homeless Veterans on that sprawling campus which was donated to Veterans back in the late 1800's. Not even after the wonderful showing with Secretary McDonald and Mayor Garcetti and a few others promising to resolve the problem there.

And they still have not addressed the issue of removal of all the illegal tenants the wonderful elitists of Brentwood who own and operate civilian businesses there. Nor have they addressed the issue of where all the income has gone to!

But then we also have bonuses still being paid out all because Congress in their infinite wisdom protected their wonderful bonus program with no checks and balances.

And they still have not addressed any of the problems in the VA Healthcare System.

Makes me wonder, is this their sick and twisted means of population control? Cutting down those who sacrificed so they could keep their jobs?

While we move closer and closer into the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, please remember all those who have served and are homeless. Donate time to a Veteran Service Organization to help the homeless Veteran community.

Go through your closets and gather up gently used clothing, jackets, blankets and donate to be given to our much neglected Veterans!

You kill two birds at the same time. You give to those who served and are in need, and you gain a tax deduction and tax season is just around the corner.

I would also suggest donating time as well to organizations who prepare meals to be delivered to homeless Veterans, or have a soup kitchen, and also deliver meals to shut in Veterans.

I hope you all had a great Veterans Day, many attended parades and BBQ's, some visited many of the National Veterans Cemeteries to remember a loved one and friend. We can never do enough!

Thank you all for your service, dedication and courage! I for one very much appreciate all you have done!

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)

---

---

### ***TRICARE and Dental Health***

November is National Dental Hygiene Month, and TRICARE officials urge people to learn more about their dental health. Practice good oral care on a daily basis, and contact a dentist as soon as oral problems arise. TRICARE's dental coverage is separate from its medical coverage, and enrollment eligibility determines which dental program people can have. The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is for retirees and their eligible family members as well as National Guard and Reserve members who, regardless of age, have transferred to Retired Reserve status. For information on TRICARE's retiree dental program, visit the [TRICARE Retiree Dental Program webpage](#).

---

---

### ***NDAAs Passes But Can't Become Law Yet***

The fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill was resurrected and passed in short order after lawmakers agreed to a new two-year budget, the main reason for the president's veto of the bill last month. The Senate cleared the bill Tuesday in a blowout 91-3 vote. The House passed the measure last week, but the bill can't be sent to the president just yet due to some highly technical complications.

After passing its version of the NDAA, the House adopted a resolution (H Con Res 90) instructing the clerks enrolling the bill to make technical corrections. After passing the bill this week, the Senate also adopted the resolution, but amended it, meaning the House will need to take up the resolution again in order for the changes — including a new title, spelling corrections and swapping out a funding table — to be made and for the bill to be sent to the president. Since the House has been in recess this week, don't expect the President to sign the NDAA any time before next week.

Source: NAUS

---

---

### ***VA and PenFed Foundation Work Together to Prevent Veteran Homelessness*** *Commitment is Part of the VA's Expanded Partnership Efforts*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is teaming up with the Pentagon Federal Credit Union Foundation (PenFed Foundation) to strengthen efforts to prevent Veteran homelessness. This new partnership will expand the PenFed Foundation's existing Military Heroes Fund Emergency Assistance Program to include all Veterans. Previously, the program was available only to Veterans of the Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) conflicts.

Through this partnership, the PenFed Foundation and VA will work together to provide emergency financial assistance for Veterans who are experiencing unexpected financial setbacks and are at risk of becoming homeless. The foundation will

be able to provide emergency financial assistance for Veterans in need of one-time payments for back utilities, creditors, security deposits, and rental deposits. To date, the PenFed Foundation's Military Heroes Fund has already provided more than \$4 million in assistance to Veterans.

As a part of the partnership, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Homeless Program staff will connect Veterans who are facing overdue or arrearage payments to the PenFed Foundation for emergency financial assistance. This partnership and pledge embodies the mission of MyVA, launched last year to reorient VA around the needs of Veterans by collaborating with Veterans, employees, private industry, nonprofits, and other stakeholders.

"VA's new partnership with the PenFed Foundation will greatly benefit Veterans who are facing overdue bills and are at risk for homelessness," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "As we work with local communities throughout the Nation to help them end Veteran homelessness, partnerships like these are critical to ensuring we are doing everything possible to support Veterans who may be facing financial hardship and are at risk of losing their homes. Whether through their Military Heroes Fund or their support of the Defenders Lodge, the PenFed Foundation has shown they are dedicated to improving the lives of Veterans and we are proud to call them a partner."

We are absolutely right to hold up our military service members as American heroes," said PenFed Foundation President and CEO James Schenck. "Anyone, who at one time or another, wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America – for an amount of up to and including their own life has paid their citizenship dues in full, as far as I'm concerned. It's up to the rest of us to ensure that when these heroes need heroes, someone is there to answer the call."

For more information about VA's homeless initiatives, visit [www.va.gov/homeless/](http://www.va.gov/homeless/). For more information about the PenFed Foundation's programs supporting Veterans, visit [www.penfedfoundation.org](http://www.penfedfoundation.org).

---

---

### ***VA Sponsors Paralympic Athletes***

The 2016 Paralympic Games will be held September 7-18 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Department of Veterans Affairs pays a monthly allowance to veterans training for or selected to compete on the U.S. Paralympic Team. The payment rates are based on VA's vocational rehabilitation rates: roughly \$600 a month for a single Veteran plus extra for dependents. For more information, visit the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and visit the [Rio 2016 Paralympic Games website](#). A full list of sport governing bodies and points of contact is available [online](#). If you are interested in learning more about VA's monthly allowance for elite athletes, visit the [VA Adaptive Sports Program webpage](#) and click on the "Training Allowance" tab.

---

---

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

Internal Controls: The Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation Has Made Significant Progress but Needs to Fully Document Certain Policies and Procedures. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-52>

Foster Care: HHS Could Do More to Support States' Efforts to Keep Children in Family-Based Care. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-85>

Federal Judiciary: Improved Cost Savings Estimates Could Help Better Assess Cost Containment Efforts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-97>

Financial Audit: Office of Financial Stability (Troubled Asset Relief Program) Fiscal Years 2015 and 2014 Financial Statements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-147R>

VA Benefits: Increasing Outreach and Measuring Outcomes Would Improve the Post-9/11 GI Bill On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-51>

DOJ Civil Rights Division Travel: Division Strengthened Controls over Travel, but Additional Areas for Improvement Identified. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-58>

Financial Audit: IRS's Fiscal Years 2015 and 2014 Financial Statements. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-146>

Military Personnel: Oversight Framework and Evaluations Needed for DOD and the Coast Guard to Help Increase the Number of Female Officer Applicants. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-55>

### **"Greenlight" Campaign to Show Vet Support**

Wal-Mart is helping to sponsor the Greenlight a Vet Campaign. To participate, change one light to green in a visible location — on your porch, in your home, or at your office — and keep it glowing every day as a symbol of appreciation and support for our veterans. Then, share your support by taking a picture of your green light and posting it using the hashtag #greenlightavet. For more information, visit the [Greenlight a Vet Campaign website](#).

---

---

### **VA To Hold 2015 Small Business Engagement in Pittsburgh**

*Annual Event to Increase Contract Opportunities for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with other federal agencies and partners, will sponsor the 5th annual National Veterans Small Business Engagement (NVSBE), November 17–19, 2015, at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

This premier event for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses is expected to attract as many as 3,000 attendees, offering the chance to learn from federal and commercial procurement decision makers the most effective ways to compete for and win federal contracts. More than 400 exhibitors and 25 government agencies will also participate in the event. The 2015 theme, **ACCESS**, is focused on promoting and supporting Veteran-Owned Small Businesses' access to economic opportunities.

"VA is committed to providing opportunities to Veteran-Owned Small Businesses, and this event is evidence of that commitment," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "The NVSBE demonstrates our commitment by offering Veteran business owners the tools they need to thrive in the federal marketplace. We want to do all that we can to help our Veterans be successful."

NVSBE provides Veteran-Owned Small Businesses and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses opportunities to connect with procurement decision makers, program specialists, and contracting experts from the federal and commercial marketplace. As the largest gathering of Veteran businesses in the country, this event is the ideal platform for Veteran entrepreneurs to make the connections necessary to succeed in today's contracting environment. In fiscal year 2014, nearly a quarter of VA's contracts were awarded to Veteran-owned small businesses. According to survey results from last year's Small Business Engagement event, 96 percent of small businesses reported making valuable connections; 75 percent reported attendance providing the highest return on investment compared with other engagements; and most agreed that the event met or exceeded their expectations.

"One of the greatest challenges for small business owners is to connect with decision makers who can help them grow their businesses," said Thomas J. Leney, Executive Director of VA's Small and Veteran Business Programs. "NVSBE provides small businesses a solution to meet that challenge."

For details about the 5th annual NVSBE, visit [www.nvsbe.com](http://www.nvsbe.com).

---

---

### **VA Telechaplancy Chaplain Program**

For many veterans, spiritual care is an important part of their total care, and difficulties traveling to a VA Medical Center for pastoral and religious providers can become a problem. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has come up with a solution — telechaplancy. Clinical Videoconferencing Telehealth (CVT) technology allows the VA chaplain to minister spiritual and pastoral care to the veteran from a remote location. This involves the veteran traveling to a Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) and using the telehealth equipment to speak with a chaplain. One VA health care center recently went one step further and now veterans can receive spiritual care from their homes using CVT tablets. The tablets are easy to use and are provided by VA. The tablet works like a cell phone; it receives an incoming call from your provider during your scheduled appointment time.

---

---

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

---

---

### **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 2,800 and 5,000 visitors per day and have had **2,446,405** 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 (**1,567** on-line now) (**Updated 04/05/15**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated 11/07/15 **45** New Jobs and **0** New Job Fair)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 04/19/14**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,325** articles on-line)
- Web Links (**1,588** Active Links)(**Updated 10/23/15**)

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.

---

---

***Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter***



**<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>**

---

---

***Vets Legal Aid Week in Texas***

Texas veterans are invited to participate in Texas Veterans Legal Aid Week (TVLAW), a statewide effort in honor of Veterans Day coordinated by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation. During the week of Nov. 9-13, legal aid programs, local bar associations, law schools and pro bono private lawyers will provide civil legal services for qualified Texas veterans in various locations throughout the state. Some events are also scheduled after the week of Nov. 9-13. For a complete list of events, visit the [TexasLawHelp.org website](http://TexasLawHelp.org).

---

---

### **Lawmaker is 'Ground Zero' for Commissary Reforms**

Rep. Joe Heck (R-Nev.) is a brigadier general in the Army Reserve, a soldier-physician thrice deployed and also a discerning commissary shopper. Heck knows grocery stores because his father spent a lifetime in the business, starting as a 17-year-old checkout clerk and rising to regional supervisor of a super market chain. "I used to go to work with him as a kid all the time," Heck said. "That's how I spent my Saturdays." Perhaps that's also why, as chairman of the House armed services' subcommittee on military personnel, Heck is sounding so confident that Congress can reform base grocery stores. He plans to have his subcommittee shape legislation next year that will make commissaries more efficient and generating first-ever profits, thus lowering taxpayer costs for the benefit.

---

---

### **VA Secretary to Announce VA-Bob Woodruff Foundation Partnership**

*Aim of Partnership is to Better Connect Veterans with Resources Close to Home*

WASHINGTON – Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Secretary Robert A. McDonald this evening will announce a partnership with the [Bob Woodruff Foundation](http://www.bobwoodrufffoundation.org) (BWF) to further advance VA's outreach to Veterans through deeper and more innovative local and community partnerships. VA will capitalize on BWF's strength and contacts to find unique ways to connect Veterans, transitioning Servicemembers and their families with resources right where they live. The partnership with BWF is one of many strategic alliances VA is forming and is an integral goal of the MyVA initiative, the largest reorganization in VA's history which reorients VA around the needs of Veterans.

"We believe that by working together we can create a 'single front door,' or a convenient community point of entry, to help Veterans gain access to the benefits they have earned in addition to the resources unique to their local communities," said Secretary McDonald. "This partnership creates a more robust integration of federal, state and local governments, non-profit organizations, businesses and other local partners at the community level. By combining and sharing our efforts and expertise, I believe this partnership can help us better serve our nation's Veterans – together."

"Our nation's transitioning Servicemembers, Veterans and their families each have unique needs, making the resources and services dedicated to overcoming their challenges all the more necessary," said BWF Executive Director Anne Marie Dougherty. "We are excited by this opportunity to work in partnership with VA to reach Veterans and their families where they live and to deliver high-impact programs to support sustainable success."

The Bob Woodruff Foundation is a nonprofit organization working on behalf of injured Servicemembers, Veterans and their families. Since 2006, BWF has invested nearly \$30 million in programs reaching more than 2 million injured Servicemembers, Veterans and their families in three key areas: Education and Employment, Rehabilitation and Recovery, and Quality of Life.

For more information about the Foundation, visit [www.bobwoodrufffoundation.org](http://www.bobwoodrufffoundation.org). For more information about VA including the MyVA initiative, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

---

---



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 8pm PST 11/13/15**

---

---

## ***Investigations Into Fraud by Compounding Pharmacies***

The Wall Street Journal reports that federal prosecutors in at least four states have launched investigations into compounding pharmacies' fraudulent claims to TRICARE's pharmacy program.

According to the Wall Street Journal, four Florida pharmacies agreed to pay \$12.8 million to settle civil allegations that they falsely billed the insurance program TRICARE for expensive pharmaceutical creams and gels to treat pain, scars and other ailments, according to A. Lee Bentley III, the U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Florida.

Prosecutors allege that two of the compounding pharmacies employed salespeople who paid doctors to write prescriptions to TRICARE beneficiaries. One paid commissions of as much as 58 percent of the amount paid by TRICARE to marketers who promoted their drugs to physicians. The commissions amounted to improper kickbacks in exchange for referring business to a government agency.

TRICARE paid \$1.75 billion for compounded drugs during its 2015 fiscal year —18 times the amount paid in 2012, according to Defense Department data. Compounded drugs represented 19 percent of TRICARE's estimated \$9.14 billion prescription drug budget in 2015, up from 1.3 percent in 2012, according to the data.

Prosecutors allege that two of the compounding pharmacies employed salespeople who paid doctors to write prescriptions to TRICARE beneficiaries. One paid commissions of as much as 58 percent of the amount paid by TRICARE to marketers who promoted their drugs to physicians. The commissions amounted to improper kickbacks in exchange for referring business to a government agency.

TRICARE paid \$1.75 billion for compounded drugs during its 2015 fiscal year —18 times the amount paid in 2012, according to Defense Department data. Compounded drugs represented 19 percent of TRICARE's estimated \$9.14 billion prescription drug budget in 2015, up from 1.3 percent in 2012, according to the data.

The sharp increase in spending on compounded drugs was the primary driver behind a \$1.3 billion shortfall in the military's health-care budget earlier this year, according to Mark Wright, a Defense Department spokesman. Defense officials redirected funds from other programs to compensate for the shortfall.

The Justice Department and Defense Department in several states, including California, Mississippi and Texas, are pursuing civil and criminal charges against other pharmacies that have billed TRICARE.

Source: NAUS

---

---

### ***Links to other Stories***

- 1) [Fort Detrick investigating remnants of Agent Orange, radioactivity on post](#)
- 2) [Hillary Clinton Doubles Down On Veterans Affairs While Obama Says Problems "Unacceptable"](#)
- 3) [Honoring service and sacrifice of Veterans](#)
- 4) [Laboratory developed test coverage expanded for TRICARE beneficiaries](#)
- 5) [MiCARE provides faster care](#)

- 6) *Military Working Dog teams train for medical evacuations*
- 7) *Minneapolis VA develops ergonomic wheelchair*
- 8) *New joint effort will help track student Veteran success*
- 9) *This Iraq War Veteran 'Hunts' and Helps Homeless Vets on the Streets of Los Angeles*
- 10) *VA Launches Hepatitis C-Advanced Liver Disease Disparities Dashboard*
- 11) *VA partners with YMCA of the USA to support Veterans*
- 12) *VA releases plan to consolidate community health care programs*
- 13) *Veterans Affairs Caught Falsifying Doctors' Certifications*
- 14) *Volunteers needed to board Alabama service members' pets during deployments*
- 15) *Woodson talks DoD efforts in area of public health at APHA meeting*

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)

### ***TRICARE Doesn't Cover All Costs – Save Now***

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the MBA-sponsored [TRICARE Insurance Supplement Plan](#).

### ***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 <b>FREE</b> Number:	866-272-6622

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



***America's Veterans United***

Is an advocacy group on Yahoo Groups developed to fight for the benefits, care, facilities, caring and compassionate fully licensed medical professionals, updated and properly operated VA Medical Facilities.

Are you sick and tired of the "business as usual" attitude, or the "delay, deny, until they die" attitude?

Are you able to give 30-60 minutes of your time per month to help develop and send letters to all 535 members of Congress each month in an attempt to force Congress into getting off their seats and actually doing something for Veterans vs. their usual lip service?

And are you sick and tired of all the other organizations who say they are fighting for you, but have shown decades of really not doing much for you?

Then join us, we do more than use membership numbers to fight, we actually have you working with us in the fight. Take control of your health and medical care and help us fight for you.

If interested, check out our page on Yahoo Groups:

[https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas\\_Veterans\\_United/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Americas_Veterans_United/info)

If you're not a member of any Yahoo Group, and not familiar with the system but want to join in the fight, you can do so via E-Mail as well:

[americas\\_veterans\\_united-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:americas_veterans_united-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

One really good thing about America's Veterans United, it won't cost you one thin dime, no membership dues, no postage costs, just your time and your computer.

Help us to help you and your fellow Veterans in the fight!

---

---

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.

Or if you prefer you can sign up to the Yahoo Groups VFC-News page and receive our weekly newsletter by sending an E-Mail to: [VFC-News-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:VFC-News-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

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

---

---

### ***VA Hands Out \$142 Million in Bonuses in 2014***

*USA Today Article* - The VA doled out more than \$142 million in bonuses to executives and employees for performance in 2014 even as scandals over veterans' health care and other issues racked the agency.

Among the recipients were claims processors in a Philadelphia benefits office that investigators dubbed the worst in the country last year. They received \$300 to \$900 each. Managers in Tomah, Wis., got \$1,000 to \$4,000, even though they oversaw the over-prescription of opiates to veterans – one of whom died.

The VA also rewarded executives who managed construction of a facility in Denver, a disastrous project years overdue and more than \$1 billion over budget. They took home \$4,000 to \$8,000 each. And in St. Cloud, Minn., where an internal investigation report last year outlined mismanagement that led to mass resignations of health care providers, the chief of staff cited by investigators received a performance bonus of almost \$4,000.

As one of his final acts last year before resigning, then-VA secretary Eric Shinseki announced he was suspending bonuses in the wake of revelations that VA employees falsified wait lists to meet wait-time targets — ostensibly to get the extra pay. But he only curtailed them for a sliver of VA executives -- those in the Veterans Health Administration, which oversees health care.

The agency has continued to pay performance-based bonuses to nearly half of agency employees, including in health administration, the data show. In all, some 156,000 executives, managers and employees received them for 2014 performance, according to data provided to USA TODAY by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

VA spokesman James Hutton said the vast majority of the employees are committed to serving veterans, and he said VA leaders are still working to change the agency's culture.

“VA will continue to review tools and options in order to ensure the department is able to attract and retain the best talent to serve our nation's veterans, while operating as a good steward of taxpayer funds,” Hutton said.

That's not good enough for Florida Republican Rep. Jeff Miller, chairman of the House VA committee, which has been investigating questionable VA bonuses for years. Miller says the most recent awards reflect a continued, “disturbing trend of rewarding employees who preside over corruption and incompetence.”

He noted the agency paid more than \$380,000 in 2013 performance bonuses to top officials at hospitals where veterans faced long delays in receiving treatment, including those under investigation for wait-time manipulation.

“Rewarding failure only breeds more failure,” he said Tuesday. “Until VA leaders learn this important lesson and make a commitment to supporting real accountability at the department, efforts to reform VA are doomed to fail.”

Miller spearheaded – and the House passed – a measure last year that would have eliminated bonuses for VA senior executives for five years. But ultimately the House and Senate compromised on legislation that still allows the VA to hand out up to \$360 million annually to executives, managers and employees.

Overall, the agency awarded \$276 million in incentives in 2014, including retention and relocation payments, rewards for saving money on travel and coming up with inventive ideas, according to committee data.

The cash bonuses of \$142.5 million were tied to performance reviews. Employees were eligible to receive the lump-sum, cash payments for ratings of “fully successful” or higher. The payments ranged from \$8 to as much as \$12,705. Most were more than \$500. The average payout was \$909.

Source: NAUS

---

---

## California Launches New Veteran Driver License and ID Card Program

*Veterans can apply for “Veteran” designation beginning November 12*

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) announce a new program honoring our Veterans by allowing qualified servicemen and servicewomen to apply for a “Veteran” designation on California driver licenses and identification cards.

**WHAT:** Press Conference announcing new “Veteran” designation program

**WHERE:** California All Veterans Memorial Capitol Park  
Corner of 13th and N Streets  
Sacramento, California

**WHEN:** November 10, 2015 (Tuesday), 10:00 a.m.

**WHO:** Jim Frazier, Assemblymember, 11th District  
Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Secretary, CalVet  
Frank Alvarez, Deputy Director and Chief of Investigations, DMV  
Chris Bingham, Veterans Service Officer, Sonoma County

**Background:** Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Oakley) authored Assembly Bill 935, allowing California Veterans to apply for a driver license or identification card that identifies them as a “Veteran.” Interested Veterans may begin applying for this designation on November 12, 2015. Detailed information about how Veterans may obtain the new “Veteran” designation will be available at the press conference.

### **Contacts:**

DMV: Jessica Gonzalez, [Jessica.Gonzalez@DMV.ca.gov](mailto:Jessica.Gonzalez@DMV.ca.gov) 916-657-6438  
CalVet: Thora Chaves, [Thora.Chaves@CalVet.ca.gov](mailto:Thora.Chaves@CalVet.ca.gov) 916-651-2147



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!



Our country is not the only thing to which we owe our allegiance. It is also owed to justice and to humanity. Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.

~James Bryce~

## ***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!*

***Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!***

<b>Distribution</b>	
Express Mail:	14,443
Face Book Pages:	3,034
Yahoo:	118
Twitter:	27
US Army	34,275
US Navy	14,970
US Marines	14,166
Dept of VA	11,114
Washington DC	117,301
New York	102,223
Los Angeles	90,400
University of So. CA	702
Boston	55,062
San Francisco	51,552
Veterans	19,025,160
Other Social Media:	12,814
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
	<b>19,550,861</b>