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Service Bulletin

June 2011

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)

<http://www.va.gov>

VA and DoD Release “PTSD Coach” Smartphone Application

The PTSD Coach smartphone application (app) launched in April by the VA and the Department of Defense (DoD), helping users connect with important mental health information and resources. The app lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with public and personalized sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful strategies for managing PTSD symptoms on the go.

The app is one of the first in a series of jointly designed resources by the VA National Center for PTSD and DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology to help servicemembers and veterans manage their readjustment challenges and get anonymous assistance. Given the popularity of mobile devices, VA and DoD hope to reach tens of thousands of veterans, servicemembers, and their family members with the new suite of apps.

Information on the PTSD Coach app is on the VA's National Center for PTSD Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>. More apps from DoD's National Center for Telehealth and Technology can be found at: <http://www.t2health.org/apps>.

VA Expanding Housing for Homeless Veterans and Their Families

VA is developing housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk veterans by adding 34 VA locations across the country. This action will increase the Department's available beds by over 5,000. VA currently has 15,000 transitional beds available to homeless veterans.

Culminating two years of work to end homelessness among veterans, a recent strategic study, the Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) initiative, identified

unused and underused buildings at existing VA property with the potential to develop new housing opportunities for homeless or at-risk veterans and their families through public-private partnerships and VA's enhanced-use lease (EUL) program. Under the EUL program, VA retains ownership of the land and can determine and control its reuse.

Additional opportunities identified through BURR will include housing for returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and their families, assisted living for elderly Veterans and continuum of living residential communities.

Supportive housing projects are planned for homeless veterans and their families at 23 VA sites: Tuskegee, Ala.; Long Beach and Menlo Park, Calif.; Bay Pines, Fla.; Dublin, Ga.; Hines and North Chicago, Ill.; Danville and Fort Wayne, Ind.; Leavenworth, Kan.; Perry Point, Md.; Bedford, Brockton and Northampton, Mass.; Battle Creek, Mich.; Minneapolis and St. Cloud, Minn.; Fort Harrison, Mont.; Castle Point, N.Y.; Chillicothe and Dayton, Ohio; and Spokane and Vancouver, Wash.

Under the enhanced-use lease agreements, veterans will receive senior and non-senior independent living and assisted living at eleven VA sites: Newington, Conn.; Augusta, Ga.; Marion, Ill.; Topeka, Kan.; Togus, Maine; Grand Island, Neb.; Big Springs and Kerrville, Texas; Salem, Va.; Martinsburg, W.Va.; and Cheyenne, Wyo.

Change in Law Results in Retroactive Benefits for Non-OIF/OEF Injuries
www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/TSGLI/TSGLI.htm

VA announced June 3, 2011 that service members who suffered a qualifying injury on or after October , 2001, may be eligible beginning October 1, 2011 for a payment of \$25,000 to \$100,000 regardless of where the injury occurred.

The Servicemembers Group Life Insurance Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI) program became effective December 1, 2005. The program provides benefits to service members who have suffered physical losses as the result of traumatic injuries. TSGLI originally provided for payment to two groups of service members:

- All service members covered under Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) who suffered qualifying losses on or after December 1, 2005, regardless of where those injuries occurred.
- Those who suffered qualifying losses between October 7, 2001 and November 30, 2005, in support of Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) or Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

With the passage of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2010, service members who incurred qualifying injuries outside of OEF or OIF during the retroactive period may be eligible to receive benefits, regardless of whether they had SGLI coverage at the time of their injury.

Beginning October 1, 2011, active and reserve service members who suffered qualifying injuries from events such as training accidents or motor vehicle accidents between October 7, 2001 and November 30, 2005, while service stateside or in other areas outside of OEF or OIF, can now receive the same traumatic injury benefits as those who served in OEF and OIF.

TSGLI covers a range of losses including amputations; limb salvage; paralysis; burns; loss of sight, hearing or speech; facial reconstruction; coma, and other traumatic injuries.

General Allison A. Hickey Sworn In as Under Secretary for Benefits

Retired Brig. Gen. Allison A. Hickey, a 27-year veteran of the United States Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserves and a graduate of the first U.S. Air Force Academy class to include women, has been sworn in as the VA Under Secretary for Benefits.

As Under Secretary, Hickey is responsible for a \$72.3 billion budget and benefit programs that include compensation and pension benefits for more than four million veterans and survivors, education programs including the Post 9/11 GI Bill, home loan guaranties, vocational rehabilitation and employment services, and one of the nation's largest life insurance programs.

Hickey, a pilot and aircraft commander, has 17 years of leadership in Department of Defense strategic and transformation planning, program and resource implementation, public and congressional affairs, and quality and organizational management. She served as head of the Air Force's Future Total Force office, and as Assistant Deputy Director of Air Force Strategic Planning, leading one of the largest mission and culture change efforts the Air Force has gone through since its inception. Additionally, Hickey held the position of Air Force Future Concepts and Transformation Division Chief, focused on the integration of technologies, organizations, and operations that became the model for the Air Force of 2025.

Department of Defense (DoD)

<http://www.defense.gov/>

Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Deadline Extended to October 21, 2011

http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2010/0710_stoploss/

The 2009 War Supplemental Appropriations Act established Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP), providing \$500 for each month/partial month served in stop loss status. Service members, veterans, and beneficiaries of servicemembers whose service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2009 are eligible for RSLSP.

To receive this benefit, those who served under stop loss must submit a claim for the special pay. Throughout the year, the services have been reaching out to servicemembers, veterans and their families through direct mail, veteran service organizations, and the media. But there is still money left to be claimed, and the deadline is approaching. The average benefit is \$3,700.

Individuals who meet eligibility criteria may submit an application between Oct. 21, 2009 and October 21, 2011. By law, there is no authorization to make payments on claims that are submitted after October 21, 2011. Eligible members should visit their specific service's Web site and submit their application on-line; on-line submission provides a claim number, allows for automated status updates, and provides a means for the military service to contact the applicant.

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Pocket Guide Mobile Application Now Available

The Department of Defense has released a new mobile application for health care professionals, the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Pocket Guide. This application, developed by the National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2), gives providers a comprehensive, quick reference that includes clinical practice guidelines for assessing and treating service members and veterans who have sustained a mild traumatic brain injury, commonly referred to as a concussion.

The mobile application is free and available for download on Android smart phones at <https://market.android.com/details?id=org.t2health.mtbi>. Hard copies of the pocket guide can be ordered by contacting the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center at info@dvcic.org or 1-800-870-9244.

U.S. Department of Labor (DoL)

<http://www.dol.gov/>

Grant Funding Available to Provide Employment Services for Homeless Veterans

Competition for grants totaling more than \$5 million has been announced through DoL's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to provide approximately 3,000 homeless veterans with job training and other services to help them succeed in civilian careers.

Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis to state and local workforce investment boards, local public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including faith-based and community-based organizations. Grantees must be familiar with the areas and populations to be served and demonstrate that they can administer effective programs. They will coordinate their efforts with other local, state and federal social service providers to provide homeless veterans with occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, including follow-up services.

The program is administered through DoL's Veterans' Employment and Training Service. A copy of the solicitation for grant applications is available at <http://s.dol.gov/FY>. Information about the Department of Labor's programs for veterans is available at <http://www.dol.gov/vets>.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD>

HUD, VA to Provide Permanent Housing to Homeless Veterans

U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced June 13, 2011 that HUD will provide \$5.4 million to public housing authorities in 18 states to supply permanent housing and case management for 676 homeless veterans. This is the fourth and final round of the FY 2010 [Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program \(HUD-VASH\)](#) funding to support homeless veterans.

HUD-VASH is a coordinated effort by HUD, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and local housing authorities to provide permanent supportive housing for homeless Veterans. The vouchers are part of a set-aside of project-based vouchers HUD announced last September that would be competitively awarded to housing authorities that received HUD-VASH vouchers in 2008, 2009 or 2010. Under HUD's project-based voucher program, housing authorities can assign voucher assistance to specific housing units. These vouchers will enable homeless veterans to access affordable housing with an array of supportive services.



GARRY J. AUGUSTINE
National Service Director