

NEWS AND NOTES FOR FLORIDA VETERANS

Veterans Service Center, VA Regional Office
St. Petersburg, FL



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Petersburg

VA Regional Office web site at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/stpetersburg/>.

DISABILITY BENEFITS QUESTIONNAIRE (DBQ)

EXPANSION (VA News Release) WASHINGTON The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today the release of 68 new forms that will help speed the processing of veterans' disability compensation and pension claims. The new forms bring to 71 the number of documents, called Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs), that guide physicians' reports of medical findings, ensuring VA has exactly the medical information needed to make a prompt decision.

When needed to decide a disability claim for compensation or pension benefits, VA provides veterans with free medical examinations for the purpose of gathering the necessary medical evidence. Veterans who choose to have their private physicians complete the medical examination can now give their physicians the same form a VA provider would use. It is very important that physicians provide complete responses to all questions on the DBQs. VA cannot pay for a private physician to complete DBQs or for any costs associated with examination or testing.

DBQ's can be found at <http://benefits.va.gov/disabilityexams>. The newly released DBQs follow the initial release of three DBQs for Agent Orange-related conditions.

AFRICAN AMERICAN VETERANS WITH DIABETES

BENEFIT FROM "MENTORS" (VA News Release) WASHINGTON—African American veterans with hard-to-control diabetes made significant gains in keeping their blood sugar under control after working with "mentors" with similar health problems, according to a recent study by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Results of the study by the Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Center appear in the March 20 *Annals of Internal Medicine*. About one in five veterans who receive care from VA have diabetes. The study included 118 African American veterans, all of who were having trouble controlling their diabetes.

Because the study lasted only six months and the study population of 118 people was relatively small, the authors

say further research is needed. The new results confirm past studies in which mentoring helped patients with diabetes—particularly minorities—improve their medication adherence, diet, exercise, blood glucose monitoring, and glucose control.

The study was conducted by researchers with VA's Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion, based in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, along with colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania and Carnegie Mellon University. Funding was provided by VA and the National Institute on Aging.

For more information on VA research, visit www.research.va.gov.

RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE CAPS VA CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

(VA News Release) WASHINGTON — Improving the health and health care of women veterans is a high priority within the Department of Veterans Affairs, said a panel of leading researchers on March 27.

VA's research commitment is multidisciplinary, covering the areas of biomedical, clinical, health services, and rehabilitation. To meet the needs of a growing, diverse demographic that spans all generations of women veterans — from an aging population of WWII veterans to those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan—the pace of research activity in recent years has greatly accelerated. Between 2004 and 2008, more research on the health of women veterans was published than in the previous 25 years combined. Today, VA supports a significant amount of research on a wide variety of health issues faced by women. In fiscal year 2011, the agency funded 60 studies for a total investment of more than \$12 million.

VA women veteran's health research focuses on: returning combat women veterans — gender differences with regard to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), post-deployment behaviors, and reintegration; understanding barriers and improving access to VA health care for women veterans; long-term health outcomes of women who

served during the Vietnam era; expanding mental health research including PTSD, substance abuse, and sexual trauma; and basic research (biomedical) on breast cancer including hormones, regulation, genetic factors, as well as autoimmune diseases.

To bolster support for investigators conducting women's health services research, as well as recruitment and inclusion of women veterans in a wider array of studies, VA Health Services Research and Development (HSR&D) launched the Women's Health Research Network (WHRN). The WHRN includes two partnered components: the Women's Health Research Consortium providing training and mentorship to researchers focusing on women's health research, and the Women's Health Practice-based Research Network supporting clinical research networks that test VA-based women's health-related interventions and studies requiring recruitment of women veterans at multiple sites.

The media roundtable is the third in a series of media roundtables sponsored by VA's Office of Research and Development. For more information about other roundtables, see www.research.va.gov/media_roundtable. For more information on VA Research, visit www.research.va.gov.

VA ANNOUNCES 2012 INDUSTRY INNOVATION COMPETITION (VA News Release) WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the 2012 Industry Innovation Competition, which identifies, tests, and evaluates promising innovations that enhance the accessibility and quality of care and services delivered to veterans. The competition is part of the VA Innovation Initiative (VAi2), a \$50 million, department-wide program that seeks the most promising innovations from employees, the private sector, non-profits, and academia to increase veterans' access to VA services, improve the quality of services delivered, enhance the performance of VA operations, and reduce or control the cost of delivering those services.

The 2012 VAI2 Industry Innovation Competition seeks creative solutions in four areas of significant importance to VA. Public and private companies, entrepreneurs, universities and non-profits are encouraged to propose new ways to enhance maternity continuity of care; redesign the PTSD treatment experience; create mobile applications for benefits information and services; and prevent and treat pressure ulcers.

This is the third Industry Innovation Competition. As a result of the first two, which generated nearly 600 proposals from the private sector, 35 projects are currently underway as part of a broader innovation portfolio that includes 135 projects across multiple VA lines of business. Information about investments made as a result of the 2011 and 2010 competitions is available on the VAI2 website at <http://www.va.gov/vai2>. For detailed information on the 2012 VAI2 Industry Innovation Competition visit FedBizOpps.gov

VA FACILITIES ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

SUICIDE PREVENTION 1-800-273-8255

VA Regional Office, St. Petersburg - PO Box 1437, St. Petersburg, FL 33731 1-800-827-1000

Regional Processing Office, Atlanta, GA (education claims) - PO Box 100022, Decatur, GA 30031-7022 1-888-GIBILL1 (442-4551)

Telephone number for Chapter 30 self-verifications 1-877-823-2378

VA EFT Information Hotline (electronic funds transfer - direct deposit) 1-877-838-2778

Veterans Health Administration Toll-Free Hotline (medical care) - 1-877-222-8387

VA Health Revenue Service (information on amounts owed to VA Medical Centers) 1-866-793-4591

VA Insurance Center, Philadelphia (VA Insurance) - PO Box 42954, Philadelphia, PA 19101 1-800-669-8477

VA Health Administration Center (CHAMPVA and Spina Bifida health care) -

CHAMPVA inquiries: PO Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206-5023

CHAMPVA claims: PO Box 65024, Denver, CO 80206-5024

Spina Bifida inquiries and claims: PO Box 65025, Denver, CO 80206-5025 1-800-733-8387

National Cemeteries

10,000 Bay Pines Blvd N, Bay Pines FL 727-398-9426

6502 SW 102nd Ave, Bushnell FL 352-793-7740

6501 S State Rd 7, Lake Worth, FL 561-649-6489

4083 Lannie Rd, Jacksonville FL 904-766-5222

Naval Air Station, Pensacola FL 850-453-4108/4846

9810 State Hwy 72, Sarasota FL 877-861-9840

104 Marine St, St Augustine FL 352-793-7740

National Cemetery Administration Office of Memorial Programs (headstones and markers) - 5109 Russell Rd Quantico VA 22134-3903 1-800-697-6947

Loan Guaranty Eligibility Center (certificates of eligibility) PO Box 20729, Winston-Salem, NC 27120 1-888-244-6711

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) Unit - Chicago VA Regional Office 1-800-829-4833

INTERNET SITES OF INTEREST:

VA Web Site: www.va.gov

VA Web Automated Reference Materials System (WARMS) www.warms.vba.va.gov

St. Petersburg VA Regional Office:

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/stpetersburg/>

Property Management (sale of VA-repossessed homes): <http://va.equator.com>

Federal employment: www.usajobs.opm.gov

Florida Dept of Veterans' Affairs: www.FloridaVets.org

Library of Congress (information on pending legislation) thomas.loc.gov