

News Release

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VA approval of veterans disability claims up seven percent in FY11

RICHMOND—According to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS), the number of veterans compensation and pension disability claims approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in FY11 increased more than seven percent.

DVS assists veterans and their families with applying for benefits at the federal, state, and local levels. Of the 28,000 claims submitted by the agency in FY11, the VA approved 12,063 claims for Virginia veterans represented by DVS. The agency estimates the dollar value of these awards at \$154.1 million annually.

Developing a solid claim for VA benefits is more than a matter of completing the application. Supporting documents, sometimes decades old, must be retrieved from federal and state archives. The process is labor-intensive. A DVS representative may spend an hour interviewing a veteran, but then spend 20 hours or more finding records and completing the necessary supporting documentation.

If approved by the VA, a claim results in two types of awards: monthly compensation based on the level of disability and a retroactive award back to the claim date. While most retroactive (or retro) awards are relatively small, some exceed \$50,000 and can even reach six-figures. In FY11, the VA granted 193 awards ranging from \$50,000 to well over \$400,000 to Virginia veterans. In total, 2,534 retro awards were granted totaling \$57.6 million.

With approximately 823,000 veterans, Virginia ranks 7th in the nation in terms of veterans population. The state ranks 6th in terms of the amount of VA disability and compensation expenditures. In FY10, the VA paid \$1.7 billion in compensation and disability payments to Virginia veterans and their dependents.

The Virginia Department of Veterans Services



DVS assists veterans at 22 locations across the state. Office locations are listed at www.VirginiaforVeterans.com. All claims services are free.

In addition to assisting veterans with submitting claims for benefits, DVS coordinates the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program and certifies that post-secondary educational institutions meet G.I. Bill funding and eligibility requirements. The agency operates veterans care centers in Richmond and Roanoke, and veterans cemeteries located in Suffolk, Amelia, and Dublin.

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Serving those who served.