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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
https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/2018_Federal_Benefits_for_Veterans.pdf

VA Fact Sheets
<https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets.asp>

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VA Structure

VA has three major parts:

VHA: Veterans Health Administration
https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/Chapter_1_Health_Care_Benefits.asp

VBA: Veterans Benefits Administration
https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/Chapter_2_non_healthcare_benefits.asp

NCA: National Cemetery Administration
https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book/Chapter_3_Burial_Memorial_Benefits.asp

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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 Veterans 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, and 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>

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VA Healthcare

Eligibility for VA Healthcare

- VA health care 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>

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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 Veterans * \$41,245.20 per Veteran = \$1,031,130. Compensation is tax free.

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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.
- "[Current and Projected Future Costs of Caring for Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars](#)," Linda Bilmes, Harvard, 2011; and "[Costs of War](#)," Catherine Lutz, Brown, 2018; 25 Veterans * \$1,000,000 per Veteran in lifetime benefits = \$25,000,000).

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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 neurological or other impairment or injury
- Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate

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**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.

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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.

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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.
- Information on S.524 – VA Tribal Advisory Committee Act of 2019.

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Thank You !

Questions ?

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