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GEORGE W. BUSH

SWORN IN AS 43rd PRESIDENT PLEDGES HIS SUPPORT
FOR VETERANS,NO MORE DELAYS,STOP THE ABUSE

Jennifer Self VA Sharing Resource Office On Diabetes
FREE TAKE ONE



Volume 19

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Number 10

CHUMP CHANGE INCREASE GIVEN TO VETS 3.5% COMPENSATION ANNUAL RAISE

By Dr. Joseph M. Paterna
National Director Of Legislation

If your a disabled veteran and depend upon your V.A. compensation check or survivor of a disabled veteran Congress has passed legislation (Public Law 106-413) granting our nations veterans a mere 3.5% COST OF LIVING increase, this increase also covers equally your social security benefit payments as affected by the COLA. By law your cost of living increase for your social security is the same as your V.A. compensation, both are tied to your annual inflation rate as measured by the consumer index, President Bill Clinton signed into law just prior to his leaving office. We feel the COLA is far to short on the 3.5% increase for our nations veterans given the ever increasing costs of living and gas, electric, utility, and food and the sky rocketing costs of medical needs for our nations veterans here in the United States the Congress also gave the Department Of Veteran's Affairs health care system a 1.4 billion dollar appropriations increase when the Department Of Veterans Affairs needed more like Six Billion Dollars to be able to just keep up with present health care costs.

President GEORGE W. BUSH, our 43rd President has assured us in a recent letter that the entire V.A. system is in for a shock when he gets done with them, he knows how our nations veterans are suffering from the abusive delays within the V.A. system his

new Secretary for The Dept Of V.A. The Honorable ANTHONY PRINCIPI, has already promised he will correct the awsome problems and chief complaints our veterans have with the delays in processing claims, the delays in medical treatments, in his own words recently to the press Secretary Principi HE WILL DECLARE WAR ON THE V.A. CLAIMS PROCESSING SYSTEM, Principi himself is a Vietnam Veteran who is highly respected by our nations veterans groups United States

Senator JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, the Honorable D.U.S. Senator from West Virginia recently said it best about Principi when he stated , WHEN WE THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE Confirm you our nations veterans will depend on you , We here at UNITED VETERANS OF AMERICA assure our members that during the months ahead we will be urging the new Bush administration to fix the very corrupt V.A. system and to honor America's promise to our nations veterans and to give the V.A. the proper financial support needed to correct the problems and stop the awsome delays in the V.A. claims process , we welcome your input and letters feel free to write us.

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VETERANS NEWS**By: Jennifer Self****DIABETES MELLITUS (TYPE II) AS A PRESUMPTIVE CONDITION FOR IN-COUNTRY VIETNAM VETERANS**

1. What veterans will be affected when this condition is added as presumptive condition for those exposed to herbicides/dioxins ? Honorably discharged veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period January 09,1962 through May 07,1975 and have adult onset diabetes mellitus. This does not include veteran's who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period February 28,1961 , to January 09,1962.
- 2.What does "presumptive condition" Mean Normally, the claimant must show proof of relationship between service and the condition being claimed. Under presumption of service connection, V.A. presumes the service-connected relationship exists based on the other qualifying criteria, such as dates and location of service and that the condition being claimed, in this case, is associated with exposure to Agent Orange.
- 3.Must I have served"in-country"Vietnam to be eligible ? To have presumptive service connection granted for diabetes mellitus based on Vietnam service the claimant must have served in-country.
- 4.What does "in-country" mean ? What if I served in support of operations in Vietnam, for example, on board a ship in the Gulf of Tonkin ? During the period 01/09/62 through 05/07/75, you must have physically served or visited in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), including service in the waters offshore if the conditions of service involved duty or any visitation in Vietnam. This means the ship must have come to port in the (RVN) and that you as the veteran had disembarked.
- 5.Will private medical records be accepted as proof of my diabetes? Will I be required to undergo a V.A. examination? if private medical records are sufficient, VA can make a determination and grant my claim based on those records if not a VA examination will be required.
- 6.I had applied for service-connection for my diabetes and was denied. The condition

was however, rated as non-service connected. Will I need to reapply for this service connected condition. As soon as the governing regulations regarding this issue are published, if you had in-country Vietnam service and now have diabetes, you will need to reapply. Any veteran in this situation should contact his or her local VA office at the National Toll Free number 1-(800) 827-1000.

7.My husband died from diabetes and was an in-country Vietnam veteran. Do I now qualify for service connected death benefits under the (DIC) ? if you believe the cause of death was related to diabetes and the veteran had in-country service, you should contact the local VA office to determine your eligibility.

8.When will my benefits begin if I am granted service connection for my diabetes? VA must now publish the regulations to be able to implement this decision. Benefit payments cannot begin prior to the date the VA publishes the final regulation concerning this issue. The VA does expect the process to be completed sometime in late Spring of the year 2001.

9.Will I receive any retroactive back payment benefits based on a grant to my person for service connection due to presumptive service in Vietnam? the answer is generally NO. The regulations will not have a provision for retroactive back payment prior to the date the regulation is published. We note, however that presently there is pending litigation before the UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, in the case of Nehmer v U.S.Department Of Veterans Affairs, which , depending on the outcome of this case, could very well result in your entitlement to receive a retroactive back payment benefits check for certain individuals who have been previously denied service connection for their disability.

10.If I am already service connected for diabetes, Will I get an increase based on this change? You will not receive any additional benefits as a result of this change. However,if your diabetic condition has increased in severity since you were last rated by the VA, you should contact your local VA office. You can file a claim for a reevaluation and the local VA office can provide you with assistance with that claim.

Continued On Page 3

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Continued From Page 2

11. Will I be eligible for medical treatment? Even if you decide not to file a claim based on exposure to herbicide, you can still get a free physical examination at the nearest VA medical Center. You may also be entitled to free ongoing medical treatment at a VA medical facility. You should contact your nearest VA medical facility or you can obtain information and an application for health benefits by calling 1-(877)-222-8387. By: MS. Jennifer Self, VA Sharing Resource Office at VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System For More information please call Ms. Self at 1-(228)-563-2886 of toll-free at 1-(800)282-3439 Ext # 2886. End.



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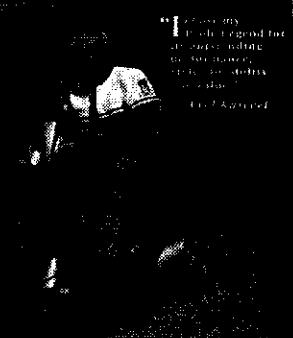
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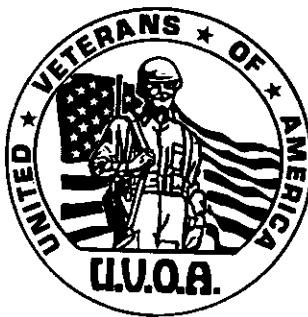
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Dear CHAMPVA Beneficiary:

The VA Gulf Coast is very pleased to announce that the VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System is in the process of implementing new programs to provide more comprehensive health care to CHAMPVA eligible beneficiaries. We would like to invite you to consider our facility as a provider of your health care needs. The same high quality care that we have provided over the years to our veteran population is now available to you.

In order to provide better services to our veterans and their beneficiaries, the VA Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System (which includes sites in Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi, and Pensacola, Florida) is now prepared to offer comprehensive Primary Care to CHAMPVA beneficiaries. We will also continue to offer quality care in the area of Women's Health; Mental Health services, and other services on a space available basis.

Our well-trained and dedicated staff invites you to take advantage of this program the next time you have a need to seek health care services. We waive the 25% co-pay for inpatient and outpatient services, making it the best deal around for CHAMPVA beneficiaries. For more information, please call Ms. Jennifer Self, Sharing Resource Office, at 228-563-2886 or toll-free at 1-800-282-3439, extension 2886.



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HELP IS A PHONE CALL AWAY FOR VETERANS WHO NEED AN APPEAL TO THE COVA.

By: Norman R. Zamboni Attorney At Law

When a veteran's claim is denied by a V.A. regional office, the veteran may appeal his claim to the Board Of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, D.C. If the Board Of Veterans' Appeals also denies the veteran's claim, the veteran has a right to appeal his claim to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, which is also located in Washington D.C. When a veteran appeals his claim to the Court Of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the veteran has the right to be represented by a lawyer or appointed representative. The federal government may pay the lawyer's legal fees on behalf of the veteran, veterans may be represented free by a lawyer because of federal law known as the Equal Access to Justice Act. Under this law, the federal government may pay the veteran's lawyer on behalf of the veteran if the veteran's appeal is successful. This law makes it possible for veterans to be represented by a lawyer during their appeal to the court of Appeals for Veterans Claims even though the veteran does not have enough money to pay the lawyer out of the veterans own pocket. In essence, this law can "open the courthouse door" to many veterans who would otherwise be locked out. Attorney Zamboni is a former Commissioned Officer from the U.S. Army and was a former lawyer for the Board Of Veterans Appeals. He practices veterans law, any veteran seeking his help is urged to write us here at the National Membership Office United Veterans Of America P.O. Box # 539, Freeport, Fla, 32439. End.

Do You Need Help To Obtain Your Social Security or V.A. Benefits? No Fee Unless You Collect. Call Pat For Details.

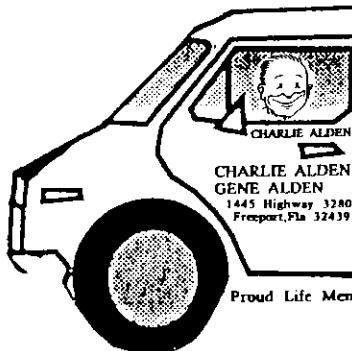
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