

Anatomy of Veteran Services

Sheri Heffelfinger, Legislative
Research Analyst
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Overview of Presentation

- ✓ Part I: The federal system
- ✓ Part II: The state system
- ✓ Part III: Conclusions and analysis

Part I: The Federal System

- ✓ The big 3 agencies
 - VA Benefits Administration
 - VA Health Care Administration
 - VA Cemetery Administration
 - Bunch of Special Programs

Benefits Administration VBA

- ✓ 9 Service Delivery Networks (SDNs)
- ✓ 50 Regional Offices
- ✓ Montana is part of SDN 8
- ✓ A Regional Office is at Fort Harrison

Benefits Administration programs

- ✓ Health care (admin. support to VA Health Administration)
- ✓ Compensation and pension benefits (biggest)
- ✓ Education and job training
- ✓ Home loan assistance
- ✓ Insurance programs
- ✓ Burial or interment services (Cemetery)

To Claim Benefits...

- Knowledge there are benefits
- Acknowledgment of a need for you to receive those benefits (willingness to ask for help)
- Know who to ask for what help
- Fill out the application correctly
- Providing all supporting evidence
- Making it to and through all required physical exams
- Deciding what rating you should request being able to prove why
- Comply with all legal requirements (USC 38)
- Present case to VA
- Wait, be questioned, rejected, questioned, wait more

While you wait....

- ✓ VA VSOs review the case and all evidence
- ✓ May ask for more documentation, records
- ✓ Etc., Etc, So Forth
- ✓ Finally get a determination
- ✓ Decide whether to appeal

What's in a Determination?

- ✓ Whether service-connected, non-service connected disability
- ✓ Eligibility for monetary benefits
 - Disability Compensation = service-connection
 - Pension = non-service connection
- ✓ Percentages determined:
 - 40% service-connected for a medical issue
 - 10% non-service connected
 - 10% service-connected for mental health issue
- ✓ then there is an unemployability rating, different

Veteran Service Officers can make or break it for you

- ✓ Veteran Service Organizations have VSOs
- ✓ State and Local governments
- ✓ These VSOs interact with VA Benefits Administration (VBA)
- ✓ All comes back to helping veterans file a claim =
BENEFITS SIDE
 - ...on to Health Care side....

VA Health Administration

- ✓ 22 Veterans' Integrated Services Networks (VISNS)
- ✓ Montana is in VISN 19
 - largest of all the VISNs in territory
 - nearly 700,000 veterans
 - distances between facilities as great as 700
 - rated 7 on a 0 to 9 urban/rural scale, highest given

VISN 19 in more detail

- ✓ 4 States, 6 medical facilities
 - Fort Harrison, Montana
 - Sheridan, Wyoming
 - Salt Lake City, Utah
 - Denver, Colorado
 - Grand Junction, Colorado
- ✓ 19 community-based primary care centers (CBOCs)

VA Montana Health Care System

- ✓ 45-bed general medical and surgical facility at Fort Harrison
 - On scale of 1=complex care, 2=basic care, 3=one-time office visit) Ft Harrison is a 2
- ✓ 30-bed VA nursing home at Miles City
- ✓ 10 CBOCs
 - Miles City, Billings, Great Falls, Whitefish, Anaconda, Bozeman, Missoula, Glasgow
- ✓ Network Authorization for non-VA services
- ✓ Contracts (outsourcing)
 - ...moving on to 3rd big administration..

Veterans' Cemetery Administration

- ✓ National Cemeteries
- ✓ Burial Benefits
 - headstones, plot allowance, etc.
- ✓ Honor Guards
- ✓ Burial Flags
- ✓ Grants for State Veterans' Cemeteries
 - States fund on-going costs
 - Montana's Veteran Cemeteries
 - Funded by special veterans' license plate fees

Bunch of Special Federal Programs

- ✓ VA special programs
- ✓ U.S. Dept. of Labor (Employment and Training)
- ✓ HUD
- ✓ U.S. DPHHS, public assistance
- ✓ Others probably

Summary:

Part I - The Federal System

- ✓ The big 3 agencies
 - VA Benefits Administration
 - VA Health Care Administration
 - VA Cemetery Administration
 - Bunch of Special Programs

Part II: State System

- ✓ Get into that more later
- ✓ For now, look at Montana's MVAD packet in your notebooks, tab 5
 - Benefit claims
 - Cemeteries
- ✓ Bunch of other state programs
 - special license plates, property tax benefits, human services in DPHHS, employment services in DOL, etc.

- Special Services
- Federal and/or State
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Chemical Dependency
- ✓ Homeless Programs
- ✓ Tribal Veterans' Representatives
- ✓ Subsistence grants
- ✓ Special loan programs

- III: Conclusion:
- By "its" very nature we have...
- ✓ Structural mazes, vast potential for crossed wires, confusion, chaos
 - All sectors
 - public, private, for-profit, not-for profit
 - All jurisdictions
 - federal, state, local
- ✓ Not necessarily coordinating or communicating
- ✓ Not necessarily seamless
 - Gaps in who is "target" of service (and outreach)
 - Gaps in access to services
 - Gaps in how those services are provided

For More Information

Contact Sheri Heffelfinger,
Legislative Research Analyst,
P.O. Box 201706, Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-3596,
sheffelfinger@state.mt.us