

Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission

Meeting Agenda

June 6th, 2025 at 10AM

Location: Arrowheads Community Club

1000	Call to Order	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Moment of Silence	Vice-Chair Constance Snavelly
	Pledge of Allegiance	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Administration of Oath	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M.B. "Bruce" Kanis as Commander of JWV	
	Introduction of Commission Members	MG John Pippy
	Vice-Chair's Opening Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Chairman's Opening Remarks	Vice-Chair Constance Snavelly
	TAG's Opening Remarks and Comments	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Approval of 04 April 2025 Meeting Minutes	MG John Pippy
	Reading of Official and Other Communications	Requires Vote
	DAG-VA Opening Remarks and Report	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PPL, BVH, PIRO• Programs Report	BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
	VISN 4	Requires Vote
	Committee Reports	Ms. Denise Boehm
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance Committee<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Bylaws / OPP• Legislative• Pensions/Relief/Grave Markings• RETX<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Chairman's testimony• MAL<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ SOP Update❖ Applications Update• Transportation• Veterans' Health• VSO Grant• Women Veterans• PAWVC Update	Mr. Michael Brooker
	Unfinished Business	Mr. Mark Baylis
	New Business	Mr. Larry Googins
	Good of the Order	Mr. Alvin Loveless
	Agenda Items for Next Meeting	Vice-Chair Constance Snavelly
	Closing Remarks	
	Next Meeting	
	05 September 2025, at 10AM	
	Arrowheads Community Club	
	Building 9-65	
	Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003	
	Retiring of the Colors	Mr. Robert Hammaker
	Adjournment	Mr. Leonard Johnson
		Mr. John Getz
		Ms. Pauline Bozdech-Veater
		President John Fritz
		Chairman Nicholas Taylor
		Chairman Nicholas Taylor
		SVC Commissioners
		SVC Commissioners
		Chairman Nicholas Taylor

**Call to Order****Chairman Nicholas Taylor**

The Pennsylvania State Veterans' Commission (SVC) meeting was called to order at 10:00AM on April 4, 2025.

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

This month we wish a happy birthday to our brothers and sisters in the Air Force and Army Reserves. Let us also take a moment to reflect on April being the month of the military child. Military children and youth should be recognized for their courage, sacrifices, and continued resilience. Some are too young to fully comprehend the ramifications of their parents deploying into dangerous situations with no true understanding of when or if they will see their parents again.

Commission Introductions

Mr. Marc Ferraro	TAG Designee-DMVA-EDS
BG (PA) Maureen Weigl	DAG DMVA-OVA
Mr. Nicholas Taylor	SVC Chairman, President - MOAA
Ms. Denise Boehm	VA-Healthcare, VISN 4
Mr. Mark Baylis	Member-at-Large
Ms. Pauline Bozdech-Veater	Member-at-Large
Mr. Leonard Johnson	Member-at-Large
Mr. Michael Brooker	Member-at-Large
Mr. John Fritz	Commander, The American Legion
Mr. James Hogan	Adjutant, The American Legion
Mr. Phil Arnold	President, MOPH
Ms. Constance Snavelly	SVC V-Chairwoman, Representative, Korean War Veterans
Ms. Diana Henry-TEAMS	Commandant, Marine Corps League
Mr. Kim Carson	Designee, AMVETS
Mr. Paul Foresman	Commander, AMVETS
Ms. Barbara Loncar	Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mr. John Getz	Adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mr. William Hines	Commander, Disabled American Veterans
Mr. Robert Hammaker	Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans
Ms. Wanda Grover - TEAMS	Commander, Blinded Veterans of America
Mr. Michael Rang	Commander, Catholic War Veterans
Mr. Alvin Loveless	President, PA State Association of County Directors of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Larry Googins	President, Vietnam Veterans of America

Absent

Mr. Stanley Majocka	Commander, Italian American War Veterans
Mr. Chris Fidler	Director, Keystone Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

Others Present

Mr. Richard Hudzinski	VVA/LVMAC
Mr. Keith Graham	DMVA- Executive Director of Veterans Programs
Mr. Richard Hamp	DMVA- Special Assistant - DAG - OVA
Mr. Nathan Silcox	Executive Director, PA Senate VAEP
Mr. Dusty Durand	DMVA-PPL
Mr. Jeff King- TEAMS	DMVA- PIRO
Mr. Bruce Lindsey	Former Marine Captain
Mr. David Cowgill-TEAMS	VISN-4 Direct of Communications
Ms. Michelle Brandt-TEAMS	Closed Captioner
Mr. Brian Natali	DMVA- PIRO
Ms. Angela Watson	Director, DMVA Communications
Mr. John Gemcavage	Dauphin County Vet. Affairs
Mr. Thomas Coreau	Dauphin County Vet. Affairs
Mr. Edward Cherry- TEAMS	DMVA- OCC
Mr. Craig Andrews- TEAMS	DMVA- Communications
Mr. Carl Curtis	
Mr. David Gyger	VFW
Mr. John Noll	DMVA
Administration of Oath	
Mr. Marc Ferraro	
Ms. Pauline Bozdech-Veater was appointed to her position as Member-at-Large.	
Vice-Chair Opening Remarks	
Vice-Chair Constance Snavelly	
April 10, 2025, at 11AM the Tunnel to Towers Foundation is having their groundbreaking event for our new Veterans Village in Harrisburg. If anyone is interested in attending.	
Chairman's Opening Remarks	
Chairman Nicholas Taylor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulations to Ms. Pauline “Polly” Bozdech-Veater as the new MAL, Retired Captain US Navy • Welcomed Ms. Denise Boehm as the interim VISN 4 Director. Vision 4 is a fully integrated network of nine V.A. campuses, 46 outpatient clinics, 16 vet centers, covering 82 counties and Pennsylvania and Delaware. Parts of Ohio. West Virginia. New York and New Jersey. 3.9 billion budget. • Attended PA War Veterans Council meetings in March and April. • Participated in biweekly VTCs with Vice-Chairman Constance Snavelly, General Weigl, Rick Hamp, Keith Graham, Brian Natali, John Noll, and Seth Bengel. Will continue to share notes with the commissioners. • March 25th at the capital center Mastriano sponsored a Vietnam Veterans Day, Vice-Chair Conny Snavelly was able to attend in place of Chairman Taylor to represent the commission. • After SVC meeting in February Chairman Taylor became aware of a discrepancy involving the Jewish War Veterans representative, specifically Mr. Richard Fine who was listed as a Department Commander of PA for many years is no longer valid according to their national headquarters. A gentleman by the name Bruce Connis is. Chairman Taylor will be working with JWV and Becky to make sure we have the most current and legal representative to be here on the commission. In future Becky and Chairman Taylor will be working on updating the SVC list. • Appointment orders, not all committees are listed yet and to those committee chairmen please provide the names ASAP. It's important for all the commissioners to know who is on what committee and what instruction Chairman Taylor has given to proceed. Will send electronic 	

copies out to the commissioners. Chairman Taylor asks if there's any corrections or missing information to inform him to make updates.

- Last page of VSO grant committee, Mr. Robert Black is not the appointment person for the American Legion. It will be Mr. Peter Hartman. Will be sending out corrected copies of that order.
- Future operations: Will be providing Commissioners with a Memorial Day message next month. Will be present to represent the SVC at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery ceremony scheduled Sunday 25 May.
- VETCON: 22-25 October
- MOAA Activities will be in Washington DC next week, will be participating in the annual advocacy and action campaign.
- Planning to attend the next Governor's Advisory Council on Veteran Service 7May2025 representing the SVC

Questions/Discussion

None

DMVA Opening Remarks

Mr. Marc Ferraro

Updates on the department:

- MG Pippy did get confirmed in February as The Adjutant General
- Military side you can see there's about 1200 soldiers and airmen deployed. Continuing to prepare to mobilize and redeploy.
- Feeling some of the pinch from the federal government through the various executive orders (hiring freeze, budget cuts, etc.) There's going to be some more structure changes coming down and what impacts to PA.
- MG Pippy has been to numerous veteran functions. Whether it be down at the capital, out visiting various organizations, going to events to speak. MG Pippy is spending an ornament amount of time outwardly focusing and advocating for the veterans and the department.
- MG Pippy has spent time having meetings with various legislators, along with General Weigl. Will be in DC for 2 days to meet with the Federal Delegation to talk both military and veteran issues we have in the state to get their support.
- Tracking the VA changes and what the impact will be on the veterans and department.

Questions/Discussion

None.

Approval of February 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Motion: Ms. Barbara Loncar, Commander, Veterans of Foreign War, made a motion to approve the minutes.

Second: Mr. Robert Hammaker

The body agreed; motion carried. Minutes approved with correction of Nick Taylor affiliation.

Reading of Official and Other Communications

Chairman Taylor

Correspondence was received by the PA War Veterans Council outlining Legislative objectives for 2025. PPL and the Veterans affairs and emergency preparedness committee, I received a few e-mails regarding pending and upcoming legislation. Going to start funneling a lot through Mr. Mark Baylis.

Received a letter from a U.S. Navy Veteran that V.A. is denying benefits for/on behalf of. There is a discrepancy in that the records that they have from the V.A. It shows him as a Navy reservist and not a

Veteran. He does have a 214. I looked at it. He spent 1 year 11 months 29 days not USS independence. Trying to work with that Veteran to make sure the V.A. recognizes his Veteran status.

Questions/Discussion

None

Deputy Adjutant General-VA Remarks

BG (PA) Maureen Weigl

- TAG did approve the VTF over 1 million dollars in awards to 39 nonprofits service orgs and county directors. And A.C.T. 66 scoring is in process. Once completed, TAG will review applicants and approve award amounts in coming weeks.
- We are looking at the relationships with some of your committees. We will probably reach out to some of the committee chairs and schedule a little more regular cadence to work with you and members at large to get a pulse of what you are doing and see if we can help focus and work with you on some of your initiatives. That is something coming up from an initiative that Becky wants to look at doing with all of you.

Questions/Discussion

None

DMVA Policy, Planning, and Legislation

Mr. Gilbert Durand

- Some updates: senate bill 129, voted out of the senate and moved to the house for consideration. Senate bill 130 is moved and being considered in the house. Senate bill 146 moved to the house as well. House bill 799 passed first consideration in the house.
- There are two real state tax exemption bills. There are three real estate tax exemption bills introduced that affect the constitution and one that affects the statute. This is an area where I think that the commission needs to have a joint meeting between the real estate tax committee and legislative committee to determine a way ahead.
- April would be a good month to meet and come to some resolution on what we would like to do and move forward with so it can start working that in May. There are 4-5 bills addressed to real estate tax exemption and if we want to see some movement on those we need to work together to get to a resolution.
- Primary May 20, 2025, last day to register is May 5th, 2025.
- November 4, 2025, Municipal Election, last day to register Oct. 20, 2025.
- Conversations about the civil service program, they are looking at and is an initiative they are trying to push for within the budget. Worked with the Office of Administration to ensure that it doesn't affect Veterans' preference.
- Garden Veterans Day at the Capitol is scheduled for 3rd of June.
- PA Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee met in January and reported five bills out of committee, five veterans measures, 4 of 5 are over in the house right now.
- Senate Bill 144 is in the Senate Appropriation Committee now.
- March 13- Senator Doug Mastriano, Senator Rosemary Brown and Senator Lisa Baker toured Gino Merli Veterans Home and had a roundtable discussion on a number of oversight issues in the homes.
- Senate adopted citation SR58 which designates March 29 as Vietnam Veterans Day, presented to Chairman Taylor.
- Bill 534 was moved and will need help to push forward as it goes to the Appropriations Committee.
- April 2nd held a conference to highlight the purpose of the Purple Star Programs.
- May 8th Senator Mastriano will be holding an event in Gettysburg area to recognize the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe and Japan Day.

Questions/Discussion

- Chairman Taylor asked for an elaboration on bill 144. Nate Silcox Answered: Senate Bill 144 needs to pass senate and house and go to Governor. It would then go before the voters to authorize the bond so it is a bond issue, to authorize up to 50 million for financing of the bonus. So it wouldn't be funded straight from the general fund in terms of appropriations bill. It would be authorized by the voters to borrow and to finance a bond. That's the distinction here between the two. As we talk through the budget, as we talk through what the governors proposed versus what house and senate are looking at in terms of revenue and balancing the budget, it is important to note this would be a separate act.
- Len Johnson asked if the paralyzed pension could be upgraded to another amount. Nate Silcox answered: Yes, it's been introduced and moved out after committee. It will be a tight budget year so we will keep it as manageable as possible. Last session it did not come out of appropriations committee last session. If after that whether on senate floor or if we get it to the house and from that front, there are other opportunities to expand it whether 200 is the magic number or whether a cola in there, manual indexing of it. Once it is out of appropriations we can still ask for an increase.
- Robert Hammaker asked: Is there anything different you are doing with the tax exemption? Nate Silcox answered: The one highlight that we were able to get done last session was senate bill 126. Signed into law. That expanded eligibility for those applying for the retax. We will continue to push from our end here in terms of the constitutional amendment. Three major pushes there are making sure we have, eliminate war time clause, that we make eligible spouses of soldiers killed in action, and adjust on the income front. We've been pushing forward for this constitutional amendment. We will continue at it. It is not any easier now days to get a constitutional amendment through the process but incumbent upon all of us. Are these the three things you unite on? If so, please continue to advocate for such. It is no longer in our committee. It is now starting off in the state government committee, Chairman Dutch is the Senator to contact on that front.
 - Chairman Taylor highly encourages that the RETX committee under Alvin Loveless and legislative committee under Mark Baylis get together. Chairman Taylor will provide both Committees with what the body unanimously recommended in Oct. 2021, will also CC the rest of the commission.
- Richard Hudzinski asked if the two actions for SB144 could be separated legislatively. Mr. Durand answered: I don't believe so but will double check. The bond is part of the initial legislation and then goes from the bond to the ballot for citizens to determine whether or not they want to let the bond out.

BVH Bureau of Veterans Homes

Mr. Keith Graham

- Waiting on the reschedule of the surveys for Pennsylvania Soldiers & Sailors home, Southeast Veterans center and Gino Merli Veteran center.
- 13 COVID positive residents – 2 COVID positive staff, 5 influenza positive residents- 0 influenza positive staff.
- 5 Star updated: Dover Valley, Gino Merli, Southeast Veteran Center all have 5 Stars. Pennsylvania Soldiers & Sailors, Hollidaysburg, and Southwester Veteran Center all have 4 stars.
- Currently 1,141 residents in state veteran homes care. Combined level filled at 75%. 80% for nursing. About maxed out based upon our manning.
- Admissions in March there were about 51 people admitted to homes.

- Staffing remains to be the biggest challenge. Hiring bonuses to current nurses who refer a nurse is still in play.
- Hollidaysburg Veterans home construction: CLC Ribbon cutting tentatively looking at September 2025
- TAG Fishing Derby will be held on 5 June. Looking for volunteers to help move veterans, bait hooks, among other tasks.
- Advisory council meetings will be held April 10 in Southeast Veterans Center, April 16th in Southwest, and April 17 in Hollidaysburg.

Questions/Discussion

None

DMVA Bureau of PIRO

Mr. Keith Graham

- In region 5 a man graduating out of the Veterans Service unit now own 3 buildings and is bringing people who are coming out of the VSUs into stabilized housing.
- Spoke about adaptability requirements in meetings with DCED, Department of Agriculture, DDAP, Department of Health and Human services.
 - No one in PA on the federal side works the LIHEAP program, so it is not a program that can be used anymore.
 - Food banks can no longer provide fresh meat, produce, and dairy products based on loss of grants from the Department of Agriculture.
 - Mr. Graham asks that, as you hear about the impacts, please email Keith and Brian Natali. They are keeping a repository of what the impacts are and so there's visibility on it.
- Grant agreements are downtown for the VTF Grant. Moved to using E-grants in hopes that it will streamline the distribution process and have a quick turnaround, if not contact John Noll.

Questions/Discussion

None

State Veterans' Programs

Mr. Keith Graham

- Amputee & Paralyzed Veterans Pension- Moving along at a good pace, experiencing a surge in applications. We were able to get a supplemental budget to help cover some of those things. The PACT Act has increased the number of people eligible for V.A. care and increased the percentages that people are receiving.
- Blind Veterans' Pension- Remaining stable
- Educational Gratuity- Growing exponentially. External factors for growth being PACT Act, Post 9/11 generations and Global War on terrorism generation is roughly at the age where their kids are going to college. Requested additional allocations for next year to help cover the shortfalls of this program.
- Veterans' Temporary Assistance- Heavy year, will spend the full \$850. With storms we had up in the northern part of the state, hurricanes and flooding. Both county directors did a great job getting people assistance when they needed it.
- Military Family Relief Assistance- Expecting grants to continue trending around \$55-\$75K.
- Disabled Vets' Real Estate Tax Exemption- PACT Act 26 has removed the VA compensation from the formula. This program has increased 1,000 people from January until the present day. With over 22,000 people in this program now.
- Proposed Rulemaking: 43 PA Code, 5 and 5A adjustments have been made and the final hearings are scheduled for June of this year. Will make sure everyone is aware of exact date once received.

Questions/Discussions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chairman Taylor commented that he asked the committee to look and make recommendations to streamline the RETX process. 	
Approval of State Veterans' Programs Reports	
Motion: Mr. Mark Baylis, Member at Large, made the motion to approve the programs report.	
Second: Mr. Robert Hammaker, seconded the motion.	
The body agreed; motion carried. Programs reports approved.	
VISN-4	Ms. Denise Boehm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quite a few leadership changes, highlighted that they have an acting Deputy Director, Mr. David coming from Clarksburg WV. Hiring freeze does not impact anyone essential like doctors, nurses, technicians. Giving the ability to keep clinics and hospitals running. Working on transportation services to do an inventory of all fleets both on the VA paid side and volunteer side. First step is to have full visual on the fleet and then assess what the needs are and cross level them all. So, we can move forward with one comprehensive service that is integrated and working together. VISN4 leads the nation in Veterans trust, consistently been above 95% veterans trust score. It has the most compliments and least number of concerns registered by veterans. VA is working to accelerate use of the new electronic health record, no date on timeline for VA hospitals in PA yet. There is a new way to log into HealtheVet, you need to have an account verified by ID.me or VA.gov before you can log on. <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark Baylis asked if there was any way you can do an overlay map to show that shows where pick-ups have been? Denise answered yes, she will work to get a map for the next meeting. Polly Bozdech-Veater commented that several women vets in the Pittsburgh area are just thrilled with the services that the VA is offering. Polly Bozdech-Veater asked if 988 is still active? Denise answered yes, it is still active, you have the same service today as you had when the Veterans crisis line began. Wanda Grover commented that the Cerner of integration of medical records is not accessible. Is there a way that it can be made accessible to the blind? Denise answered that she will take this information back and relay what she can find out for the next meeting. John Getz thanked VISN4 for moving the VSO to another room so they can have more privacy. Robert Hammaker Thanked VISN4 for getting an SOP set up for the VA Transportation program. Mr. Hammaker asked if there was a program in place where the VA does maintain the vehicles. Denise answered that is one of the things we are going to look at with overall transportation needs. 	
Committee Reports	
Legislative Committee	Mr. Mark Baylis
No official Report. Trying to interview people to join the Legislative committee, not having much luck. Will work independently until there are volunteers.	
<u>Questions/Discussion</u>	
None	
Pensions/Relief/Grave Markings/State Military Cemetery Committee	Mr. Larry Googins

No Official Report. Thanked everyone and the programs that had attended the Vietnam War Veterans Day on 25 March. Veterans Breakfast Club had a huge event on March 29th at Heinz Center in Pittsburg. Maxed out the number of people they could hold at 450. Mr. Googins mentioned that it would be nice to have Nonveterans recognize Veterans at the events.

Questions/Discussions

None

RETX

Mr. Alvin Loveless

No official Report

Questions/Discussions

None.

MAL

Vice-Chairwoman Constance Snively

As I reported at our last meeting, the next Member at Large position to fill will be the seat that is currently held by Mr. Brooker, whose term expires on 27 July 25. Per the Member at Large SOP, the Vacancy Announcement and application instructions should be advertised on the DMVA website 100 days prior to the expiration of the MAL term making that date on or about 17 Apr 25, and remain posted for 45 days. The Committee then has 30 days to rate and recommend the top candidates to the SVC Chairman.

Questions/Discussions

None

Transportation Committee

Mr. Robert Hammaker

Currently have 348 volunteers and in search of more. Mr. Hammaker reached out to the national organization who has a ride-along program. They come out to areas in need, along with news crew, they do a ride along and can generate volunteer drivers.

Total of 4,380 hours of volunteer, Erie has 1,177 hours- 5th in the nation for volunteer hours. Total mileage in February was 78,802, with Erie at 22,684- 4th in nation in mileage. The number of veterans transported were 1,475.

Questions/Discussions

- Chairman Taylor asked since the numbers are very impressive, is there some sort of “reward” for this? Mr. Hammaker response: Looking into getting plaques, awards, and recognition for the drivers.
- Chairman Taylor asked if there was some sort of algorithm that might influence the life cycle management or replace many of these vehicles or increases the maintenance schedule? Mr. Hammaker response: The vehicles are literally driven until the wheels fall off. Example: in Pittsburgh there are 2012-2013s well into the 200,000-mile mark. Vehicles are being picked up on roll back because they can’t move.
- Bill Hines commented that the VA and National do a great job with the volunteers. Mr. Hines explained that the VTS program is a new program that the VA has had for the last 2-3 years. VTN program has been in effect since 1996.
- Alvin Loveless commented that volunteers are hard to come by sometimes. Another issue being the lengthy onboarding process. Is there any way to streamline that process to get more volunteers to drive vans? Denise answered that they do recognize the lengthy onboarding process, right now not positive they will be able to make any significant changes but will certainly look at that moving through the restructuring phase.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richard Hudzinski commented that the VA recognizes the many issues and are in the process of scheduling a meeting at the DAV. Mark Baylis asked if there is a record of the addresses where you pick up the veterans and can they be used to make the overlay on the maps. Bill Hines responded it would be a HIPPA violation. 	
Veteran Health Committee	Mr. Leonard Johnson
<p>Discussed about Melanoma. These are considered by V.A. to be presumptive conditions.</p> <p>V.A. is still studying other forms of melanomas for inclusion to this list.</p> <p>(Document of presumptive diseases attached, this is not a complete list of presumptive melanomas from V.A.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None</p>	
VSO Grant Committee	Mr. John Getz
<p>A meeting was held on March 19th to discuss what was being done wrong. Discussed the types of reports that need to be given, and when and how they are to be given. More meetings with John Noll and his team to become more efficient and comply with the law.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
Womens Health	Ms. Pauline Bozdech-Veater
<p>Continuing to look for members for the women's committee. If you know anyone interested, please reach out to Ms. Pauline.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None</p>	
Governance Committee	Mr. Michael Brooker
<p>Fellow Commissioners, I am excited to announce that much like the legendary Jake and Elwood of the Blues Brothers when they were released from the Joliet Correctional Facility....the Governance Committee is getting the band back together! And while we're not on a mission from God, we are on a mission from TAG to conduct the two-year review of the Bylaws and the OPP to see if there are any tweaks needed or required to the existing documents. These documents provide both the commission and its members the necessary tools and requisite guidance to effectively perform their duties. Since they were crafted by the committee from scratch as a thorough, but not exhaustive, playbook, I would ask your assistance by doing your own review and providing your feedback to the Committee through the Becky. I respectfully request that you complete your review by April 25th. I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize and thank the other team members of the band, er, Governance Committee, Rich "Big Stick" Hudzinski, Dave "Spike" Gyger and our DMVA Advisor Rick "\$6 Million Man" Hamp. Pending any questions, that concludes my report....Bow Bow Bow!!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None</p>	
PAWVC	Mr. John Fritz
<p>No Official Report</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None</p>	
Unfinished Business	
None	

New Business
<p>For informational purposes, if the various Veteran Service Organizations would please email Becky outlining your convention event list, dates, and any other planned activity so it can be shared among the commissioners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions/Discussions</u></p> <p>None</p>
Good of the Order
<p>Mr. Michael Brooker pointed out the 250th Service Birthdays: Army June 14, Navy October 13, Marine Corps November 10.</p>
Agenda for Next Meeting
<p>None</p>
Closing Remarks
<p>Chairman Taylor updated his e-mail address.</p>
Next Meeting
<p style="text-align: center;">Friday, June- 6th, 10:00 AM Forum: Arrowheads Community Center, FIG Annville, PA 17003</p>

The minutes of this meeting are respectfully submitted by:

BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
Deputy Adjutant General
Veterans Affairs



“Presumptive” Disability Benefits for Certain Groups of Veterans

What is “Presumptive” Service Connection?

VA *presumes* that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. VA does this because of the unique circumstances of their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a veteran in one of these groups, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded.

What Conditions are “Presumed” to be Caused by Military Service?

Veterans in the groups identified below: Entitlement to disability compensation may be presumed under the circumstances described and for the conditions listed.

Veterans within one year of release from active duty: Veterans diagnosed with chronic diseases (such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension) are encouraged to apply for disability compensation.

Veterans with continuous service of 90 days or more: Veterans diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)/Lou Gehrig's disease at any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service is sufficient to establish service connection for the disease, if the veteran had active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

Former Prisoners of War	Vietnam Veterans (Exposed to Agent Orange)	Atomic Veterans (Exposed to Ionizing Radiation)	Gulf War Veterans (Undiagnosed Illness)
<p>(1) Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> psychosis any of the anxiety states dysthymic disorder organic residuals of frostbite post-traumatic osteoarthritis heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease and their complications stroke and its residuals <p>(2) Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> avitaminosis beriberi chronic dysentery helminthiasis malnutrition (including optic atrophy) pellagra any other nutritional deficiency irritable bowel syndrome peptic ulcer disease peripheral neuropathy cirrhosis of the liver 	<p>Served in the Republic of Vietnam between 1/9/62 and 5/7/75:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne* porphyria cutanea tarda* soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma) Hodgkin's disease multiple myeloma respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea) non-Hodgkin's lymphoma prostate cancer acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy* type 2 diabetes chronic lymphocytic leukemia AL Amyloidosis Parkinson's disease Ischemic heart disease Hair cell leukemia <p>*Must become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.</p>	<p>Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before 2/1/92 at a diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak Ridge, TN; or service before 1/1/74 at Amchitka Island, AK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all forms of leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia) cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (kidneys, renal pelvis, ureters, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, ovary bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma multiple myeloma lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease) primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated) 	<p>Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10 percent disabling by 12/31/11. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chronic fatigue syndrome fibromyalgia irritable bowel syndrome any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection <p><i>Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, menstrual disorders</i></p>

“Presumptive” Disability Benefits for Certain Groups of Veterans

What is “Presumptive” Service Connection?

VA *presumes* that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. VA does this because of the unique circumstances of their military service. If one of these conditions is diagnosed in a veteran in one of these groups, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded.

What Conditions are “Presumed” to be Caused by Military Service?

Veterans in the groups identified below: Entitlement to disability compensation may be presumed under the circumstances described and for the conditions listed.

Veterans within one year of release from active duty: Veterans diagnosed with chronic diseases (such as arthritis, diabetes, or hypertension) are encouraged to apply for disability compensation.

Veterans with continuous service of 90 days or more: Veterans diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)/Lou Gehrig's disease at any time after discharge or release from qualifying active service is sufficient to establish service connection for the disease, if the veteran had active, continuous service of 90 days or more.

Former Prisoners of War	Vietnam Veterans (Exposed to Agent Orange)	Atomic Veterans (Exposed to Ionizing Radiation)	Gulf War Veterans (Undiagnosed Illness)
<p>(1) Imprisoned for any length of time, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychosis • any of the anxiety states • dysthymic disorder • organic residuals of frostbite • post-traumatic osteoarthritis • heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease and their complications • stroke and its residuals <p>(2) Imprisoned for at least 30 days, and disability at least 10 percent disabling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avitaminosis • beriberi • chronic dysentery • helminthiasis • malnutrition (including optic atrophy) • pellagra • any other nutritional deficiency • irritable bowel syndrome • peptic ulcer disease • peripheral neuropathy • cirrhosis of the liver 	<p>Served in the Republic of Vietnam between 1/9/62 and 5/7/75:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne* • porphyria cutanea tarda* • soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma) • Hodgkin's disease • multiple myeloma • respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea) • non-Hodgkin's lymphoma • prostate cancer • acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy* • type 2 diabetes • chronic lymphocytic leukemia • AL Amyloidosis • Parkinson's disease • Ischemic heart disease • Hair cell leukemia <p>*Must become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.</p>	<p>Participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before 2/1/92 at a diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak Ridge, TN; or service before 1/1/74 at Amchitka Island, AK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all forms of leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia) • cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (kidneys, renal pelvis, ureters, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, ovary • bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma • multiple myeloma • lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease) • primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated) 	<p>Served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10 percent disabling by 12/31/11. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronic fatigue syndrome • fibromyalgia • irritable bowel syndrome • any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection <p><i>Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include:</i> fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, menstrual disorders</p>

CURRENT AND FUTURE UNIT MOBILIZATIONS



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

[illegible]

Current ANG Unit Airmen Mob: 252
Current ANG Individual Mob: 9
Total: ANG Mob: 261

As of 21MAY25

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CURRENT MOBILIZATIONS & TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS



PAANG Current Deployments

Unit	Opn	Pax
193 SOW	CENTCOM, AFRICOM, PACOM, EUCOM	4/2/59/3
111 ATKW	IPR (HS), PACOM, CENTCOM	36/53/67
171 ARW	Alert Status (HS)	37
Total PAANG Deployed		261

Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

Introduced	Initial Committee	1 st Consideration	2 nd Consideration	Appropriation	3 rd Consideration	2 nd Chamber Committee	1 st Consideration	2 nd Consideration	2 nd Chamber Appropriation	3 rd Consideration	Signed by Gov	Act #
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Bill Number	Title				Primary sponsor		Last action				Progress Code	
SB173	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in general provisions, providing for veteran of Korean Armed Forces.				Sen. Tracy Pennycuik (R)		2025-03-19 H - First consideration, March 19, 2025				8	
HB304	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in general provisions, providing for veteran of Korean Armed Forces.				Rep. Melissa Cerrato (D)		2025-03-18 H - Third consideration and final passage, March 18, 2025 (201-1) , 2025-03-19 S - Referred to - Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness - Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness				6	
HB799	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, providing for veterans' benefits and services workplace posting; and making an editorial change.				Rep. Daniel J. Deasy (D)		2025-04-23 H - Third consideration and final passage				6	
HB993	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veteran-owned small businesses, providing for veteran-owned business logotype; and imposing a penalty.				Rep. John C. Inglis III (D)		2025-05-06 H - Third consideration and final passage , 2025-05-12 S - Referred to - Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness				6	
SB130	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, providing for burial benefits.				Sen. Doug Mastriano (R)		2025-03-25 S - Third consideration and final passage				6	
SB146	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in State Veterans' Commission and Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs, further providing for Veterans' Trust Fund.				Sen. Lisa Baker (R)		2025-03-25 S - Third consideration and final passage				6	
SB327	An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, further providing for automatic certification.				Sen. Chris Gebhard (R)		2025-05-12 S - Third consideration and final passage , 2025-05-13 H - Referred to - House Judiciary - House Judiciary				6	
HB1144	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veterans' pensions and benefits, further providing for blind veteran's pension and for amputee and paralyzed veteran's pension.				Rep. Dan K. Williams (D)		2025-05-12 H - Third consideration and final passage				6	
SB232	An Act amending Title 30 (Fish) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in fishing licenses, further providing for disabled veterans and former prisoners of war and for deployed Pennsylvania National Guard members and repealing provisions relating to reserve component of armed forces members.				Sen. Tracy Pennycuik (R)		2025-05-07 S - Third consideration and final passage , 2025-05-08 H - Referred to - House Game and Fisheries				6	

As of 22 MAY 2025

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Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs



Pennsylvania
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Introduced	Initial Committee	1 st Consideratio	2 nd Consideratio	Appropriation	3 rd Consideratio	2 nd Chamber Committee	1 st Consideratio	2 nd Consideratio	2 nd Chamber Appropriatio	3 rd Consideratio	Signed by Gov	Act #
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
SB144	An Act providing compensation to persons in active service in connection with the Global War on Terrorism or their beneficiaries; authorizing the incurring of indebtedness and the issue and sale of bonds by the Commonwealth for the payment of compensation contingent upon electorate approval; establishing the Global War on Terrorism Veterans' Compensation Bond Fund and the Global War on Terrorism Veterans' Compensation Bond Sinking Fund; imposing a penalty; making appropriations; and making a repeal.				Sen. Doug Mastriano (R)		2025-01-29 S - Second consideration , 2025-01-29 S - Re-referred to - Senate Appropriations - Senate Appropriations					4
SB511	An Act amending Title 38 (Holidays and Observances) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veteran recognition, providing for Korean War Veterans Armistice Day.				Sen. Doug Mastriano (R)		04/02/2025S - Second consideration, 2025-04-02 S - Re-referred to - Senate Appropriations - Senate Appropriations					4
SB64	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veteran-owned small businesses, further providing for definitions; adding miscellaneous provisions relating to veteran-owned business logotype and nonprofit membership association; and imposing a penalty.				Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R)		2025-04-02 S - Second consideration					4
SB534	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veterans' pensions and benefits, further providing for blind veteran's pension and for amputee and paralyzed veteran's pension.				Sen. Judy Ward (R)		2025-05-06 S - Second consideration , 2025-05-06 S - Re-referred to - Senate Appropriations					4
HB427	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, providing for burial benefits.				Rep. Craig T. Staats (R)		2025-02-04 H - First consideration					3
HB430	An Act imposing the duty on Department of Environmental Protection to prohibit the construction or installation of wind turbines that negatively affect military installations.				Rep. Zachary Mako (R)		2025-03-17 H - First consideration					3
HB968	An Act amending Titles 30 (Fish) and 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in fishing licenses, providing for active duty military fishing reciprocity and for disabled veteran annual fishing license reciprocity; and, in hunting and furtaking licenses, providing for active duty military hunting reciprocity and for disabled veteran annual hunting license reciprocity.				Rep. Chris Pielli (D)		2025-05-13 H - First consideration					3

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Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs



Pennsylvania
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Introduced	Initial Committee	1 st Consideration	2 nd Consideration	Appropriation	3 rd Consideration	2 nd Chamber Committee	1 st Consideration	2 nd Consideration	2 nd Chamber Appropriation	3 rd Consideration	Signed by Gov	Act #
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Bill Number	Title				Primary sponsor		Last action				Progress Code	
SB475	An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in organization and jurisdiction of courts of common pleas, further providing for problem-solving courts; and, in sentencing, further providing for modification or revocation of order of probation.				Sen. Amanda M. Cappelletti (D)		2025-05-05 H - First consideration				3	
SB129	An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, further providing for advisory councils for veterans' homes.				Sen. Doug Mastriano (R)		2025-03-17 H - Reported as committed - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness				2	
HB575	An Act amending Titles 51 (Military Affairs) and 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in professional and occupational licenses, further providing for definitions and providing for policy for the award of academic credit for military training; and making editorial changes.				Rep. Jacob D. Banta (R)		2025-03-17 H - Reported with request to re-refer to the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee - House Education - House Education , 2025-03-17 H - Re-referred to - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness , 2025-03-17 H - Corrective Reprint, Printer's No. 959, March 17, 2025				2	
HR93	A Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a comprehensive study and issue a report on Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs in schools in Pennsylvania.				Rep. Joe Webster (D)		2025-03-25 H - Voted Favorably From Committee - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness , 2025-03-25 H - Reported as committed - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness , 2025-05-14 H - Laid on the table (Pursuant to House Rule 71)				2	
HB1257	A Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, further providing for exemptions and special provisions.				Rep. Tarah Probst (D)		2025-04-16 H - Introduced , 2025-04-17 H - Referred to - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness - House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, 2025-04-28 H - Meeting Scheduled - 05/12/2025, 11:00 AM - Public Hearing (House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness), Room 515, Irvis Office Building 5/12/25 11:00 AM - Public Hearing, Room 515, Irvis Office Building				1	

As of 22 MAY 2025

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2025-2026 Session

General Assembly

Senate: June 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30

House: June 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30

2025 Pennsylvania Elections: [Upcoming Elections](#)

Nov 4th, 2025 Municipal Election

Last day to register to vote: Oct. 20, 2025

Last day to request a mail-in or absentee ballot: Oct. 28, 2025

Survey Update



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

SVH Survey Table as of May 23, 2025

SVH	Regulatory Agency	Survey Reason/Type	Survey Date(s)	Status/comments
DVVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	10/15/24 - 10/18/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	05/07/25	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	09/10/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/19/24	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	10/21/24	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	12/17/24 - 12/20/24	CAP accepted, date certain 4/1
GMVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/13/24 - 08/16/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	05/13/25	POC under development
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	08/21/24	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/25/25	Suspended
HVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	07/15/24 - 07/18/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	12/02/24	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	07/15/24 - 07/17/24	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	01/29/25 - 01/30/25	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Complaint	11/06/24	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Incident	08/15/24	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	06/10/24 - 06/14/24	Cleared, full certification

SVH Survey Table as of May 23, 2025

SVH	Regulatory Agency	Survey Reason/Type	Survey Date(s)	Status/comments
PSSH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	03/04/25 - 03/07/25	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	03/11/25	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	02/06/25	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Incident	04/10/25	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/24/25 - 02/25/25	Suspended
SEVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	05/06/25 - 05/09/25	POC under development
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	03/20/25	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	11/18/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	10/01/24	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	05/20/25	Results Pending
	DHS	Annual Recertification	11/13/24	Cleared
	DHS	Abbreviated - Incident	01/03/25	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/24/25 - 02/25/25	Suspended
SWVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	04/21/25 - 04/25/25	POC accepted, date certain 6/4
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	12/27/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/07/24	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	07/03/24	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	04/28/25	POC accepted, date certain 6/4
	VA	Annual Recertification	05/07/24 - 05/10/24	Cleared, provisional certification

Infection Prevention Update



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

COVID-19, Influenza, RSV Data							
Friday, May 23, 2025	DVVH	GMVC	HVH	PSSH	SEVC	SWVC	TOTAL
Total # of COVID + residents	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total # of COVID + staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of residents who have received the 2024/2025 COVID vaccine	166	149	172	116	183	128	914
Total # of + RSV residents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total # of residents who received a dose of RSV vaccine	12	43	69	14	32	28	198

5 Star Rating - Last Updated: April 30, 2025						
	DVVH	GMVC	HVH	PSSH	SEVC	SWVC
Overall	5	5	4	4	5	4
Health Inspection	3	4	2	3	4	3
Quality Measures	5	5	5	4	3	4
Staffing	5	5	5	5	5	5
Changes from March/April 2025	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged	Unchanged

Resident Status: May 23, 2025			
Veteran Home	Isolation COVID	Quarantine	Isolation RSV
DVVH	1	0	0
GMVC	0	0	0
HVH	0	0	0
PSSH	0	0	0
SEVC	0	0	0
SWVC	0	0	0

COVID vaccines residents only: 914 Vaccine Numbers since 9/16/24

*COVID: 1 resident at DVVH

*RSV: None



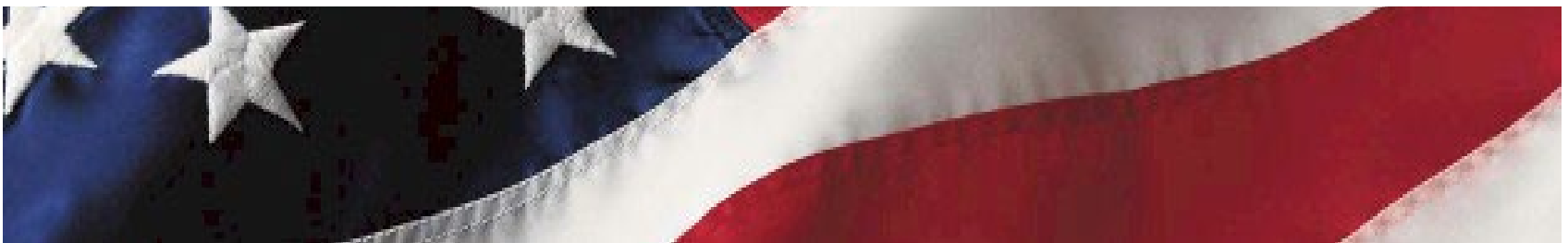
Pennsylvania Veterans Homes COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 links for information related to the Veterans Homes and skilled nursing facilities.

- <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/LTCF-Data.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/SNF-Guidance.aspx>
- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19MpLoPxayE1MDwQJJYCZxISN64V4FJSJPGzfvVBb5Mw/edit#gid=1511961664>



**BUREAU OF VETERANS PROGRAMS,
INITIATIVES, REINTEGRATION, AND OUTREACH
Mr. Keith Graham**



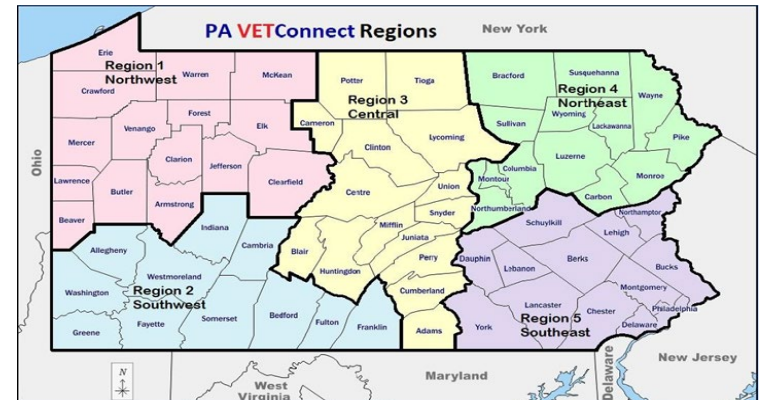


We build relationships that amplify service to the SMVF community

- Region 1 – RPOC connected a struggling Veteran and his spouse with the Erie VA HUD-VASH team to help with housing crisis situation. They were living in a trailer and had lost heat, power, and any viable source to keep them in safe conditions. The HUD-VASH program was able to provide a voucher, and housing was found for them to move into.
- Region 2 – Held their 2nd Annual Veteran Resource Fair and Benefit Presentation on 4/26 at the West Deer American Legion in Allegheny County. This marked the culmination of months of preparation and hard work. We had 13 resource tabling organizations present, to include three from VHA: Enrollment/Eligibility, Adult Day Healthcare and Suicide Prevention. Presentations were provided by NCA, VHA Adult Day Healthcare, VA Vet Center, and SWVC. 48 Veterans attended.
- Region 3 – Had referred a Veteran to a non-profit called VFW Riders Group District 15-PA back in May 2024 for potential help with his trailer siding, etc. RPOC is gathering more information from this group on the work they have done to help this Veteran as it is extensive, and they have basically found resources and help to redo his entire trailer and even found him a new mobile home lot with cheaper lot rent. This Veteran's mental health and socialization has also improved over this time, and he is now involved in local posts, etc.
- Region 4 – VSS is working with Korean American group that still hasn't been able to access VA healthcare; Sung Nam details of 113 applicants still waiting for VA to provision healthcare; 16 have healthcare cards but not receive timely treatments; 10 have healthcare cards but continued postponement of appointment dates; one individual has received VA letter requesting US Military Form DD-214 to continue application; Certified, translated Korean military documents were included with application. Karen is working directly with VISN 4 to resolve.
- Region 5 – RPOC attended the GAC-VS and during Hazel's presentation on the VBOC she was asked what is one thing she would like to focus directly on, and she answered Veteran farming. After the meeting Erica connected her with Mimi Brooker and the PA Veteran Farming Network..

■ **Successes**

- >27,500 Connections
- Building trust within the network
- PA VETConnect now Powered by PA Navigate – Connecting Veterans with resources and support



Reintegration & Outreach Events



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

Outreach Statistics					
	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Year to Date
Outreach Events Supported	111	128	67	70	376
Veteran Interactions	1,894	1,551	1,457	911	6,350
Women Veterans		141	219	147	507
Family Members or Caregivers		357	621	314	1,292
Claim referrals to County Directors and Service Organizations	661	557	371	334	1,932
Claim referrals to other state, county and local organizations assisting Veterans	537	395	302	318	1,552
Health Care Enrollment Referrals	381	286	191	143	1,001
Number of Veterans Registry Cards distributed / enrolled	291	432	420	396	1,539
County Directors Office Attended	55	64	29	39	187
Legislative attended events	50	77	8	26	161

As of 20 May 2025

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Amputee & Paralyzed Veteran's Pension



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

SFY24/25 Budget: \$4,408,050

Expended \$3,950,800



Projected \$457,250

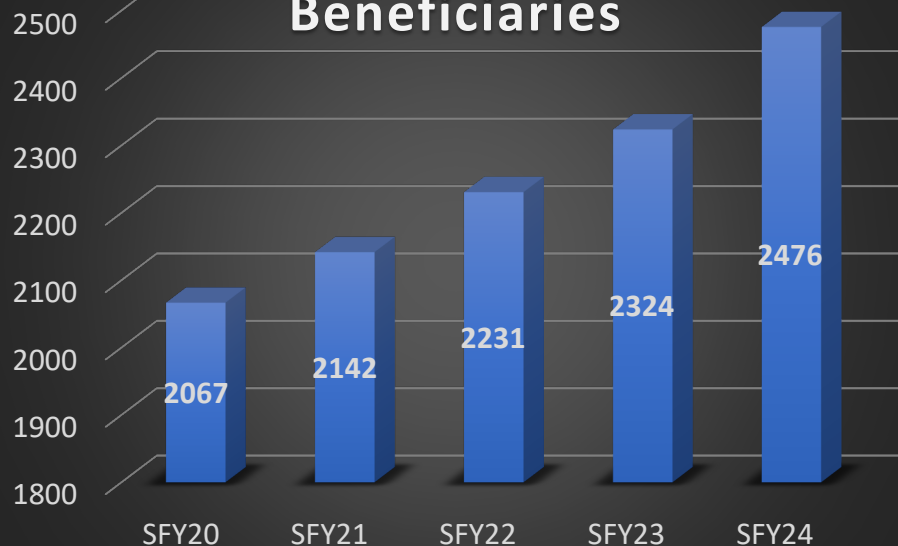


Lapsed \$0

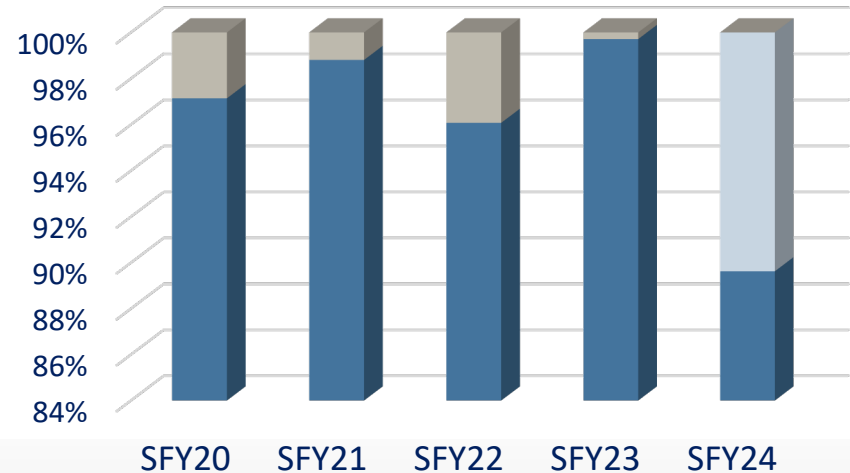


At 11/12 thru SFY, 89.6% of budget expended.

Beneficiaries



Budget Execution



Notes: 2,476 Veterans currently on pension.

Five-year trend shows a 15% beneficiary increase largely attributable to positive external factors such as the federal PACT Act of 2022.

Currently experiencing surge in applications covered by a supplement to the budget.

Blind Veteran's Pension



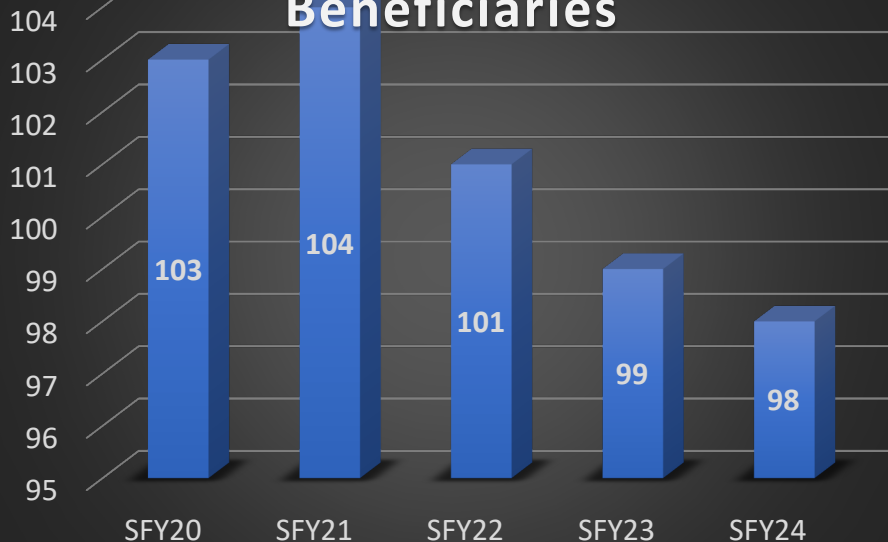
Pennsylvania
Department of Military
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SFY24/25 Budget: \$222,000

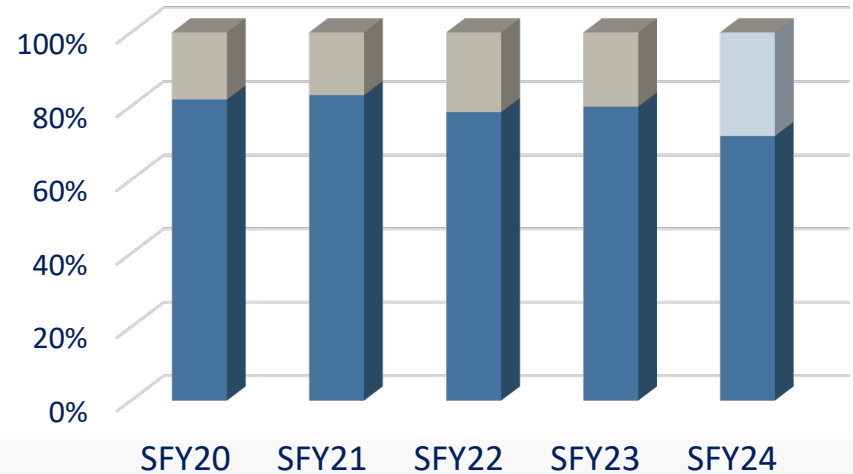


At 11/12 thru SFY, 71.9% of budget expended.

Beneficiaries



Budget Execution



Notes: 98 Veterans currently on pension.

Five-year trend shows a steady average of 101 pensioners. This beneficiary population is not significantly affected by the federal PACT Act of 2022 or other current external factors.

Expect continued stability.

Educational Gratuities



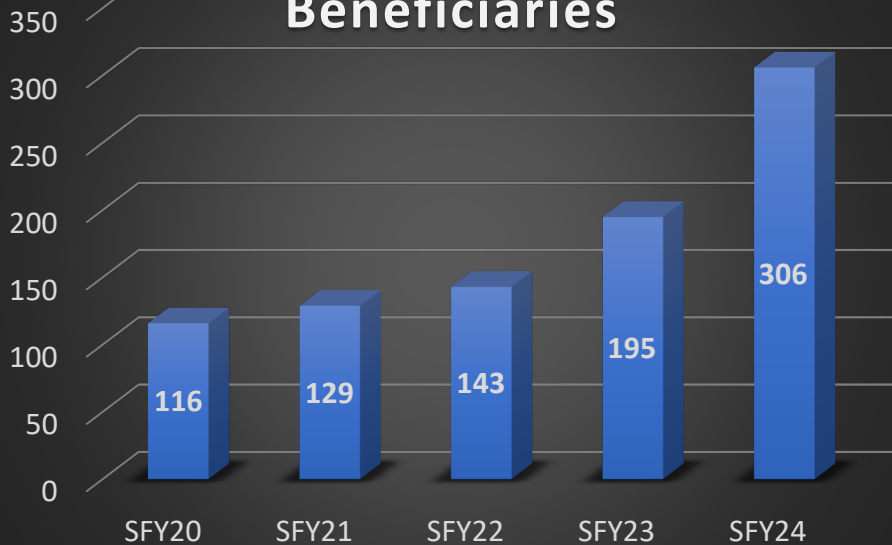
Pennsylvania
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SFY24/25 Budget: \$321,599

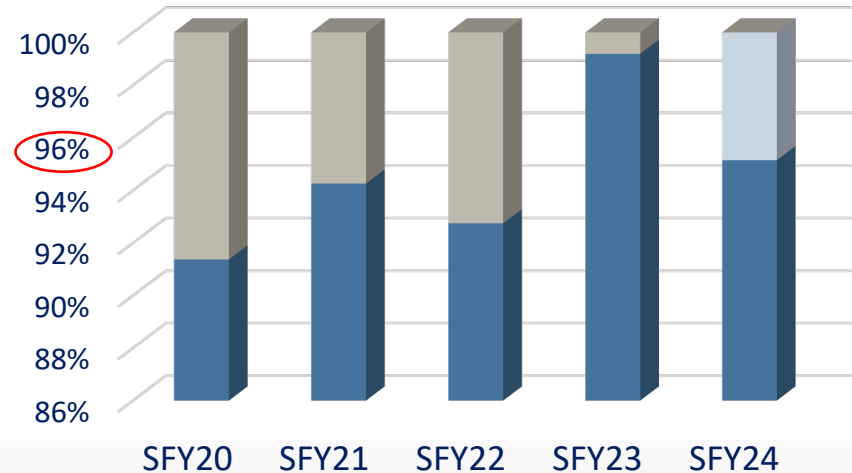


At 11/12 thru SFY, 95.1% of budget expended.

Beneficiaries



Budget Execution



Notes: 612 gratuities have been paid this SFY.




Five-year trend shows **150%** beneficiary increase since SFY20 attributable to positive external factors such as the PACT Act of 2022, Act 27 of 2024, and children of early GWOT Veterans now aging into higher education.

Veterans' Temporary Assistance



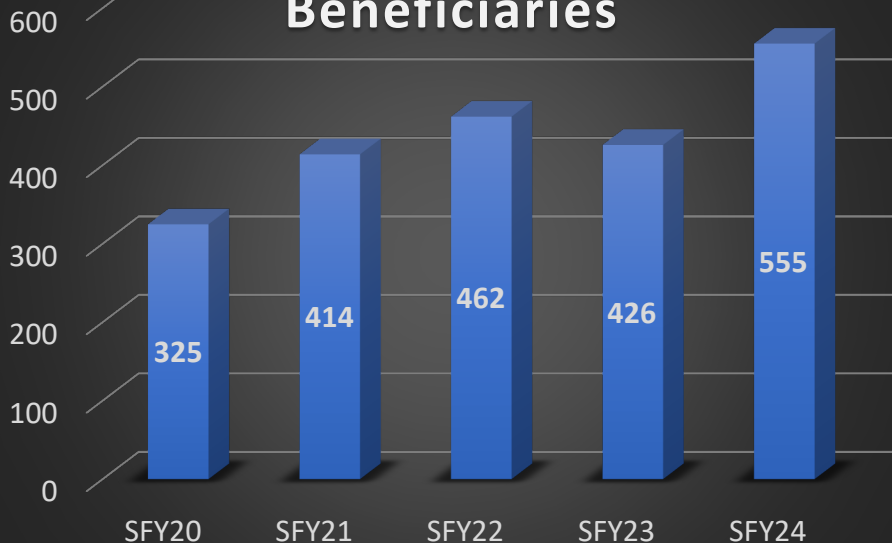
Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

SFY24/25 VTF Allowance: \$900,000

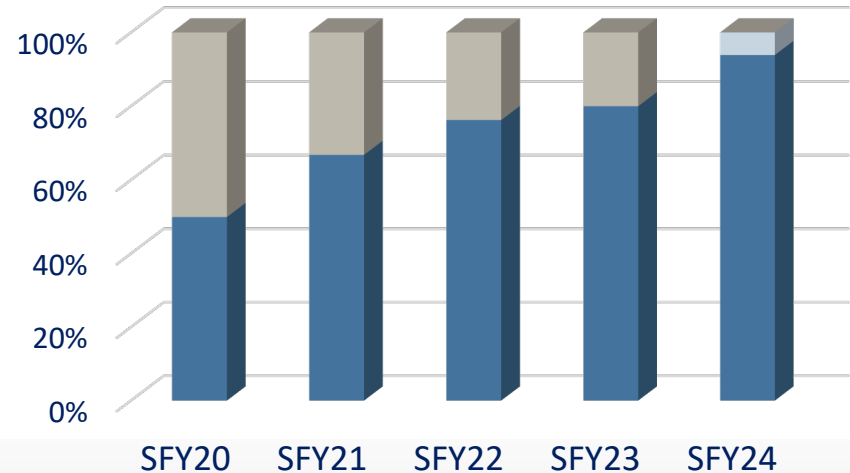
Expended \$844,862	
Projected \$55,138	
Lapsed \$0	

At 11/12 thru SFY, 93.8% of budget expended.

Beneficiaries



Budget Execution



Notes: 555 grants issued SFY to date.
(*\$87,400 in TS Debby disaster-related assistance granted to Tioga and Potter county Veterans.*)

Five-year trend shows an average of 437 VTA grants per year.

Expect to expend the total \$900,000 VTF allowance this SFY.

Military Family Relief Assistance



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

Personal Income Tax Donations



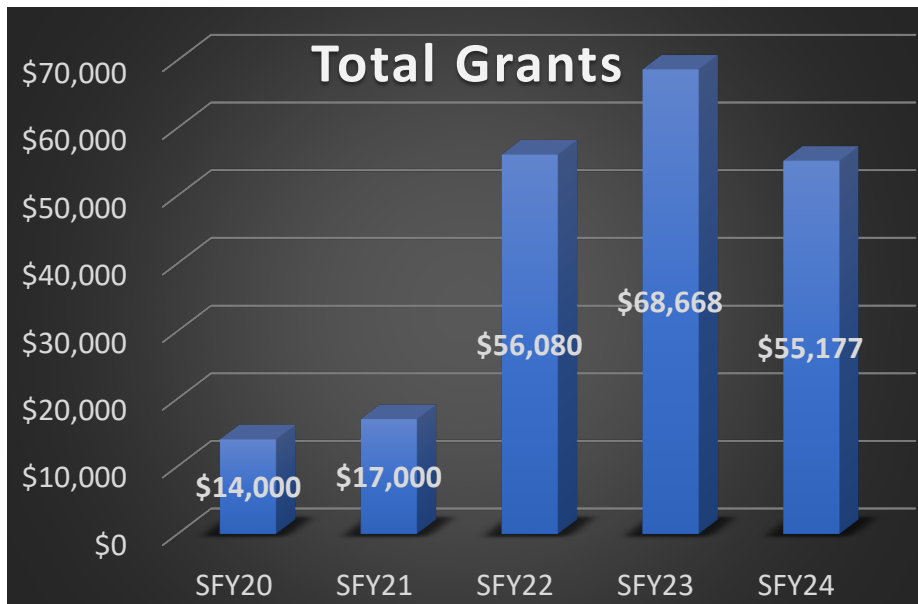
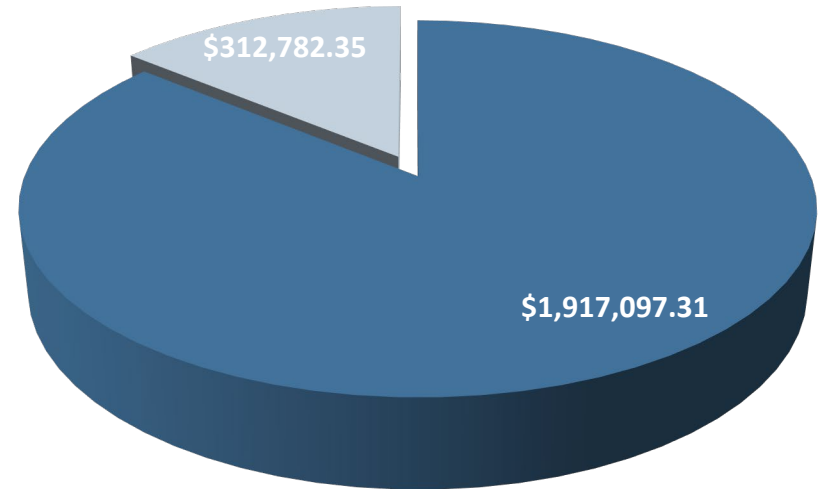
Private/Cash/Other Donations



Total Donations SFY05-24: \$2,229,880

Total Grants SFY05-24: \$1,051,669

MFRA Fund Balance: \$1,144,678.34



Notes: \$55,177 in total grants SFY to date.

Five-year trend shows large grant increases over the last two years with low points in 2020-2021 (Covid-19). Overall, the current grant trend is low compared to earlier years with higher active-duty mobilization rates.

Expect grants to continue trending at \$55-\$75K.

As of 28 May 2025

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Disabled Vets' Real Estate Tax Exemption



Pennsylvania
Department of Military
and Veterans Affairs

1,643 Approved (85.5%)



45 Denied: Financial Need



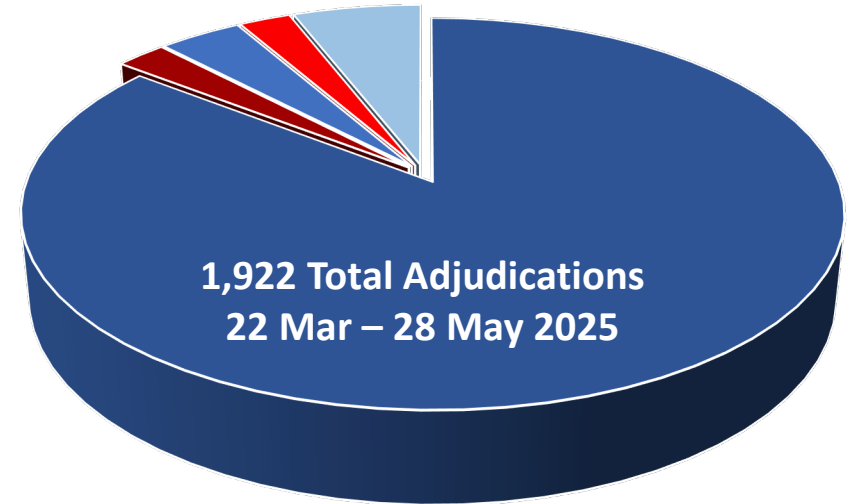
74 Denied: Eligibility



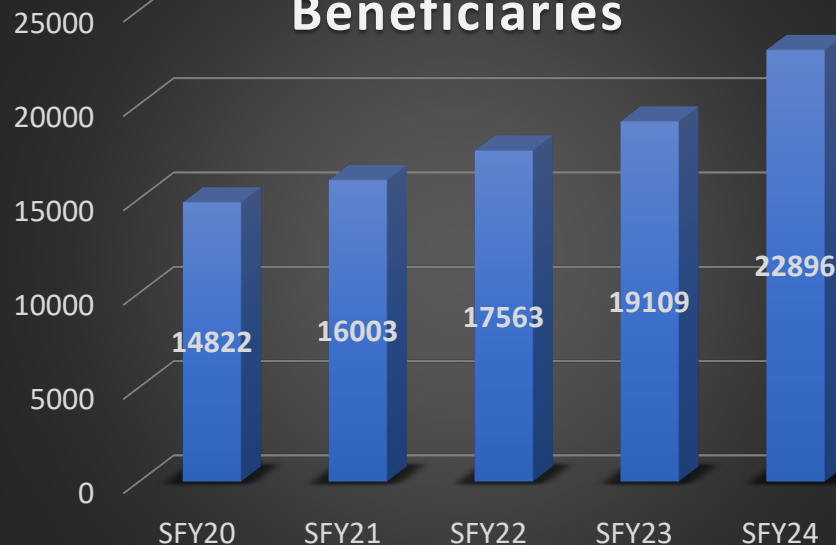
114 Removed: Change of Eligibility/Need



46 Removed: No Response to 5-Year Review



Beneficiaries



Notes: 22,896 Veterans and surviving spouses currently receive est. **\$78.4M** in exemptions.

Beneficiary increase of over **4,000** in the last year alone attributable to federal PACT Act and Act 27 of 2024 effects on eligibility and need.

Expect continuing increases.

As of 28 May 2025

> community > commonwealth

> country

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY REVIEW COMMISSION

Notice of Comments Issued

Section 5(g) of the Regulatory Review Act (71 P.S. § 745.5(g)) provides that the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) may issue comments within 30 days of the close of the public comment period. IRRC comments are based upon the criteria contained in section 5.2 of the Regulatory Review Act (71 P.S. § 745.5b).

IRRC has issued comments on the following proposed regulation. The agency must consider these comments in preparing the final-form regulation. The final-form regulation must be submitted within 2 years of the close of the public comment period or it will be deemed withdrawn.

<i>Reg. No.</i>	<i>Agency/Title</i>	<i>Close of the Public Comment Period</i>	<i>IRRC Comments Issued</i>
13-6	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs State Veterans' Programs 55 Pa.B. 1421 (February 15, 2025)	03/17/25	04/16/25

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Regulation # 13-6 (IRRC # 3429)

State Veterans' Programs

April 16, 2025

We submit for your consideration the following comments on the proposed rulemaking published in the February 15, 2025 *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Our comments are based on criteria in Section 5.2 of the Regulatory Review Act (RRA) (71 P.S. § 745.5b). Section 5.1(a) of the RRA (71 P.S. § 745.5a(a)) directs the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (Department) to respond to all comments received from us or any other source.

Subchapter A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

the Commission. Since the rulemaking is a product of both agencies, what is the need to delegate authority to a bureau within the Department? We recommend that this section be deleted from the final-form rulemaking.

3. Section 5a.4. Waiver of regulations.—Clarity; Implementation procedures.

This section will allow the Adjutant General, "in his or her sole discretion," to waive requirements in the chapter for "good cause." We have two concerns. First, the term "good cause" is vague and should be defined. Second, the process under which waivers are granted is unclear. Must a waiver be requested by a member of the regulated community? Can the Adjutant General grant a waiver upon his or her own initiative or upon the request of a

VISN 4 Access – Fiscal Year 2025 Wait Times



Clinics FY25 thru May 12	Number of Appointments	Average Wait
Mental Health	258,937	4.9
Primary Care	316,142	3.9
Specialty Care	676,291	10.2
Other	538,574	6.7
ALL	1,789,944	7.3

FY25 data updated 5/14/2025 with appointment info as of 5/12/2025.

VISN 4 Access – Current Average Wait Times



VISN 4 Facility	Primary Care	
	New Patients	Returning Patients
James E. Van Zandt VAMC	15	2
Abie Abraham HCC	15	1
Coatesville VAMC	16	4
Erie VAMC	18	3
Lebanon VAMC	17	3
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC	23	4
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (University Drive)	22	4
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (H.J. Heinz)	26	8
Wilkes-Barre VAMC	10	2
Wilmington VAMC	22	6

FY25 data updated 5/14/2025 with wait times as of 5/14/2025 for the last 30 days.

www.accesstocare.va.gov

June 2025 Update

> community > commonwealth > country

VISN 4 Access – Current Average Wait Times



Improvements to the Access to Care website

Average wait times for all VHA medical centers and clinics are now calculated to include additional steps in the appointment process that had not been captured in the past.

- For **new patient** appointments, average wait time is calculated from the earliest time a request for care is consistently recorded in the scheduling system to the date the appointment is completed – or the date it is scheduled to occur if not yet completed.
- For **established patient** appointments, average wait times are measured from the date agreed upon between a Veteran and provider for future care and ends on the date care is received, or the date that care is scheduled to occur if it has not yet occurred.

The upgraded calculation makes the website more reflective of the complete process of requesting and receiving care. Averages are representative of general performance and may not represent individual experience. Average wait times are never used to determine eligibility for community care.

FY25 data updated 5/14/2025 with wait times as of 5/14/2025 for the last 30 days.

www.accesstocare.va.gov

June 2025 Update

> community > commonwealth > country

VISN 4 Care in the Community



Care in the Community Consults (Scheduled and Completed)		Non-VA Unique Patients*
FY23	190,810	99,167
FY24	211,725	103,826
FY25 (as of 5/14/25)	141,514	84,935

*Number of unique enrolled Veterans who receive community care at VA expense

FY25 data updated 5/14/2025 with consult info as of 5/14/2025.

CMS Star Ratings – July 2024



Facility Name	Peer Grouping	Overall Star Rating	Hospital Summary Score
James E. Van Zandt VAMC	4	★★★	0.04
Lebanon VAMC	4	★★★★★	0.68
Corporal Michael J. Crescenzo VAMC	5	★★★★	0.23
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (University Drive)	5	★	-1.20
Wilkes-Barre VAMC	4	★★★★	0.58
Wilmington VAMC	4	★★★★	0.35

- The CMS Star ratings, available publicly, show 67% of applicable VISN 4 facilities performing at 4 or 5 stars (5 stars being the highest rating).
 - Lebanon increased from 4 to 5 stars
 - Wilmington increased from 3 to 4 stars
- Six facilities are included in star ratings due to number of patient discharges.
- CMS Star ratings update annually.

SAIL Radar

FY 25 Q1
Rank (FY24
Q4 Rank)

• Ranked out of
18 Total VISNs

Rank Improved = 5 (11)

Rank Worse = 7 (7)

No Change = 14 (9)

**Note – preferred direction in
rank is down

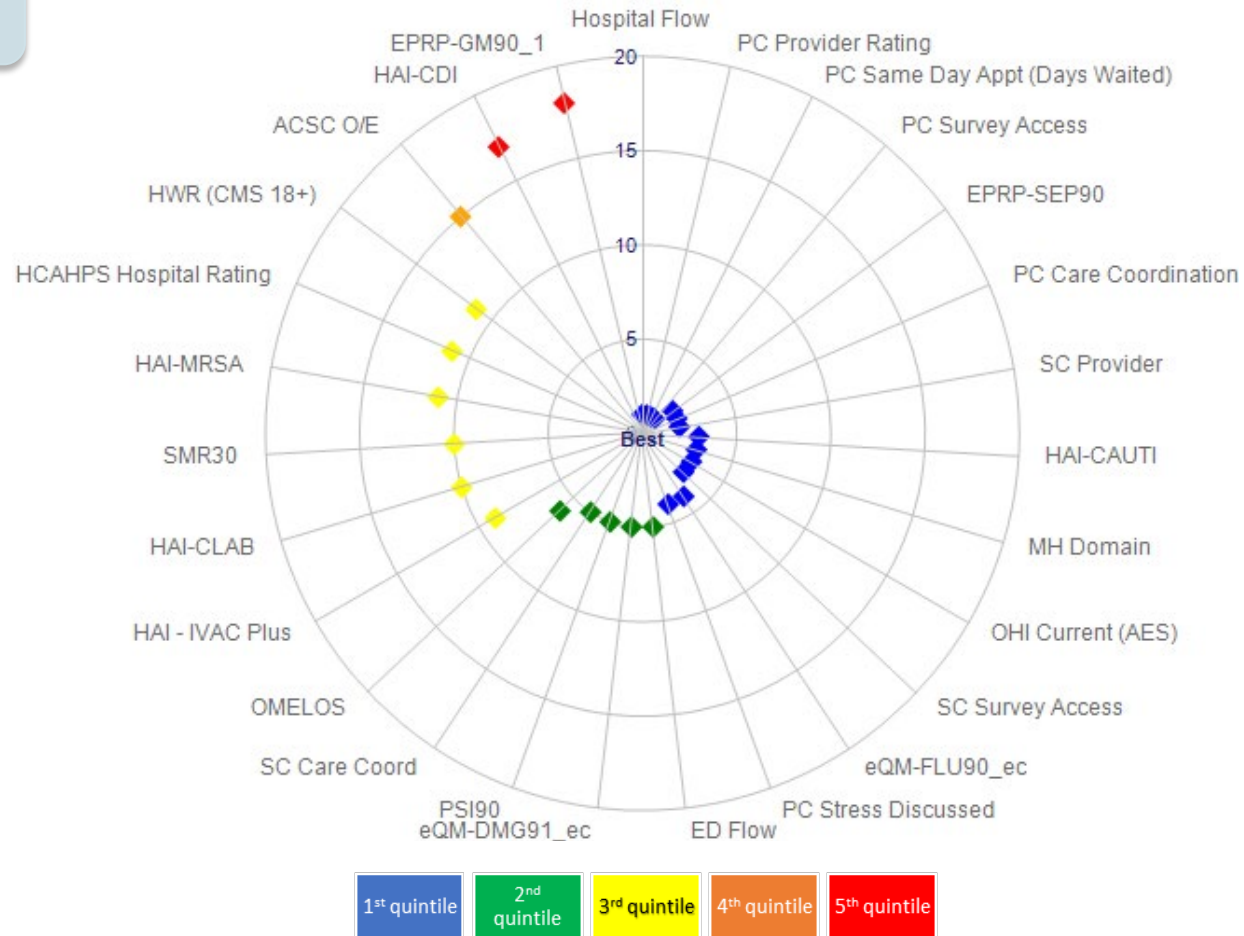
15

Main Measures in the
1st Quintile among 18
total VISNs

2

Total 5th quintile
Main Measures –
previously 2

VISN 4 (FY2025Q1) (Metric)



1st quintile

2nd quintile

3rd quintile

4th quintile

5th quintile



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare–VISN 4

VISN 4 Update

June 6, 2025

Leadership Update

Denise Boehm, VISN 4 Chief Nursing Officer continues to serve as Interim VISN 4 Director.

David DiGiacomo Associate Director at the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia, continues to serve as the Interim VISN 4 Deputy Network Director.

Elizabeth Katrancha has been appointed to serve as the Associate Director, Patient Care Services at the Altoona VAMC, effective April 6, 2025. She previously served at the Chief Quality Officer for the Altoona VA.

Carmen Concepcion has been appointed to serve as the Associate Director, Patient Care Services at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, effective May 4, 2025. She previously served as the Associate Director, Patient Care Services at the San Diego, VA Medical Center.

Kim Butler, the Associate Director at the Wilmington, VA continues to serve as the Acting Associate Director of the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center.

Mike Amos, Wilmington VAMC Health Administration Services Supervisor, continues to serve as Wilmington's Acting Associate Director effective March 16.

Thomas Bennett, the Chief of Police at the Butler VA, is currently serving as the Acting Chief VISN 4 Security Officer.

Nicole Lynn, VISN 4 Deputy Business Implementation Manager is currenting serving as the VISN Business Implementation Manager.

Transportation Update

The VISN Transportation Manager met with our State Veterans Commission colleagues on May 5th, 2025. An overview of the work VISN 4 and VAMCs will be doing to incorporate VTN services into VetRide over the remainder of Q3 and through Q4 was

provided. Our SVC partners brought several items to the table including the need to determine life cycles for DAV vehicles, identification of vehicles needing repair, vehicles needing returned once end of life cycle was reached, and locations of DAV vehicles across the network. VISN 4 will be able to meet these requests with our ongoing VTN/VetRide implementation project. A VISN 4-wide transportation gap analysis is also underway with local VAMCs identifying each county in their jurisdiction and the transportation services available within each – upon completion, this will allow us to share identified areas where we could expand VTN services.

Patient Experience Update – Trust

VISN 4 continues to have the highest trust Score across the enterprise at 95.1%.

Our network also has the highest number of compliments at 80.4% and the lowest number of concerns at 9.8%. The top 5 compliments recently are quality of care, cleanliness of facility, interactions with staff, satisfaction with specialty care, and concerns for agent orange.

Connected Care Update

Transition to VA.gov: My HealtheVet on VA.gov is VAs new Veteran-facing health portal home within VA.gov – the one place for Veterans to manage their benefits and health. Back in March 2025, VA Appointments began re-directing My HealtheVet users to VA.gov. For the second milestone, scheduled for June 5, 2025, Veterans will be redirected from the My HealtheVet portal to VA.gov when using Secure Messaging, Medications, and Medical Records. The My HealtheVet website will still be available, but the features will be pared down. Veterans will be encouraged to go to www.VA.gov/my-health to manage their health care.

HRO Highlight: Butler VAMC

This Butler VAMC staff member exemplified all 5 HRO principles and the HRO Values Respect of People, Commit to Zero Harm, and It's About The Veteran during their shift.

On December 1, 2024, during her regular afternoon shift, a nurse and a colleague encountered a situation involving a newly admitted Veteran from the CWT/TR program who was not responding appropriately to requests. The Veteran had recently experienced return to use and did not check in as expected during required check in time. Upon calling the Veteran, he reported feeling unwell and stated that he would attend shortly. Recognizing the need for further investigation, the nurse and her colleague decided to act. While her colleague went to the Veteran's residence, the nurse monitored the situation via the CCTV system. When she observed her co-worker rushing to the phone, she promptly took initiative grabbing the emergency kit and proceeded to the Veteran's apartment.

Upon arrival, she found the Veteran unresponsive. Given his recent history of heroin use, she administered Narcan in an effort to revive him. The nurse instructed her

colleague to contact emergency services, and upon regaining consciousness, the Veteran reacted with agitation and attempted to ingest stamp bags of heroin that he had concealed in his pocket. Despite her petite stature, she bravely restrained the 6-foot tall, 190-pound Veteran, removed the heroin bags from his mouth, and ensured his safety until professional assistance arrived.

Her decisive actions undoubtedly saved the Veteran's life. The administration of Narcan and her protective intervention stabilized him until he could be transported to a more appropriate level of care, which ensured his safety until help arrived. The nurse's selfless response exemplifies her heroic qualities. Her selfless dedication and heroic response are commendable. She zeroed in on each of the five HRO principles. She was able to effectively get to the root cause and effectively save the Veteran's life. She was preoccupied with failure, anticipating that her coworker would need assistance. Her participation in routine mock drills also helped lead to an effective response and made a stressful situation a more streamline process. The domiciliary staff participated in a team debriefing to review what happened, ultimately bouncing back from the event.

VA announces major survivor benefits reforms.

On May 5, VA announced a three-pronged approach to eliminate barriers and streamline the process for how eligible survivors and dependents of deceased Veterans and servicemembers apply for and receive VA benefits and services.

Specific improvements include:

- Starting this month, VA's [Office of Survivors Assistance](#) will be moved from the Veterans Benefits Administration to the Office of the VA Secretary, reversing a Biden-era decision that buried OSA under layers of bureaucracy.
- Starting this month, VA will create a "white-glove" survivor outreach team to guide and assist eligible survivors throughout their [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) (DIC) claims process.
- Starting immediately, VA will begin work to identify areas where automation can be used to make the DIC claims process easier to navigate for survivors.

Background information on the changes VA announced on May 5, 2025 is below.

Relocating OSA

In 2021, the Biden administration moved OSA from the Office of the VA Secretary to the Veterans Benefits Administration, creating a siloed system at odds with the intent of the [Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008](#). Starting this month, VA will reverse this decision and move OSA to the Office of the VA Secretary, where a staff of five full-time employees will advise the Secretary on all matters related to the policies, programs and legislative issues affecting survivors and dependents.

“White-Glove” Survivor Outreach Team

Under previous administrations, there were gaps in the survivor claims system and no defined outreach process for VA employees to gather information from survivors navigating the benefit process. VA’s “White-Glove” Survivor Outreach Team will begin operations in May 2025 and consist of experts based out of the Philadelphia VA Regional Benefit Office. These experts will receive specialized training and guide and assist eligible survivors throughout every step of the DIC claims process with the goal of getting to “yes” on DIC claims decisions for eligible survivors.

Automation Improvements

VA now automates more than 1,000 DIC claims payments or adjustments per day and is in the process of ongoing enhancements to increase automation that will expedite survivors’ claims and improve their experience. VA will also be identifying additional areas where automation can be used to make all benefits delivery processes easier to navigate for eligible surviving dependents.

RETX- Exempt List

mvfigsqlprod01
5/28/2025
rep_VADC_RETX_Exempt_List_New

Summary of Current Applications (Exempt)

Count	No Activity	Review Process Started	Review App Received	New Apps Pending
22,896	22,464	404	28	244

Summary of Activity from 03/22/2025 to 05/28/2025

Apps Created: 1,512	
New:	1,089
Review:	423
Apps Approved: 1,643	
New:	1,190
Review:	453
Apps Denied (Need):	45
Apps Denied (Eligibility):	74
Apps Removed (Eligibility Change):	114
Apps Removed (No Response):	46

Summary of Ineligibility Reasons

Reason	Count
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determined the veteran did not have a total and/or 100% permanent disability during their lifetime.	3
No response to requested information	1
The property for which you claim exemption is not owned solely by you, jointly or as an estate by the entirety with your spouse.	20
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determined the veteran did not serve during a period of war or armed conflict.	25
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determined you did not serve during a period of war or armed conflict and have a future exam, therefore, has not been rated as total or 100% permanent.	1
Veteran's disability has not been declared by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be a total or 100% permanent disability.	2
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the service member's death as a casualty while on active duty.	1
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs stated that you have a future exam, therefore, your disability has not been rated as total or 100% permanent.	21

Summary of Activity: 22 Mar - 28 May 2025

Applications Approved	1,613
New	1190
Review	423

Applications Denied	279
Financial Need	45
Ineligible	74
No Response	114
Change of Eligibility	46

Over Income	94
New	94
Review	0

FALSE
8%
0%

Applications Created	1,512
Total Adjudicated	1,892