



VA Appeals Modernization Update Stakeholder Engagement Meeting

Date of Briefing: January 25, 2018

Veterans Benefits Administration

VA



**U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs**

Appeals Modernization Update

- **Proposed regulations are in VA concurrence**
 - Scheduled for final publication in Federal Register by January 2019
- **VA has ensured congressional reporting requirements are met**
 - Progress of appeals reform reported to Congress and GAO every 90 days
 - January 17, 2018, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hearing
 - January 30, 2018, House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing
 - Ongoing GAO engagement on appeals reform
- **Developing Information Technology systems**
 - Improvements to the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS)
 - New “Caseflow” applications (i.e. Caseflow Intake)
- **Future Objectives**
 - Prepare the Secretary to certify that the Agency can fully implement the Appeals Modernization Act by February 2019
 - Monitor progress and success of appeals modernization
 - Refine processes and best practices to ensure rapid reduction of legacy appeals

RAMP Update

- RAMP began on November 1, 2017 at the ARC in Washington, DC
- February 2018 VA will expand RAMP processing to ROs
 - Tentatively the Denver and Phoenix ROs to start
 - VA will expand to additional ROs as warranted by opt-in rate and workload capacity
- RAMP Data as of January 25, 2018
 - **431** total appeal count opt-in
 - **225** higher-level reviews and **92** supplemental claims received
 - Average days pending of **27.7** days
 - 88 issues granted; 144 issues denied
 - 27 claims granted; 20 claims denied
 - **\$1,254,964.07 awarded for granted benefits**

RAMP Update

Proposed Monthly Mailing Schedule					
Date	Primary Batch Letters	Newly Established NODs (Estimated)	Date	Primary Batch Letters	Newly Established NODs (Estimated)
01-Nov-17	500	N/A	1-Jul-18	30,000	12,000
01-Dec-17	5,000	N/A	1-Aug-18	30,000	12,000
01-Jan-18	10,000	N/A	1-Sep-18	30,000	12,000
01-Feb-18	25,000	12,000	1-Oct-18	30,000	12,000
01-Mar-18	25,000	12,000	1-Nov-18	30,000	12,000
01-Apr-18	30,000	12,000	1-Dec-18	30,000	12,000
01-May-18	30,000	12,000	1-Jan-19	N/A	N/A
01-Jun-18	30,000	12,000	1-Feb-19	Appeals Modernization Enactment Date	
			TOTALS	335,500	132,000

- Notice letters sent each month
- Started with oldest appeals in each stage
- Will add in newest NODs beginning February 2018
- Increase the number of letters mailed each month until May 2018
- Follow-up letters mailed 45 days after initial notice

RAMP Update

- **Marketing and Outreach**

- Collaboration with
 - Benefits Assistance Service
 - Office of Corporate Communications
 - VSOs and other stakeholders
- Monthly follow-up calls to recipients of opt-in letters
- Communication products for RO Directors
 - Talking points
 - Fact sheets/Frequently Asked Questions
- Monthly lists of opt-in letter recipients for ROs to share with local POAs

- **Future Objectives**

- RAMP Dashboard available
- Determine best practices for full implementation based on RAMP data
 - Veteran behavior
 - Work productivity
 - Procedures

Digital Service at VA Demo

Board of Veterans' Appeals Update

The Board is on pace to produce over 81,000 decisions for Veterans this fiscal year

- As of January 22, the Board signed 22,872 decisions
- With 31.0% of the fiscal year lapsed, the Board has achieved 28.2% of its annual goal

The Board is developing training and tools to improve decisions

- Training for the new appeals framework will begin in April 2018
- A new decision template, currently in testing, will create efficiencies for decision-drafting attorneys, assist Veterans Law Judges in their review, and provide Veterans with better, clearer information

Enterprise-wide efforts

- The Board is working with Digital Service at VA to ensure IT systems will support timely processing of all appeals;
- A dedicated, expert Project Manager from VA's Office of Enterprise Integration is assisting the Board in implementing the new framework and improving the legacy processes

Questions?

