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Economic Impact of Veterans Benefits on Native American Communities

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Presentation Agenda
1. Introductions
2. Federal VA Benefits
   A. VA Disability Compensation
   B. VA Pension
   C. VA Healthcare

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Introduction
Carol Wild Scott
• Attorney with Bergmann & Moore, LLC
• Chair, Veterans Affairs Committee, Veterans & Military Law Section Federal Bar Association
• Advocates for veterans, including Native American veterans before the VA and Congress
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- Bergmann & Moore, LLC is a national law firm founded in 2004 and located in Maryland.
- The founding partners are former VA attorneys, Glen Bergmann and Joe Moore.
- Represents Veterans at VA Regional Offices, the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, and Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

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**Overview of VA**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- ~350,000 employees
- ~$20 billion annual budget

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**Resources for VA**

- VA’s 2018 Benefits Booklet
- VA Fact Sheets
  https://www.va.gov/opapublications/factsheets.asp
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**VA Structure**

VA has three major parts:

- **VHA:** Veterans Health Administration
- **VBA:** Veterans Benefits Administration
- **NCA:** National Cemetery Administration

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**Top VA Economic Impacts**

VA’s top three economic impacts:

1. **VA Compensation**
   - ~5 million Veterans,
   - ~$77 billion per year paid
2. **VA Pension**
   - ~500,000 Veterans, ~Survivors,
   - ~$900 million per year paid
3. **VA Healthcare**
   - ~1,250 facilities, 9 million enrolled patients,
   - ~$77 billion

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**VA Compensation**

What is VA Disability Compensation?

- Veterans file claims to get “service-connected” to receive free, lifetime VA medical care plus compensation.
- When granted by VA, compensation is paid monthly by VA to Veterans who are disabled by an injury or illness incurred in or aggravated by active military service.
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VA Compensation

Monthly Payment Ranges:

- 10% = $140.05 ($1,680.60 / year) for a single Veteran without children
- 100% = $3,437.10 ($41,245.20 / year) for a married Veteran with two children

https://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/resources_comp01.asp

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VA Pension

- A Veteran may file a claim to obtain a VA Pension and receive free, lifetime VA medical care plus a Pension payment.
- VA Pension payment amount varies based on household income, assets, severity of conditions, and dependents. Pension is tax free.

https://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/current_rates_veteran_pen.asp

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VA Pension

Eligibility for VA Pension

- Discharge from service under other than dishonorable conditions, AND
- Service of 90 days or more of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war time, AND
- Countable household income below the maximum annual pension rate, AND
- Meet the net worth limitations, AND
- Age 65 or older, OR, a permanent and total non-service connected disability, OR, patient in a nursing home, OR receiving Social Security disability benefits.

For more details:
https://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/docs/Pension_FAQ.pdf
VA Healthcare

Eligibility for VA Healthcare

• VA healthcare is available with 90 days active duty in Army, Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, Airforce with an other than dishonorable discharge
  
  https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/

• Here is where to apply:
  
  https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction

Economic Impact #1

VA Compensation:

• If 25 Veterans with a spouse and two children begin receiving VA service-connected compensation at the 100 percent rate, then VA may add more than one million dollars per year to the local economy
  
  VA Compensation Rate Table, 25 Veteran * $41,245.20 per Veteran = $1,031,130. Compensation is tax free.

Economic Impact #2

VA Healthcare:

• If 25 Veterans enrolled for the first time in VA healthcare, then VA may add more than a quarter million dollars per year to the local economy above and beyond improving the health of the Veteran.
  
  FY 2017 VA Budget, 25 Veterans * $11,300 per Veteran per year = $282,500
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**Economic Impact #3**

**VA and Younger Veterans:**
- If 25 younger Gulf War Veterans (deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11) use a full suite of earned VA care and benefits, then the lifetime value may be above $25 million.

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**New VA Programs**
- With deployment to a war zone since 1998, VA provides five years of free care.
- For Veterans in crisis, VA has counselors 24/7 at: 800-273-8255
- This includes VA MST assistance 24/7 at: 800-273-8255
- VA also has a homeless Veteran, 24/7 hotline: 877-424-3838

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**VA FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM**

*Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Part 71 of Title 38 CFR)*

**Veteran Eligibility for Family Caregiver Program**
- Inability to perform one or more activities of daily living
- Need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurocognitive or other impairment or injury
- Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate
ADDITIONS ENACTED BY THE MISSION ACT UPON CERTIFICATION OF IT SYSTEM

- Eligibility will expand to veterans serving prior to 9/11
- Within 2 year period after certification of IT program, will include veterans with traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma or other psychological disorder
- Incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval or air service.

CATEGORIES OF CAREGIVERS

General Caregiver –
  • Education & training on care of a VA enrolled veteran, telehealth, counseling, respite care, may live apart.

Secondary Caregiver –
  • Benefits & services of General Caregiver plus training, counseling, tech support, must reside with veteran

Primary Caregiver –
  • Highly trained for care for specific veteran, beneficiary travel for training, monitored by VA care team, monthly stipend
  • All benefits and services of General and Secondary caregivers

More detailed description in handouts.

AVAILABLE HANDOUTS

- Information on Family Caregiver Program
- Information on Veterans Business Opportunity Centers (VBOCs)
- Information on other VA programs that provide tax free income and other services of economic value.
Thank You!

Questions?