

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission; Notice of Public Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in accordance with Public Law 92-463, gives notice that the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission will conduct its eighth public meeting on Tuesday, July 16, and Wednesday, July 17, 1996, at the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Room 230, Washington, DC. The Commission will meet from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on both days.

This public meeting will focus mainly on discussion and consideration of proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendations, which have originated from the Commission's new areas of pursuit.

On July 16, the Commission will begin to discuss and consider proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendations generated from new areas of pursuit including:

- *Strategic Management Planning*—Setting strategic goals and embracing the accelerated development and integrated strategic management process;
- *Adjudication and Appeals Issues*—Redesigning the adjudication and appeals process to make it more functional, fair, and efficient;
- *Disability Compensation Advisory Committee*—Establishing an Advisory Committee which reports to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding disability compensation issues;
- *Annual Report on VA's Disability Compensation Program*—Developing an annual report which provides comprehensive information to be used in the long-term management of the program; and
- *Medical Examinations*—Assessing the military separation examination test to effect changes that will benefit servicemembers and veterans.

At the end of the day, the Commission will receive an update from the Veterans Benefits Administration's Business Process Reengineering (BPR) Team.

On Wednesday, July 17, the Commission will continue to discuss and consider proposed findings, conclusions, and recommendations from new areas of pursuit including:

- *VA Disability Compensation and Commercial Disability Insurance Comparisons*—Consideration of program and administrative practices of commercial insurers for possible adoption or adaptation by VA;

- *Lump Sum Compensation Benefits at Lower Disability Levels*—Revising the payment system to "free-up" time and resources so that the needs of more severely disabled veterans could be better served;
- *VA Pension Program/Supplemental Security Income Program Relationship*—Determining the relationship between the VA Pension Program and the Supplemental Security Income Program;
- *VA Pension Reform*—Reform and streamline the Pension Program to reduce the confusion and burden on the veteran and VA;
- *Claims Intake Issues*—Simplifying the application form and claims filing procedures, in addition to developing cooperative strategies with Veterans Service Organizations to encourage the submission of fully supported claims; and
- *Other Relevant Issues*—Issues on which the Commission will not take a formal position/make a formal recommendation, such as the lack of closure for VA compensation claims, and reevaluating the purpose of the rating schedule.

The meeting is open to the public; however, no time is allocated for the purpose of receiving oral presentations from the public. The Commission will accept appropriate written comments from interested parties on the subject matter addressed during the meeting. Such comments may be referred to the Commission at the following address: Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission (20C), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20420.

Additional information concerning this meeting may be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 275-2142.

Dated: June 26, 1996.

By Direction of the Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

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Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Vietnam and Other War Veterans, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Pub. L. 92-463 that a meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Vietnam and Other War Veterans will be held July 25 and 26, 1996. This meeting will be a field meeting conducted primarily at VA facilities in Tacoma and Seattle, Washington. The Committee

will also visit the Colville, Lumni and Tulalip Indian Reservations in eastern and central Washington to review the availability of services for area rural and minority veterans. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the Committee a first hand opportunity to review the provision and coordination of VA services for war-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other readjustment difficulties specific to war veterans. For this purpose the Committee will tour facilities, and engage in discussions with VA service providers and veteran consumers.

The meeting on July 25 will begin at 8: a.m. and conclude at 5 p.m. The day's agenda will be conducted concurrently at two different locations. Specifically the Committee will visit the American Lake VA Medical Center and the Tacoma Vet Center. The day's agenda will consist of direct observations of VA readjustment counseling and mental health services with particular attention to the PTSD Clinical Team at the American Lake VA Medical Center. An additional focus for the meeting is continuity of care and clinical follow-up between area VA medical centers and Vet Centers. A separate Committee group will visit the Colville Indian Reservation in Nespelam, Washington to review available services and meet with area veterans.

The meeting on July 26 will begin at 8 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. The second day's agenda will also be conducted concurrently at two different locations. The regular agenda will consist of a continuation of direct observations of VA programs and facilities at the Seattle VA Medical Center and Vet Center. Concurrently a separate Committee subgroup will be visiting with local veterans at the Lumni and Tulalip Indian Reservations in Bellingham and Marysville, Washington. In addition to the regular agenda the Committee will conduct a local community forum meeting and group discussion with VA and non-VA officials and service providers, and local veteran representatives regarding the post-war readjustment and service needs of area war veterans. The meeting will be conducted from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Seattle Vet Center, 2230 Eighth Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98121.

The meeting will be closed from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 25, and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, July 26, in accordance with the provisions cited in 5 U.S.C. 522b(c)(6) pursuant to subsection 10(d) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. During this portion of the meeting the Committee will be engaging in discussions with VA clinical service providers and veteran

consumers. The discussions will disclose information of a personal nature for veteran patients which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The meeting on July 26 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. will be open to the public to the seating capacity of the facility.

Anyone having questions concerning the meeting may contact Alfonso R. Batres, Ph.D., M.S.S.W., Director, Readjustment Counseling Service, Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office at (202) 273-8967.

Dated: June 26, 1996.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

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