



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, April 03, 2016

Volume 7, Issue 14

This-N-That

Well it seems the appointments/wait list scam is still thriving and alive and well as another whistle blower has come forward with screen shots of appointments being deleted from the system that were 120 days plus out.

Add to that there are even more being canceled, but they're being canceled by dead Veterans!

Amazing to find out we have some special phone system where a deceased Veteran can call and cancel their appointment. How thoughtful of them!

And I do have to agree with the whistle blower, these incidents should be brought to the US Attorney General for prosecutorial action against those VA Employees involved, and immediate steps taken to rectify the problem, and make sure that all Veterans receive the care they earned and deserve!

I also personally feel that further protections be installed to protect those who are the whistle blower, in fact when all is said and done, and the VA Employees involved are terminated and prosecuted the whistle blower should be rewarded with some kind of a bonus, or added vacation time, or something.

They're concerned and compassionate enough to bring the problems to light, should they not be protected and rewarded?

Then we have the issue of Veterans being denied healthcare since there seem to be two sets of rules regarding those who were discharged with less than an honorable discharge.

Congress set down one set of rules and the VA set down their own, and they differ greatly.

I'd really like to hear from you what your feeling is on the VA providing healthcare to those who were discharged with less than an honorable discharge.

Do you feel they should be provided healthcare, and no benefits, or no healthcare and no benefits?

The majority of our readers are Veterans, and most if not all of you have served on foreign soil at one point in your career and I'm sure that when it came time for mail call you witnessed one or more fellow soldiers in your unit whose names were never called.

Operation Mail Call is designed to address that problem and a little more!

Betty Hidalgo who is the director of VFC's Operation Mail Call Program does her level best to bring a little joy to all those on foreign soil by sending them care packages which she is working all the time to fill them with a little bit of home with cards, letters, baked goods, candies, and sometimes little gag gifts, anything she can find to bring a little joy to their daily lives where they are.

We still need lots of help with cards and letters letting them know all those here at home appreciate them, and support them.

A little further down in this newsletter there is a web link which will take you to the information on where you can send cards and letters which will be included in many of the boxes that go out weekly.

We'd appreciate anything you can do to help us bring a little joy to them, maybe even put a smile on their faces even if only for a few moments.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health and a very Happy Easter weekend!

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder & CEO
Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

TRICARE: State of **Emergency** in Texas, Louisiana

A State of Emergency has been declared in all of Louisiana and several counties in Texas due to severe flooding. Emergency prescription refill procedures are in place. To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy: call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.

VA Compensation for Gulf War Syndrome

Many veterans who served in the 1991 Gulf War continue to suffer from chronic symptoms of 'gulf war syndrome' including fatigue, headaches, joint pain, indigestion, insomnia, dizziness, respiratory and memory problems. These veterans may be eligible for disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Benefits may include free, comprehensive medical examinations, including laboratory testing, a Gulf War Registry health exam, the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, and health care for the disease or diseases they suffer from that are related to military service. For more information, contact your county veteran services officer and visit the VA Gulf War Veterans [webpage](#).

Veterans Treatment Courts

Veterans Treatment Courts allow jurisdictions to serve a large segment of the justice-involved Veteran population. Because a Veterans court judge handles numerous Veterans' cases and is supported by a strong, interdisciplinary team, the judge is in a much better position to exercise discretion and effectively respond than someone who only occasionally hears a case involving a Veteran defendant. VA regularly works with Veterans Treatments Courts across the country through its [Veterans Justice Outreach initiative](#). While VA cannot provide legal services for Veterans, there are a number of resources available. If you need legal assistance, contact your local [Veterans Justice Outreach specialist](#) who may know of community resources for legal assistance. More information about Veterans Treatment Courts is available from [Justice for Vets](#).

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 the kids too!

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

Enhanced VA Enrollment for Combat Vets

When veterans choose to enroll, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers an enhancement to their enrollment experience through "Welcome to VA" (W2VA). Veterans enrolled since July 1, 2015 have received a personal introduction to VA health care services, programs and resources to help them become more familiar with VA's services. In addition, VA sends each new enrollee an introductory letter and personalized handbook in the mail. W2VA enhances communication by reaching out to newly enrolled veterans through personal phone calls upon enrollment, providing assistance with health care inquiries and assisting with their initial appointment at their preferred VA healthcare facility. For more information, veterans can contact the Health Eligibility Center Enrollment and Eligibility Division toll free at 1-855-488-8440.

Civil Relief Act Aids Servicemembers

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) provides protection to servicemembers who have difficulty meeting their financial and legal obligations because of their military service. The SCRA allows servicemembers required to PCS or deploy with military orders to terminate automotive or residential leases early. The SCRA affords servicemembers this right regardless of what the lease says. Your deployment must be for at least 90 days for you to terminate a residential lease. Your deployment must be for at least 180 days in order for you to terminate an automotive lease. To terminate either lease, you must provide written notice along with your orders or a letter from your commander. For more information, contact your base legal office. [Learn more about SCRA.](#)

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

Tips and Tricks to Accessing VA Health Care

Here are several tips one veteran uses to have a good experience with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): (1) schedule your appointments first thing in the morning or right after lunch so you will be seen on time; (2) have a referral to

a specialty clinic? Call that clinic yourself to schedule an appointment; (3) ask for an appointment tomorrow and see if it works; (4) use My HealthVet secure messenger to talk with your physician; (5) choose a different VA if necessary; (6) if you need to be seen sooner than your appointment, use the VA medical center emergency room; (7) use the kiosks, and avoid the lines; and (8) prepare and double-check your list of needs with your physician.

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 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,657,139** 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

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **14,417+** documents
- FAQ's (**1,662** on-line now) (**Updated 02/20/16**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated **03/27/16** **35** New Jobs and **1** New Job Fairs and **0** Business Opportunity)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,610** articles on-line)
- Polls Added **02/08/16**
- Web Links (**3,429** Active Links)(**Updated 03/07/16** added **1** New Links)

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)

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.

Families, Therapists Brace for Autism Care Cuts

Under an expansive demonstration program, TRICARE, the military's health insurance program, now covers ABA therapy for more than 10,500 service families and retirees with autistic children. Another 16,000 are eligible for such care. Yet this is a nervous time for these families, and for ABA therapy providers. On April 1, TRICARE will cut ABA reimbursement rates as much as 15 percent, with a second rate cut planned in some locales next year.

Homeland Security Hiring Veterans

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is recruiting veterans and promoting on-the-spot job offers to qualified veterans looking for jobs in law enforcement, mission support, program and budget analysis, contracting and chemical security. The National Protection and Programs Directorate hiring event is scheduled for April 5 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Fort Belvoir Community Center, Fort Belvoir, Va. A flyer promoting the event is available [online](#). DHS is hiring military veterans who are eligible under the following special hiring authorities: (1) Veterans Recruitment Appointment and (2) 30 percent or more disabled veteran. Learn more about federal hiring authorities for veterans at the Feds Hire Vets [website](#). For more information, contact Ms. Lauren Dupree at (703) 805-2605/1836.



<http://veterans-for-change.org/>

Eliminate Costs Left Behind by TRICARE

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

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Drinking Water: EPA Needs to Collect Information and Consistently Conduct Activities to Protect Underground Sources of Drinking Water. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-281>

Information Security: IRS Needs to Further Improve Controls over Financial and Taxpayer Data. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-398>

Information Security: IRS Needs to Further Improve Controls over Financial and Taxpayer Data. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

DOD Major Automated Information Systems: Improvements Can Be Made in Reporting Critical Changes and Clarifying Leadership Responsibility. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-336>

NASA: Assessments of Major Projects. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-309SP>

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute: Review of the Audit of the Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2015. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-458R>

Defense Acquisitions: Assessments of Selected Weapon Programs. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-329SP>

Homeland Security Acquisitions: DHS Has Strengthened Management, but Execution and Affordability Concerns Endure. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-338SP>

Syria: Results of U.S. Efforts to Vet Recruits to Form a New Syrian Force to Counter ISIS. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Get a Job with the Army Materiel Command

Through a partnership with Syracuse University in New York, the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) is offering an opportunity for 15 employees to earn a master's degree in less than a year. Applications are being accepted for the Logistics and Technology Master of Science Degree program in Supply Chain Management. Civilian employees from around the AMC enterprise are welcome to apply. Applicants must be a GS12-GS14 and in career programs CP-13 supply management, CP-14 contracting and logistics, CP-17 materiel management, CP-24 transportation and distribution management or CP-33 ammunition management. For more information, contact Mary Moore at 256-450-9138 or mary.e.moore114.ctr@mail.mil.

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<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Dead Veterans canceling their own appointments?](#)
- 2) [Hatch, Lee, Bishop to Veterans Affairs: Give northern Utah Vets a new center](#)
- 3) [More than 125,000 US Veterans are being denied crucial mental health services](#)
- 4) [St. Vincent's offers Veterans Choice Program](#)
- 5) [Study: VA Wrongly Denied Services to Thousands of Vets](#)
- 6) [Watchdog: Canceled VA appointments drove Vet to suicide attempt](#)

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



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 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 04/05/16 by 6pm PST

2016 Diplomatic Fellowship for Vets

The U.S. Department of State is accepting applications for the Fall 2016 Veterans Innovation Partnership Fellowship Program, also known as VIP. The one-year VIP Fellowship offers veterans the opportunity to work on the frontline of diplomacy. VIP fellowships are open to veterans who have completed a master's degree in International Business, International Relations, Public Policy, Public Administration, or related fields with a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or above. All positions will be in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Apply to become a VIP Fellow, or get more information, at [this website](#). The application deadline is April 4, 2016.

Florida Tries to Attract Veterans

The State of Florida has launched an initiative to attract veterans from other states, especially young ones. According to the state-formed website VeteransFlorida.org, here are several reasons why veterans will like Florida; (1) there are "no taxes on personal income, military pensions, inheritance, gifts, or intangible property" for vets; (2) every Florida resident receives \$25,000 homestead property tax exemption with additional breaks for disabled veterans; (3) thanks to Florida's GI Bill, the state gives in-state tuition rates to all veterans, spouses and dependents of veterans; (4) free tuition is also an option for those who have received the Purple Heart or several other combat decorations. For more information, visit the Veterans Florida [website](#).

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

Scholarships in Illinois

Illinois veterans and their families looking for help paying for school have until the end of March to apply for scholarships. The Illinois Patriot Education Fund not only gives money to veterans, their spouses and children to continue their education; some recipients receive monies for multiple years so they can finish their degrees. For more information, visit the Illinois Patriot Education Fund [website](#).

VA Has no Plans to Punish Those Responsible for Denver Medical Center Overruns

The VA has no plans to punish any other employees over massive cost overruns at a VA medical center under construction outside Denver, the agency said Tuesday.

The executives who made the decisions that caused the price to swell to \$1.7 billion have already left department, the VA said in announcing the long-awaited results of an internal review. The VA said last year that three other executives were transferred or demoted.

A separate investigation by the VA's inspector general is still underway.

The decision angered members of Congress who have demanded for months that the executives responsible be fired.

"There's going to be a billion dollars wasted on this hospital that could have gone to veterans' health care," said Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO) whose district includes the site.

The facility's final cost will be many times the amount estimated in 2014. It's expected to be finished in January 2018.

When Congress reluctantly approved additional spending in September to complete the hospital, it stripped the VA of the authority to manage large construction projects in the future and turned it over to the Army Corps of Engineers.

VA officials have repeatedly said federal personnel rules controlled what action they could take against executives. They also said they had no legal authority to stop employees from retiring amid the internal review.

Coffman said the department should have at least tried.

"I think they use that system, the personnel system, to hide behind when it's convenient to do so," he said.

Colorado Sens. Michael Bennet, a Democrat, and Cory Gardner, a Republican, also condemned the decision.

Bennet called it an abdication of responsibility.

"It's incomprehensible that the VA concluded no further personnel action was necessary to hold these individuals accountable," he said.

Gardner said the VA's decision makes it appear that "federal employment comes with a get-out-of-jail-free card."

Source: NAUS

TBI? Get Your Eyes Checked

The Defense Health Agency reports that concussion can cause changes to vision that are sometimes overlooked during an initial medical evaluation.

Vision experts stress that eye exams should be part of the diagnosis and treatment of mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), according to Felix Barker, associate director of research for the [Vision Center of Excellence](#) in Bethesda, Maryland.

Because a patient's vision may not be affected at first, and issues such as bumping into objects or having double vision may seem subtle, providers and patients may not realize vision is a problem.

"Undiagnosed, such 'invisible' eye problems can interfere with near tasks such as reading, which, in turn, can be confused with TBI issues, such as cognitive dysfunction," Barker said.

To help eye care providers diagnose and treat eye problems associated with a concussion, the Vision Center of Excellence created a [clinical recommendation and support tools](#) for eye problems following a TBI. This clinical tool offers a practical approach to help identify patients with mild TBI who may benefit from further assessment and care. There is also [an educational brochure for patients](#).

Patients with moderate or severe TBI may have more serious vision injuries and may TBI may experience central vision loss or loss of half of their visual field due to direct brain trauma.

In these cases, treatment may not restore vision back to what it was before the TBI. However, rehabilitation can help patients return to daily activities. Rehab specialists should work with eye care providers to support these individuals.

The [Vision Center of Excellence website](#) has information for service members, families and health care providers to help recovery after an eye injury.

Source: NAUS

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

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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.

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DoD Pondering Options for Medical Personnel to Maintain Medical Proficiency

Military Health System (MHS) leaders are evaluating a wide-ranging set of options so that medical personnel can practice their skills to maintain what is known as clinical currency.

“Recapturing care” from the civilian sector – convincing beneficiaries who are located within driving distance of a military treatment facility (MTF) to seek care there first – is first among those solutions.

“Recapturing care into MTFs is a strategic priority,” said Navy Vice Adm. Raquel Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency. Bono explained that the recapture efforts help provide military surgeons with an active clinical practice to sustain skills, offers superb care to patients, and lowers costs for the entire system by more efficiently using military hospitals and clinics.

Bono said that in addition to recapture, she and other MHS leaders are looking at a variety of options to help ensure surgeons have access to clinically complex care. Options include greater sharing of patients between Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs’ facilities, as well as increased partnerships between military and civilian hospitals.

Bono also discussed the MHS journey toward a high reliability organization, emphasizing the need for greater internal and external transparency – where patients and providers can more easily access information already available – to drive improvement system-wide. She added that transparency is also a critical piece of ongoing efforts to modernize TRICARE.

“Transparency isn’t just a nice buzzword,” she said. “The Secretary of Defense demanded it, our patients expect it, and there’s a reason why leading high reliability organizations embody it. It fosters a culture of continuous improvement.”

Source: NAUS

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



America is a passionate idea or it is nothing. America is a human brotherhood or it is chaos.

~Max Lerner, *Actions and Passions*, 1949~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

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Express Mail:	144,460
Boston	64,645
Courtesy Copies:	3,500
Dept of VA	13,011
DoD	5,386
Face Book Pages:	3,116
Los Angeles	107,747
New York	125,398
Other Social Media:	17,841
San Francisco	63,643
Twitter:	30
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	826
U.S. Senators & Staff	94
University of So. CA	2,017
US Air Force	15,991
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