CALVET
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

FOLLOW US!

NEWSLETTER

All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to learn about and secure the benefits they have earned is by visiting their local County Veterans Service Office. A listing of these offices is available at www.cacvso.org.

OCTOBER 2014

Governor Signs 19 Veteran-Related Bills

Veterans, active duty service members, and their families received needed legislative support thanks to several bills signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.

"By signing these important bills into law, the Governor once again demonstrates his unwavering commitment to our California Veterans, service members, and their families," said Peter J. Gravett, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet).

The package of 19 bills includes legislation allowing Veterans to receive special designation on their driver's licenses (AB 935); provides spouses of military personnel who are licensed in another state to receive a 12-month temporary license to practice their profession in California (AB 186); directs CalVet to develop a California-specific transition assistance program for Veterans leaving the military (AB1509); provides greater oversight of private for-profit colleges and universities (AB 2099); and exempts a Veteran from any state from paying out-of-state tuition at California community colleges, California State Universities or University of California Campuses (AB13).

On Saturday, September 24, 2014, the Governor signed the following bills into law:

- AB 935 by Assemblymember Jim L. Frazier Jr. (D-Oakley): Allows Veterans to apply for a driver's license or identification card that includes a special "Veteran" designation.
- AB 186 by Assemblymember Brian Maienschein (R-San Diego): Requires Department of Consumer Affairs licensing entities to provide military spouses and domestic partners licensed in another state with a 12-month temporary license to practice their profession in California if they meet certain conditions.
- AB 1509 by Assemblymember Steve Fox (D-Palmdale): Requires CalVet to develop a transition assistance program for Veterans discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard of any state.
- AB 2099 by Assemblymember Jim L. Frazier Jr. (D-Oakley) – Provides the California State Approving Agency for Veteran Education (CSAAVE) with greater authority over for-profit colleges and schools that serve Veterans using their GI Bill education benefits.
- AB 13 by Assemblymember Connie Conway (R-Tulare): Requires the California Community Colleges and the California

GOVERNOR, page 3 >>

INSIDE

Protecting Our Student Veterans p. 4
Post-9/11 Veteran Unemployment Rate Drops p. 6
State Library Launches Veteran Website p. 8
Chula Vista Veterans Home Social Workers Pay it Forward p. 13

Secretary's Message

On September 26-27, 2014, CalVet hosted the first-ever forum for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Veterans. The LGBT Leadership Forum identified, explored, and discussed the spectrum of issues and needs specific to our LGBT service members and Veterans by assembling leaders who are serving the LGBT, service member, and Veteran communities.

I was honored to meet and listen to discussions that identified programs currently available for LGBT Veterans, best practices and initiatives for duplication, gaps and exclusions in services, and new program and initiative ideas. The Forum helped bridge the information gap that exists between Veterans and the education, employment, housing, health and other benefits they and their families have earned. I hope this event serves as a model for the rest of our nation.

On October 17, I had the pleasure of meeting with our Veterans, Veteran family members, and Veterans stakeholders at my biannual Secretary's Conference generously hosted by Irvine Valley College. Since starting or resuming a college education is often a priority for our Veterans, my conference focused on the public education needs and challenges of Veterans attending California Community Colleges (CCC), California State Colleges (CSU), and Universities of California (UC).

With the assistance of CalVet staff, plus staff and students from CCC, CSU and UC campuses, our conference made clear how Federal GI Bill benefits are administered and the distinct roles of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and CalVet in that process; the advantages and challenges of using GI Bill benefits; how Veteran resource officers assist Veterans on CCC, CSU, and UC campuses. Veteran/Military Advisors representing CCC, CSU and UC leadership shared their visions on the path forward in serving our Veterans on campus.

I do want to thank the Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Assemblymember, 65th District, Glenn R. Roquemore PhD, President, Irvine Valley College, Linda Fontanilla, Ed.D., Vice President for Student Services, Irvine Valley College, and Nancy Montgomery, RN, MSN, Director of Health, Wellness & Veterans, Irvine Valley College, for their support of my Conference.

As CalVet moves forward for the remainder of the year, my staff and I continue to work on behalf of our Veterans and their families. I always welcome your thoughts about how and where we can be of further service.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Gravett, Major General (Ret)
Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs

<< GOVERNOR

State University to update in-state tuition rate policies for eligible Veterans to ensure compliance with the Federal Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 and it requests the Board of Regents for the University of California to do the same thing.

Other Veteran-related bills the Governor signed include:

- AB 585 by Assemblymember Steve Fox (D-Palmdale): Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to develop a prioritized list of uses for unused or underutilized nonresidential real property it owns.
- AB 614 by Assemblymember Rocky Chávez (R-Oceanside): Ensures that a Veteran with 70 percent or more service-connected disability receiving intermediate care or skilled nursing care in a Veterans home shall have their account deemed paid in full by the amounts paid on their behalf by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- AB 919 by Assemblymember Das G. Williams (D-Santa Barbara): Permits Veterans who are itinerant vendors to receive a refund of sales taxes paid to the Board of Equalization between April 1, 2002, and April 1, 2010.
- AB 1397 by the Committee on Veterans Affairs: Requires the California Department of Human Resources to collect and report on data regarding the Veterans preference system in state hiring.
- AB 1453 by Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton): Requires CalVet to cooperate with local government bodies in Orange County to design, construct and equip a state-owned and operated Southern California Veterans Cemetery in the City of Irvine and establishes eligibility for interment.
- AB 1589 by Assemblymember Jim L. Frazier Jr. (D-Oakley): Requires an elections official to arrange electronic delivery of a ballot to a military or overseas voter who makes a standing request for all elections, eliminating the requirement that the individuals renew their email address every two years.
- AB 1821 by Assemblymember Richard S. Gordon (D-Menlo Park): Establishes the Medical Foster Home Pilot Program and authorizes U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to create a medical foster home not subject to licensure or regulation as a residential care facility for the elderly.
- AB 2215 by Assemblymember Brian Maienschein (R-San Diego): Allows a Veteran's family or legal representatives to file a copy of a Veteran's military discharge document with a county recorder without the consent of the Veteran.
- AB 2263 by Assemblymember Steven Bradford (D-Gardena): Authorizes a Veterans service organization to volunteer as a Veterans service advocate at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation facilities.
- SB 842 by Senator Stephen T. Knight (R-Palmdale): Requires the California Department of Transportation to construct directional signs on state highways for each Veterans home in the state.
- SB 1110 by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara): Requires the court to inform active duty or Veteran status defendants of restorative relief rights available to them and requires the Judicial Council to include information about the provisions in its military service form.
- SB 1113 by Senator Stephen T. Knight (R-Palmdale): Extends the statute of limitations for a Veteran with a 100 percent service-connected disability to claim a disabled Veteran property tax exemption refund from four to eight years.
- SB 1226 by Senator Lou Correa (D-Santa Ana): Expedites the Department of Consumer Affairs boards' and bureaus' initial licensure process for Veteran applicants who were active duty and stationed in California and authorizes prospective proprietary private security officers to submit verification of military training in lieu of a course in security officer skills.
- SB 1227 by Senator Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley): Authorizes a court to create a diversion program for active duty military personnel or Veterans who commit misdemeanors and who are suffering from service-related trauma or substance abuse.

Federal and State Agencies Protecting Our Student Veterans

Starting or resuming a college education is a priority for many service members and Veterans during and after military service. To better protect our service members, Veterans, and their family members who are attending college, the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), Defense (DoD), and Education (DOE) recently signed an agreement with the U.S. Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) that will strengthen enforcement and compliance work.

This new agreement is part of a larger effort to prevent abusive and deceptive recruiting practices by schools serving Servicemembers, Veterans, spouses and other family members. This includes working to ensure these individuals receive the information they need to make informed choices with their education benefits and colleges are providing these students high-quality academic and student support.

The joint agreement requires the agencies to:

- Have a point of contact for sharing information
- Share complaints about schools
- Alert each other of suspected fraud, deception, or misleading practices; and/or
- Notify each other of any agency action that could lead to a college's loss of eligibility, a suspension of enrollment, or a termination of license

Before this agreement, an agency could have been looking into a particular school or even taking away the school's eligibility to receive Federal funds without the other agencies knowing about it. Now, there is a system for sharing important information and coordinating efforts.

Recently, CFPB also worked with USDVA, DoD, and DOE and launched an online student complaint system. Here, students can report negative experiences at schools and training programs. The complaints are forwarded to schools and shared with other law enforcement agencies. The student complaint system has already received more than two thousand complaints.

To submit a complaint to the CFPB, consumers can:

- Go online at www.consumerfinance.gov/complaint;
- Call the toll-free number: 855-411-2372 or TTY/TDD 855-729-2372;
- Fax the CFPB at 855-237-2392;
- Mail a letter to: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, P.O. Box 4503, Iowa City, Iowa 52244.

Source: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, August 26, 2014.

California State Agencies Protecting Veteran Students

The California State Approving Agency for Veteran Education (CSAAVE), a unit of CalVet, works to protect student Veterans. Operating under contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), CSAAVE approves or disapproves Veterans' education and training programs, prevents abuses, and promotes quality in Veterans' education by evaluating and monitoring education and training programs.

CSAAVE conducts on-site supervisory visits at approved institutions and schools seeking approval, provides technical assistance to all interested parties, and is engaged in outreach activities to encourage eligible individuals to use their GI Bill® benefits.

Between January 1, 2014, and September 30, 2014, CSAAVE withdrew approval of 52 for-profit schools because they did not comply with federally-mandated regulations.

The California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education, part of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, promotes and protects the interests of students and consumers through oversight of California's private postsecondary educational institutions. The Bureau's oversight promotes competition that rewards educational quality and employment outcomes, combats unlicensed activity, and resolves student complaints in a manner that benefits both the complaining student and future students.

To learn more about how CSAAVE protects our student Veterans, go to www.calvet.ca.gov/CSAAVE.

To file a complaint about a California college, students may contact the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at http://www.bppe.ca.gov/enforcement/complaint.shtml.

CalVet, City Leaders Work Together on Behalf of Veterans

In early September, city and statewide leaders gathered in Los Angeles for the annual League of California Cities conference. Keith Boylan, CalVet Deputy Secretary Veterans Services, spoke to the audience about the enormous value Veterans benefits bring to local communities.

Boylan encouraged cities to work with CalVet by connecting local Veterans and their families with their state and Federal benefits earned because of their military service.

Boylan explained that Veterans benefits are fantastic for California's Veterans, families, and economy:

- Every year, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) pays billions of dollars in disability compensation and pension benefits to nearly 300,000 Golden State Veterans;
- Hundreds of thousands of California Veterans receive free or low-cost health care from USDVA;
- USDVA education and homeless prevention programs reduce Veteran unemployment and homelessness in our state;
- CalVet programs increase Veteran and Veteran dependent enrollment in Californias Community College, California State College, and University of California campuses, as well as non-public institutions.

In short, Veterans benefits improve the quality of life for Veterans and their families while they generate revenue, reduce costs, and improve business environments for the State of California and its municipalities.

Boylan also promoted CalVet's major programs assisting Veterans. He discussed CalVet's Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise, our Farm & Home loan programs, CalVet's Residential Enriched Neighborhood program, our Veterans Homes of California, plus the state's Veteran Housing and Homeless Prevention program.

At the encouragement of Veterans Services Division staff at CalVet's exhibit booth, city mayors, council members, managers, and other local officials from the cities of Palmdale, Chino Hills, Petaluma, El Centro, American Canyon, Pittsburg, Antioch, El Segundo, Calimesa, Salinas, Monrovia, Ontario, Fowler, Thousand Oaks, Alameda, Avalon, Vista, Oxnard, Watsonville, and Ventura agreed to some or all of the following:

Adding a link to CalVet's website

- Working with CalVet to create a Veterans resource page and post it on city web sites
- Sending Veterans Day greeting from the Mayor (or other appropriate official) to city employees system wide promoting the newly-created Veterans resource page
- Becoming a CalVet ListServe subscriber
- Reprinting CalVet Newsletter articles
- Requesting CalVet publications for distribution, such as our Resource Guide.

The conference also provided the opportunity for Homes Division staff to reconnect with many cities looking to provide affordable housing homeownership opportunities for Veterans. Several city officials asked CalVet to follow up with them about the department's Residential Enriched Neighborhoods program and some asked how they could use vacant land for these types of projects. Many cities were excited to learn from CalVet staff they could use this program towards their affordable housing mandates.

Post-9/11 Veteran Unemployment Rate Drops

The unemployment rate for post-9/11 Veterans dropped to 6.2 percent in September 2014. That's a drop of nearly two percentage points from the month before. Even still, that rate is still two points above the nationwide unemployment rate of 6.1 percent for that same period, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Unlike the nationwide rate, which has seen a gradual decline since the end of last year, the post-9/11 Veteran unemployment month-to-month rate changes significantly during 2014:

February	**June**
9.2%	**7%**
March	**July**
6.9%	**9.2%**
April	**August**
6.8%	**8.1%**
May	**September**
5.3%	**6.2%**

According to BLS, the dramatic fluctuation is a characteristic of the statistic because it is based on a small sample. BLS is also quick to point out that post-9/11 Veteran unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted, so comparing those rates with national unemployment rates can be deceiving, including taking into account college attendance. For a better picture of post-9/11 Veteran unemployment, BLS recommends looking at longer-term trends, which seem to suggest the rate is slowly dropping.

CalVet Forum Successfully Matches DVBEs with Contractors

On October 1, CalVet successfully hosted a first-of-its-kind forum for Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) owners in California. The forum was unique in that Federal, state and private entities collaborated to put government contracts into the hands of our disabled Veterans.

Our forum showed DVBEs and suppliers how to:

- Become certified by the State of California
- Find state and federal bidding opportunities
- Compete for contracts
- Effectively manage their business
- Take advantage of the support and services available through the CalVet and the California Department of General Services (DGS).

By the forum's end:

- 140 DVBEs visited 47 state, Federal, public utility and private-sector booths
- CalVet facilitated nearly 290 sessions in which DVBEs met one-on-one with suppliers and Federal, state, public utility, and private-sector procurement decision-makers for targeted business matchmaking discussions
- 87 DVBEs took advantage of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs workshops, and

DVBE, page 8 >>

my CalVet

Receive veteran benefit information specific to your needs! Register with myCalVet today!

myCalVet provides veterans and their families the opportunity to create a customized profile which targets the benefits, resources, and services available in their community and throughout the State.

WWW.CALVET.CA.GOV

Department of Defense Willing to Reconsider "Bad-Paper" Discharges

Before Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became a diagnosable condition in 1980, tens of thousands of service members who suffered from the condition were kicked out of the military for low-level misconduct that could have been associated with the condition. In early September, 2014, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) announced it will reconsider the "bad-paper" discharges of Veterans from the Vietnam era and other past wars.

The new rule, which will apply to all Veterans who were discharged prior to the formal recognition of PTSD in 1980, came in response to a Federal lawsuit. Filed earlier this year by the Yale Law School Veterans' Legal Service Clinic, the suit alleges DoD wrongfully denied discharge upgrade applications of Veterans who filed claims and evidence of PTSD. DoD will now give "liberal consideration" to Veterans who seek to correct their military records and provide some evidence a PTSD diagnosis that existed at the time of their service.

In reconsidering Veteran applications for discharge upgrade, DoD will focus on relatively minor misconduct that may have resulted in administrative discharge. Unlikely to benefit from DoD's new rule are Veterans who were court-martialed for serious misconduct and involuntarily separated from military service with bad-conduct or dishonorable discharges.

Restoration of significant Federal benefits, including disability pay, separation pay, or GI Bill education benefits—typically denied to Veterans with other-than-honorable discharges—could be available to Veterans who receive discharge upgrades.

Besides the emotional boost discharge upgrades likely will afford the Veterans who receive them, an honorable discharge notation on their DD214 separation document could improve the way potential employers view those Veterans' job applications.

According to the lawsuit filed, as many as 125,000 Vietnam-era Veterans received other-than-honorable discharges. Up to 80,000 of Veterans may have suffered from PTSD.

Source: Military Times, September 3, 2014

State Library Launches Veteran Website

By Karen Bosch Cobb, InfoPeople

In 2012, California public libraries, in partnership with CalVet, began connecting our Veterans and their families to benefits and services for which they are eligible. Eleven libraries have Veterans Resource Centers (VRC) with trained staff and volunteers, many of whom are Veterans.

Ten to fifteen new libraries will be added this year including sites in Camarillo, Chico, Lancaster, North Hills, Palm Desert, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Leandro, and San Mateo County.

To boost VRC's public profile and make it easier for Veterans and their Families to use its services, the program launched a new website and a new brand: Veterans Connect @ the Library. The webpage can be found at www.calibrariesforVeterans.org.

The new site provides information for Veterans and detailed information for librarians and volunteers who staff the Veterans Resources Centers. The site also includes a complete list of VRC locations. The "in a box" model, developed for partner libraries in California, is being used informally by other public and academic libraries searching for ways to improve services and provide information to Veterans.

<< DVBE

- four new DVBEs became state certified

"My day [at the CalVet Forum] was absolutely well spent," said Bob Katin, Principal at Katin Engineering Consulting, who was able to speak directly with contracting entities looking to do business with DVBEs. "It was a great experience … a complete success."

The State of California contracts with DVBEs for approximately $300 million in goods and services every year. CalVet established the DVBE program in 1989 with the goal of awarding at least 3% of all state contracts to certified disabled Veterans. The State met that 3% goal the last three years, and CalVet met or exceeded its own DVBE contracts goal of 5%.

CalVet's DVBE Outreach and Education Program works to increase the number of DVBEs available to state agencies in their contracting and purchasing efforts and to increase DVBE participation in those efforts. The Federal government is the world's largest purchaser of goods and services, spending over $536 billion during Fiscal Year 2011. The Federal goal to set aside at least 3% of all contracting dollars exclusively for disabled Veterans was established in 2003.

For more information about CalVet's DVBE Program, go to https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/Disabled-Veteran-Business-Enterprise-Program.aspx.

Multiple Agencies Support Mental Health Needs of Servicemembers and Veterans

By Roberto Herrera
Interagency Council on Veterans

Did you know 22 Veterans complete suicide every day in the United States?[1] Research confirms treatment outcomes for Veterans and their families are improved when clinicians and care providers are proficient in military cultural competency.[2]

With nearly two million Veterans calling California home, the need for healthcare providers who are knowledgeable in military culture and veteran specific treatment is at an all-time high.[3]

To help meet this significant need, the Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans (ICV) is reaching out to healthcare professionals to ensure they are aware of the little-to-no cost continuing education credits (CEU) awarding courses, training opportunities, and outreach programs detailed below.

Army OneSource

Continuing Behavioral Health Education Resource Center Online Training - Army OneSource provides access to continuing behavioral health education courses to educate service providers so they better understand military culture as well as the physical and psychological traumas of war. www.aosresourcecenter.com/cebehavioralhealth

Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense jointly sponsored a plan to develop and implement an online Military Culture Training Curriculum for health care professionals. The curriculum for this training encourages military cultural competency in health care professionals through the provision of interactive online training in the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Course and CEUs are free until December 8, 2015. www.deploymentpsych.org/military-culture-course-modules

Star Behavioral Health Providers Program Regional Training

The Star Behavioral Health Providers program (SBHP) aims to provide information and knowledge to all community based healthcare providers wanting to better serve our Veteran populations within their communities. Attendance and CEUs are free of charge. Training dates for Fall 2014, and Winter 2015, released are available here: www.starproviders.org/providers/states/california.

LivingWorks Education: Suicide Prevention and Intervention Training

For more than 31 years, LivingWorks Education remains an international trailblazer in the field of suicide prevention, intervention, and skill building. By developing evidence-based programs utilizing experiential strength-based learning, participants leave workshops willing, ready, and able to help save lives.

California has approximately 500 ASIST and safeTALK trainers covering almost every county. ASIST and safeTALK Workshops are facilitated somewhere in California virtually every week. The Department of Defense has adopted ASIST and safeTALK for use within the Army, Navy and National Guard. You may qualify for little-to-no-cost training opportunities in your area. www.livingworks.net

For more information please contact: Glen Bloomstrom, Col. Ret., Military Director, LivingWorks Education, glen.bloomstrom@livingworks.net, (612) 824-1395; Kathleen Snyder, Senior CA LivingWorks Training Coordinator, LivingWorks Education, Kathleen.Snyder@livingworks.net, (916) 316-2076.

"Have You Ever Served" Campaign

The American Academy of Nursing's "Have You Ever Served" campaign works to educate clinicians on the importance of identifying a patient's military service in order to enhance healthcare, and identify presumptive service connected disabilities. For more information, please contact www.haveyouserved.com.

The Governor's Interagency Council on Veterans

Created in 2011 by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. "to identify and prioritize the needs of California's Veterans, and to coordinate the activities at all levels of government in addressing those needs" (EO B-9-11). The Interagency Council conducts workgroup meetings every month, encompassing the arenas of Health, Housing, Employment, and Education. We welcome members of the public at every meeting.

For more information, please visit the ICV website at www.icv.ca.gov. To join the conversation, please contact info@icv.ca.gov.

1. Suicide Data Report (2012). Department of Veterans Affairs. J.Kemp, R Bossarte
2. Developing military cultural competence in civilian clinicians: Working with returning U.S. military populations with combat-related PTSD (2012), California Institute of Integral Studies, Stewart, A. T.
3. Veteran population Model (2012), Department of Veterans Affairs, http://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp.

CVSOs Bring in More than $545M in New Veterans Benefits to California

During Fiscal Year 2013-14, County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) assisted California Veterans in filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) which resulted in more than $545 million paid to our Veterans and their beneficiaries. This is an increase of more than 23% from 2012-13.

According to Chris Bingham, President of the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) and Sonoma County Veterans Service Officer, a number of factors attributed to the increase. Those factors include:

- Increased state funding in Fiscal Year 2013 from $2.6 million to $5.6 million. The increased funding allowed the CACVSO to increase Veteran outreach activities and hire additional Veterans Service Representatives to assist Veterans in the benefits claims process.
- Coordination with the state-funded CalVet Strike Teams working in U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs district offices in Los Angeles, Oakland and San Diego reviewing backlogged claims and new incoming claims for quality and training opportunities with CVSOs.
- Better claims reporting and tracking by CVSO using the CalVet-sponsored VetPro software program.

CalVet has a long-standing and productive relationship with CVSOs statewide ensuring Veterans and their families receive the benefits and services they earned in a timely manner.

Let Your Voice be Heard!

Our November 4 General Election is just around the corner. In coordination with the California Secretary of State, CalVet encourages you, your family, and friends to register and vote!

Voter Registration
Online or postmarked by October 20

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Request
Mail to arrive by October 28

Completed Vote-by-Mail Ballot
Mail to arrive by Election Day November 4

Election Day
General Election November 4

For more information call the Secretary of State's voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE or visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-in-california.

CALVET
HOME LOANS

VETERANS IN CALIFORNIA PURCHASING HOMES

RATES AS LOW AS
3.90%*
NO MONEY DOWN**

For more information contact
(866) 653-2510 or
loanapps@calvet.ca.gov

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

*4.25% - Estimated total monthly payment/APR based on a $200K sales price, no down payment & financing of the VA funding fee under the CalVet/VA program, $200K assessed value, mandatory hazard, and disaster indemnity insurance. Your actual payment can vary due to replacement costs for your home, location, local taxes, fees, and assessments and subsequent use of VA benefit, etc.
** Not all buyers will qualify.

Significant Drop in Veteran Homelessness Nationwide

The annual Point-in-Time Count conducted in January 2014, indicates there are significantly fewer homeless Veterans in the U.S. than there were four years before.

Data released in August 2014 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) estimated 49,933 homeless Veterans in America. That is a drop of 33% (or 24,837 people) compared to January 2010. This report also indicates there is an almost 40% drop in the number of Veterans sleeping on the street.

Veterans now have access to an array of programs that can provide them and their families with the housing and supports necessary to prevent or end their homelessness. USDVA works with its staff and grantees to connect Veterans to the program with the best fit for their individual needs to ensure the best outcome. The core USDVA program components include:

- Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) provides short-term assistance with a focus on making connections to mainstream assistance to prevent homelessness for at-risk Veterans and rapidly re-house Veterans experiencing homelessness.
- The Grant and Per Diem (GPD) and other Residential Rehabilitation programs provide moderate transitional assistance with structured supports and a focus on completing treatment and exiting to permanent housing. VA is encouraging its GPD grantees to adopt a Transition-in-Place model where Veterans are provided rental assistance and supportive services while they are in the program. After program assistance ends, Veterans can remain in the rental unit, without rental assistance, as the leaseholder.
- HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) provides a permanent rental subsidy and long-term case management for chronically homeless Veterans—Veterans with disabilities who have been homeless continuously for the last year or have had four or more homeless episodes in the last three years. VA and HUD are working with each of their medical centers (VAMCs) and public housing agencies (PHAs) to implement HUD-VASH based on Housing First principles. Housing First is an evidence-based best practice for assisting people experiencing chronic homelessness focused on getting clients into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Once housed, a team of caseworkers and clinicians work with clients to help them maintain their housing and improve their health and quality of life.

Earlier this year, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Administration's "Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness." The challenge will help ensure the goal of ending Veteran homelessness by 2015 is met. To aid the mayors in their efforts to end local Veterans homelessness, the federal government provided resources and enforced programs to strengthen our country's homeless assistance programs. These include:

- Using a Housing First approach, which removes barriers to help veterans obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, without unnecessary prerequisites;
- Prioritizing the most vulnerable veterans, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness, for permanent supportive housing opportunities, including those created through the HUD-VASH program;
- Coordinating outreach efforts to identify and engage every veteran experiencing homelessness and focus outreach efforts on achieving housing outcomes;
- Targeting rapid rehousing interventions, including those made possible through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, toward veterans and their families who need shorter-term rental subsidies and services in order to be reintegrated back into our communities;
- Leveraging housing and services resources that can help veterans who are ineligible for some of the VA's programs get into stable housing;
- Increasing early detection and access to preventive services so at-risk veterans and their families remain stably housed; and
- Closely monitoring progress toward the goal, including the success of programs achieving permanent housing outcomes.

So far, more than 210 mayors, county, and state officials have accepted the First Lady's challenge 2015. In California, mayors in the following cities have accepted the First Lady's challenge: Bakersfield, Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Fremont, Fresno, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Livermore, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, West Hollywood, and West Sacramento.

USDVA Launches Enhanced GI Bill Comparison Tool

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) enhanced the agency's GI Bill Comparison Tool, first launched in February of this year. The improved tool makes it easier for Veterans service members, and dependents to estimate their GI Bill education benefits and learn more about USDVA's approved college, university, and other education and training programs across the country.

The updated version of the GI Bill Comparison Tool contains new functionality, including a more robust GI Bill benefits calculator and additional information pertinent to the Veteran population (e.g., identifies schools with student Veteran groups, VetSuccess on Campus program, and those that have agreed to the 8 Keys to Success).

The GI Bill calculator provides a personalized estimate of Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition and fee, housing allowance, and book stipend benefits that potentially would be paid to the student. The calculator prepopulates the tuition and fee estimates from the ED's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The Veteran indicator section now contains new information on schools' student Veterans groups, VetSuccess on Campus program and Yellow Ribbon agreement status.

The tool also provides key information about college affordability and value so GI Bill beneficiaries can choose the best education program to meet their needs. In the past six months, nearly 350,000 people have accessed the tool on USDVA's GI Bill website. The GI Bill Comparison Tool is available at www.benefits.va.gov/gibill.comparison.

In 2009, the USDVA's Veterans Benefits Administration, which administers the Post-9/11 GI Bill program, paid more than $43 billion nationally in the form of tuition and other education-related payments to more than one million Veterans, service members, and their families; and to the universities, colleges, and trade schools they attend.

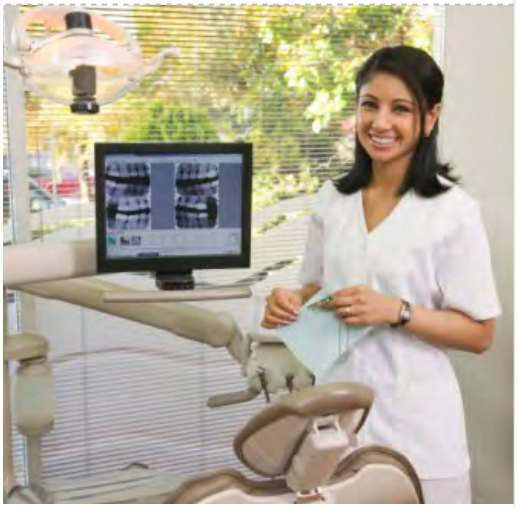
New Law Gives Veterans Access to More Medical Services through Non-USDVA Providers

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) recently added primary care to the services available to Veterans through its Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) contracts. With the addition of primary care, USDVA Medical Centers can now provide additional types of care to reduce patient wait times. Additionally, reduced commuting standards require that contracted providers schedule appointments closer to the Veterans' homes.

Eligible Veterans are already able to access inpatient specialty care, outpatient specialty care, mental health care, limited emergency care, and limited newborn care for female Veterans following childbirth under PC3.

USDVA Medical Centers have the ability to purchase non-USDVA medical care for Veterans through contracted medical providers when they cannot readily provide the needed care due to geographic inaccessibility or limited capacity. This additional option is available to purchase non-USDVA medical care when required Veteran care services are unavailable within the USDVA medical facility or when Veterans benefit from receiving the needed care closer to their homes.

Speaking to Veterans at the AMVETS national convention in Memphis, Tennessee in August, USDVA Secretary Robert McDonald said, "In the past two months, [USDVA] has made more than 838,000 referrals for Veterans to receive care from private doctors. That's an increase of 166,000 referrals, or about 25 percent, from the



same period last year." According to McDonald, each referral results in seven medical visits or appoints, on average.

Ten billion dollars of the $16.3 billion USDVA revamp law enacted earlier this year will be used to pay private doctors to treat qualifying Veterans who cannot get prompt appoints at the nearly 1,000 USDVA hospitals and outpatient clinics. Five billion dollars of the total allocated will be used to hire more doctors and other medical mental health professionals.

State-Level Employment Benefits May be Available to Disabled Veterans

Veterans with service-connected disabilities are entitled to receive benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and benefits may also be available at the state level.

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) helps people with disabilities find employment and live independently. DOR's vocational rehabilitation counselors work to develop and educational or employment goals for its clients. Clients receive services ranging from job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, and other work readiness assistance to post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical, or business school.

DOR also works with employers to help them understand hiring incentives and job accommodations such as "On the Job Training," apprenticeships, and non-paid work experiences.

To be eligible for DOR services, you must have a physical or mental disability that is preventing you from finding and keeping a job. Additionally, you must be able to benefit from DOR's vocational rehabilitation services, designed to help you find and keep a job or live independently.

If your disability is so severe that you might not be able to benefit from DOR services, DOR can arrange a trial work experience. This is an opportunity to work in a realistic setting to better gauge if you can benefit from our services. Independent living services are available for people unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities.

For more information about DOR and its services, visit www.dor.ca.gov.

Chula Vista Veterans Home Social Workers Pay it Forward

By Robert Winkler
CalVet Information Officer

Social work is an important element in providing care to residents at Veterans Home of California – Chula Vista (VHC-Chula Vista). The professionals who perform this vital role are often part of a continuous cycle of mentorship which begins during their formal educations.

Counseling and mental health care, discharge planning, patient advocacy, conflict resolution, and psychosocial education and assessment are all part of the VHC-Chula Vista social workers' duties—and more. While a good education provides the background necessary to understand the basic aspects of the job, only experience and mentorship can prepare social workers to interact with residents.

Marina Kravets, VHC-Chula Vista's Chief of Social Work Services, began her career here as a Masters of Social Work intern from California State University (CSU), Long Beach. "As an intern, I learned what it's like to walk in the shoes of social workers and to apply what I learned in class in the real world," she said. Kravets was hired as a Clinical Social Worker after her internship, and later obtained a position as a supervisor. "I feel that teaching

FORWARD, page 14 >>

<< FORWARD

future social workers is my way of paying it forward to the community."

Currently, VHC-Chula Vista is providing Masters in Social Work (MSW) internships to four students: Kiara Baugh, Erin Gray and Alexa Starr, from San Diego State University (SDSU), and Nycole Cully, from CSU, San Marcos. They all began their internships on August 25, 2014.

Baugh served as a captain in the Army National Guard Medical Service Corps for eight-and-a-half years. "As an Army Veteran, I am very excited to be accepted for this internship," she said. "My plan after graduating is to practice clinical social work in the Army Reserve, or work for them as a civilian. The experiences I'll receive here will help prepare me for working in the Veteran health care system. I've found that having a military background benefited me in already having a solid knowledge base and familiarity on which I can relate with the residents. I'm looking forward to a wonderful year ahead," she added.

Kravets takes her role as a mentor seriously, with the understanding these students may one day work in a similar setting, serving the community, and possibly veterans in need. "Our students complete 500 hours of supervised clinical social work, where they become a part of the VHC-Chula Vista team and carry out their roles and responsibilities as a social worker," she said. Kravets has developed relationships with local universities in support of the program to enhance the knowledge and experience of medical social work and veteran-related issues in long-term care. She recently received a certificate of appreciation from SDSU for going "above and beyond" as a field instructor.

Tanya Frausto worked at Chula Vista as an intern for nine months while attending SDSU, and began working as a full-time employee August 13. "I was first introduced to the world of medical social work during my internship here," she said. "Marina provided me with the skills necessary to succeed not only as an MSW intern, but also to excel academically. Today, I am beyond excited to have the opportunity to continue my work at the home, under the supervision and guidance of Marina."

The symbiotic relationship between VHC – Chula Vista, and local university MSW programs creates a fertile training ground for students, as well as a pool of well-trained social workers who may choose to continue to help veterans. Mentors, such as Kravets, ensure future residents will continue to receive the support they need.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 25
Redding Veterans Home
Founders Day Celebration
Redding Veterans Home
12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Contact: (530) 224-3814

OCTOBER 26
Wings, Wheels & Rotors Open House
Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Contact: (562) 598-6659

NOVEMBER 5
Orange County Conference on Veterans' Behavior Health Needs
Delhi Center
505 East Central Avenue, Santa Ana
Contact: (714) 480-6542

NOVEMBER 6
Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet Job Fair
Job Fair
The Proud Bird
11022 Aviation Blvd., Los Angeles
Contact: (323) 290-5139

NOVEMBER 7
Stanislaus County Veteran Stand Down
Modesto American Legion Hall
1001 S. Santa Cruz Ave., Modesto

NOVEMBER 7
VA Rural Medical Outreach Clinic
American Legion Post
11350 American Legion Drive, Sutter Creek
Contact: (209) 267-5764, ext. 9248

NOVEMBER 7-11
Global War on Terror Wall of Remembrance
State Capitol Park, Sacramento
Contact: (916) 492-0550

Note: To view full calendar, visit www.calvet.ca.gov/home/calendar

CalVet News
1227 O Street, Room 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
P (916) 653-2192
F (916) 653-2611
pao@calvet.ca.gov

Paul Sullivan
Deputy Secretary, Communications

Carolyn Ballou
Public Information Officer

Jaime Arteaga
Public Information Officer

Thomas Moralez
Graphic Designer

Greg Nannini
Office Technician

Reprint Permission
You are encouraged to forward the CalVet Newsletter to others and do not need permission to do so. If, however, you would like permission to reprint a single Newsletter article, please send your request to pao@calvet.ca.gov.

FOLLOW US!