



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY

September 6, 2013

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VA Releases Caregiver Expansion Report

Late this week, VA released a congressionally mandated report on expanding the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to caregivers of veterans of all eras. The *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010* created a wide range of benefits for caregivers of severely disabled post-9/11 veterans, including a monthly stipend, training, mental health counseling and respite care. Although VA stated that they have the capability to provide these benefits, they could not recommend that Congress do so without first increasing funding for the program. VA estimates that fully expanding the program would cost between \$1.8 and \$3.8 billion. VA stated that if they had to find the funding within its current budget, it would diminish their ability to provide direct-to-veteran healthcare services. The VFW supported the original *Caregiver Act*, but has consistently called for a full expansion, which would properly recognize the sacrifices of all severely disabled veterans and their families. Currently, the Senate VA committee has cleared legislation (S. 851), which would provide these services to veterans of all eras. The VFW testified in support of the bill and will continue to work with Congress to ensure it is funded and implemented. [Learn more](#) about current caregiver program benefits.

The VFW Joins DOL for Discussion on Women Veterans' Employment

The VFW was on hand at a recent Department of Labor (DOL) summit with private industry, academia and other veterans' advocates to discuss women veterans' employment issues. The meeting was the third in a series regarding employment for female veterans. DOL data shows unemployment has remained stagnant, with nearly 12 percent of women veterans still struggling to find work. Hoping to make significant changes, the Women Veterans Employment Initiative was created as a collaboration between the secretary's office, the Veterans Employment and Training Service, and the Women's Bureau to help identify unique challenges to employment for women veterans and to develop potential solutions. Speakers and participants discussed additional research gaps for information on women veterans in the workforce; developing innovative solutions to help women veterans find meaningful employment; and building upon military-acquired skills to find civilian careers. The VFW will continue to work with Labor and private industry to ensure that all veterans have access to quality careers. For more information and to

check back regularly for updates, [visit our blog](#).

Congress Returns to Busy Fall Schedule

Next week, Congress returns from a month-long recess with a full agenda of items to debate. Among the most critical are the budget debate and the effects of sequestration on DOD. With the fiscal year just a few short weeks away (Oct. 1), Congress looks to pass a two- to three-month continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government into the next fiscal year. The CR would fund the government at current FY 2014 levels, but allows some time to consider compromises on other issues, such as raising the government's statutory borrowing authority and restructuring sequestration. The VFW continues to urge Congress to come to a budget agreement. We urge all of you—our advocates—to reach out to your legislators and urge them to pass a budget agreement as soon as they return to Washington. Remind them their inability to reach a bipartisan budget agreement weakens the country, impacts military readiness, and hurts our troops and their families. Tell them it is their responsibility as leaders to work together to replace the senseless and irresponsible policy of sequestration. [Take action](#) today.

Change Affecting TRICARE for Life Beneficiaries Who Use VA

Beginning October 1, TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries who are Priority Group (PG) 8e and 8g (non-service connected, over income and not enrolled as of January 16, 2003) will be responsible for 80 percent of the cost of the care they receive at VA medical facilities. Earlier this month, TRICARE sent out letters to the approximately 12,000 beneficiaries affected by this change, which resulted from a review of previously overlooked provisions of the 2001 NDAA. Until now, PG 8e and 8g TFL beneficiaries have only been responsible for 20 percent of the cost of their care at VA, in accordance with a 1995 Memorandum of Understanding between VA and DOD. It is highly recommended that those affected by this change should seek care from Medicare-authorized community providers in order to avoid the increased costs. It is important to realize that this change will only affect vets who are PG 8 and ineligible for VA enrollment but choose to use their TFL benefits at VA anyway. TFL vets who are eligible for VA enrollment will still only be responsible for standard VA copays, which generally range from \$15 to \$50 per visit for non-service connected care. Care for service-connected conditions remains free of charge. More information can be found [here](#).

Korean War MIA Identified

The Defense POW/MIA Office announced the identification of remains belonging to Army Sgt. Charles L. Scott, 20, of Lynchburg, Va. In late November 1950, Scott and elements of the 31st Regimental Combat Team were deployed along the east side of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea when they were under attack and forced into a fighting withdrawal. Scott was reported missing in action on Dec. 2, 1950. [Read more](#) about his recovery and identification.

Congratulations go out to VFW Departments of California, Florida, Texas and Virginia for being the August leaders in signing up new advocates to join our Action Corps team! Great job, and keep up the good work!

As always, we want to share your advocacy stories on the VFW Capitol Hill blog. To share your stories, [fill out our online form](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

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