

TDVS Benefits Bulletin
22-12

TDVS Updates
VA and Veteran Benefit Updates
Practice Like a Pro

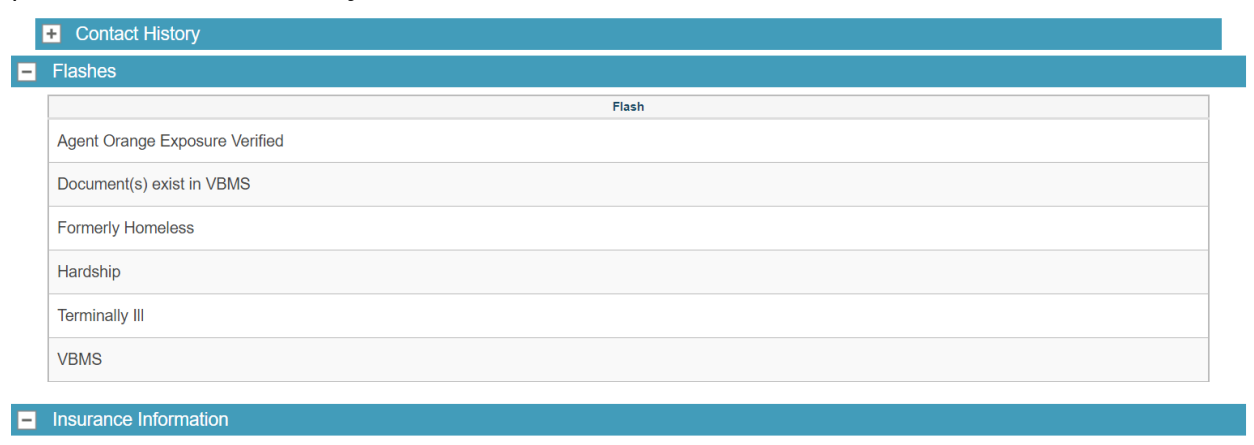
This month's bulletin is 917 words and will take less than 4 minutes of your time.

1 big thing: VA is processing PACT Act claims for terminally ill Veterans.

VA began processing PACT Act claims for terminally ill Veterans yesterday – December 12th. VA made this announcement in a [press release](#).

What next: Don't wait to file PACT Act related claims. VA has been doing development and is prepared to begin processing all PACT Act claims January 1st.

If you've filed a PACT Act claim for a terminally ill Veteran, check VBMS to ensure the Veteran's profile has the "terminally ill" flash.



The screenshot shows a user interface with a blue header bar containing a plus icon and the text 'Contact History'. Below this is a section titled 'Flashes' with a minus icon. It contains a table with the following rows:

Flash
Agent Orange Exposure Verified
Document(s) exist in VBMS
Formerly Homeless
Hardship
Terminally Ill
VBMS

Below the 'Flashes' section is another blue header bar with a minus icon and the text 'Insurance Information'. Below this header, the text 'No Insurance Information captured for this Veteran' is visible.

TDVS Updates

Training Updates

- December Lunch and Learn, December 14th, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST
 - TN Dept. of Health's Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Program and Resources
- January 2023 Quarterly Training, NVLSP Live Webinar: Battle of the Medical Experts (Mandatory Training). Thursday, January 12, 2023, 11:30 to 1 p.m. CST
 - You will receive an email confirming your registration and a webinar access link from GlobalMeet between January 3 - 6, 2023.

- February Lunch and Learn, February 8th, 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. CST
 - Suicide Prevention and TN Dept. of Health County Health Councils

PACT Act Toolbox – Updates

TDVS has created a [PACT Act Toolbox](#) to help you serve Tennessee Veterans and their families. It's an advocate's one-stop shop for --

- VA Fact Sheets
- VA Web Resources
- TDVS Fact Sheet
- TDVS FAQs
- Bill Text, Summaries, and More
- Training Resources

By the numbers: Veterans have filed over 679,584 claims since the PACT Act was signed on August 10th. This is an increase of over 17% from the same period last year.

Through the week ending December 10th, VA has received the following –

- 185,819 PACT Act related claims received since August 10th
- **5,126 PACT Act claims received in Tennessee**

What's new:

- The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) can and has been granting benefits based on the PACT Act. BVA follows current law and is not waiting until January to implement the expansion of benefits provided by the PACT Act.
- There's been an increase in email, phone and social media scams targeting Veterans alleging to help them access PACT Act benefits. This [VA Fact Sheet](#) – added to TDVS's PACT Act Toolbox -- outlines some Do's and Don'ts for Veterans.
- The U.S. Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs both recently held hearings on VA's PACT Act implementation. Watch them here –

Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, November 16, 2022

[Watch Here](#)

House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, December 7, 2022

[Watch Here](#)

VA and Veteran Benefit Updates

VALife – VA’s New Whole Life Insurance Program

Enrollment opens January 1, 2023, for VA’s new life insurance program – VALife.

VA offers life insurance options for Veterans, service members and family members. VALife is a new program that offers whole life coverage for service-connected Veterans. This [VA Fact Sheet](#) offers important milestones for the programs roll out and how VALife impacts VA’s Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program.

Dig deeper: Here are additional resources on VALife and VA’s other insurance programs.

- TDVS’s [June 2022 Lunch and Learn](#) – VA Insurance
- [VA Life Insurance](#)
- [VALife](#)
- [Final Rule](#) implementing VALife effective January 3, 2023

Veterans Can Get Free Lifetime Passes to National Parks and Other Public Lands

The National Park Service unveiled a lifetime pass that provides free access to National Parks for Veterans.

- **Who is eligible:** Current service members and their dependents, Veterans and Gold Star Families.
- **Where does it apply:** Waives entrance fees for the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and standard amenity recreation fees for the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sites.

Here’s more including information on how to obtain the lifetime pass.

- [VA News](#)
- [National Park Service](#)

VA Publishes Increased Benefit Rates for 2023

[Disability Compensation Rates](#)
[Special Monthly Compensation Rates](#)
[DIC Rates](#)

[VA Pension Rates](#) and Net Worth Limits
[VA Survivors Pension Rates](#) and Net Worth Limits

Here's TDVS's consolidated [quick reference guide](#).

Survivor Benefit Plan Offset Ends January 1, 2023

Don't forget - the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) offset ends in 2023. On February 1, 2023, surviving spouses will receive both their full SBP payment and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payment from VA.

Details:

- Defense Finance and Accounting Service [SBP-DIC Elimination News](#)
- SBP-DIC Offset Phased Elimination [Quick Reference Guide](#)

Practice Like a Pro

Developing medical evidence to support a claim is a key advocacy skill.

There was great discussion about private medical evidence with the Nashville Regional Office Rating Veterans Service Representative that gave us a look behind the curtain at [October's Lunch & Learn](#) – VBA Rating Decision Process.

Over the next several months, we're going to build upon that discussion.

- January Accreditation Training - NVLSP Live Webinar: Battle of the Medical Experts
- Advocacy Tips On –
 - Importance of Disability Benefit Questionnaires and Where to Find Them
 - Researching Medical Principles and Using Medical Texts to Establish Linkage
 - VA's Acceptable Clinical Evidence or ACE Initiative and Avoiding VA Exams
 - Preparing to Obtain Convincing Private Medical Opinion
 - Avoid VA Rejection of a Private Medical Opinion
- Spring Regional Accreditation Training – Hands-on Exercises and Application

Stay tuned!

TDVS Benefits Bulletins Can Be Found on the [VSO Tools](#) Portion of TDVS's Website

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