



Nashville VBA Regional Office

UTVA Report

September 2015

1. Reduced backlog from peak of **611,000** in March '13 to **93,674** this week, an **85%** reduction in 29 months – lowest since we started measuring the backlog in 2007; reduced inventory from peak of **884,000** in July '12 to **367,311**, a **60%** reduction and new low since FY08; increased claim-level accuracy from **83%** in 2011 to **91%** – at the issue-level accuracy is **96%**
2. Completed **1.17M-claims** this year so far; today, Veterans with a pending claim are waiting, on average, **181 days** less for a claim decision, from peak of 282 days in March 2013 to **101 days** today
3. Productivity **rose 67% on medical issues per FTE** since 2009; helped mitigate effects of a **154% increase in workload** since 2007 (820K claims, 2.1M medical issues in 2007 vs. 1.32M claims, 5.5M medical issues in 2014)
4. Added **1.7M+** Veterans to compensation rolls since 2008 (**1.1M** net), and added **26%** more Veterans and Survivors to compensation and pension caseload (from **3.8M** to **4.8M**)
5. Went from touching **5,000 tons of paper annually** to processing **99.7% of disability compensation claims electronically**, with **346K claims** in electronic inventory – only **21K** pension and DIC in paper, completed **3.6M** rating decisions and **1.98 million** claims in VBMS
6. Enabling Veterans to file claims online through eBenefits – over **5M** registered users, **68M** contacts with Veterans in FY14 (**86%** online) vs. **9M** contacts (majority by phone) in 2009
7. Expediting Veterans claims: **44.4%** of receipts from VSOs FY2015 to date are Fully Developed, up from **3%** in 2012; received nearly **2.5M** Disability Benefits Questionnaires in FY14 from VHA
8. Dedicated non-rating workforce has completed **2.9M non-rating end products** FY15 to date – **17%** more than the 2.3M completed at the same time last year – and **74%** more than FY11
9. More automation: **1 in 5** Veterans submit online dependency requests – **more than 60 percent** receive payments in **under 1 day**; automatic burial allowance payments to surviving spouses within **6 days** (down from **190**)
10. Held appeal rates steady amidst increased production – **1.32M** completed claims in FY2014, **11-12%** (historical rate) appealed, **4-5%** reached Board of Veterans' Appeals, **1.2%** decided in Veteran's favor, often based on additional evidence
11. Reduced Veterans Pension inventory by **68%** from peak of **36.4K** to **11.7K**; backlog by **96%** from peak of **15.3K** to **565**; reduced Survivors' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation inventory by **56%** from peak of **19.1K** to **8.3K**, backlog by **84%** from peak of **8.8K** to **1.4K**; improved DIC timeliness by **112 days** from peak of **182** to **70 days** while maintaining **99%** accuracy
12. Provided nearly **\$54B** to send **1.44 million** Veterans and dependents to school under the Post-9/11 GI Bill since 2009; now processing reenrollment claims in **average of 6 days FYTD** at **99.8% accuracy**
13. Over **2.3M** total loans on the books; guaranteed almost **521K** loans FY15 to date (**18%** more than FY14) totaling **\$126B** and helped **80K** Veterans avoid foreclosure, while maintaining the lowest foreclosure rate (**1.39%**) in the industry for **25 of the last 27 consecutive quarters**
14. Paying insurance death claims in an average of **4.5 days** at **99.7% accuracy**
15. More than **99K** Veterans received nearly **\$1.1B** in VR&E benefits in FY14

## Nashville Regional Office Staffing and Hiring Update

1. Temporary Veterans Service Representatives hired to assist with non-rating claims/adjustments workload. Nashville was one of six stations nationally to receive the temporary hiring authority.
2. The Nashville Regional Office is staffed at 500 full-time equivalents and 5 temporary hires. The Nashville Regional Office workforce is currently comprised of 61% Veteran employees.

## Summary of Service Provided by the Nashville Regional Office Veterans Service Center (VSC)

1. Claims Completion for Fiscal Year To Date (October through August 15th)
  - a. Completed **31,449** disability rating claims (331 claims ahead of last FY)
  - b. Completed **15,927** non-rating claims/adjustments (30.45% ahead of last FY)
  - c. Achieved an accuracy rate of **96.3%** (3 month issue-based) and 92.1% (12 month claim-based) for disability rating claims
  - d. Fully Developed Claims (FDC)
    - i. Completed **13,833 FDC** Claims (79.25% ahead of last FY)

## Summary of Service Provided by the Nashville Regional Office Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) Division

1. Rehabilitation Services **Fiscal Year 2015 (to July 31, 2015)**
  - a. Assisted **189 Veterans** in obtaining suitable employment
    - 154 Suitable Employment
    - 30 MRGs
    - 9 IILPs
  - b. Processed **330 IDES** applications
  - c. Processed **3374 Chapter 31** applications
  - d. Processed **1840 Entitlement Determinations**
2. Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - a. Served approximately **3,400 VR&E** participants
    - 2481 in Rehabilitation Plans
    - 1767 pursuit of training
    - 74% Active Case Workload
  - b. Provides greater access to Veterans throughout the state of Tennessee through offices in Nashville, Memphis, Clarksville, Ft. Campbell and Knoxville
3. VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC)
  - a. Serves approximately **180 students a month** between Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and Austin Peay State University (APSU).
  - b. Provide a range of services to include tutoring, benefit information and vocational guidance to all service members, Veterans, and eligible dependent students on campus.
  - c. Each VSOC location has an active mentoring program where Veteran students provide information and guidance to these students. The VA Work Study program is utilized to compensate these mentors for their time and assistance.
  - d. MTSU will open the Veterans and Family Center in November 2015 which will include the VSOC.
  - e. APSU celebrated its one year anniversary in October.
4. IDES Program

- a. The VR&E Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) program includes **10** IDES VRCs, with **7** counselors located at Ft. Campbell, KY and **3** at the nearby Clarksville VR&E Office.
- b. The VR&E IDES program is currently serving approximately **650 Servicemembers**.
- c. Completing development of claims in **2 days**.
- d. Fourth highest average monthly caseload of IDES Army sites, with **115 cases per month**.
- e. Second highest installation-level satisfaction with a weighted overall satisfaction percentage of **91%**.
- f. **Seventh Highest** total number of cases processed since IDES inception.
- g. The VRCs are actively involved in providing IDES briefings at the Medical Evaluation Board briefings in addition to biweekly briefings provided to the Warrior Transition Unit. The VR&E IDES program at Ft. Campbell also offers a walk-in service for service members seeking more information about VR&E. Ft. Campbell and the service members are very excited to have VR&E on post to assist with their transition.

### Nashville Call Center (NCC)

1. For Fiscal Year 2015, the Nashville Call Center has answered **590,528** calls.
2. FYTD the wait time for all VA Call Centers nationally is **6 minutes and 14 seconds**.
3. Veteran Service Organization (VSO) 800 Number Pilot
  - a. The Nashville Call Center has sole responsibility for providing assistance through a toll free line to our VSO partners across the nation and has **24 PCR**s dedicated to providing expeditious service to our VSO partners.
  - b. The VSO pilot line has been operational since May 13, 2013. Agents have answered over **203,715** calls with a wait time of approximately **6:11** minutes with no blocked calls. However, since the start of Authenticated Chat in January, data taken from February 2015 to date show SEP/VSO key call metrics were negatively impacted as follows:
    - 1) **average wait time- 11:09 seconds**
    - 2) **calls attempted- 59,879**
    - 3) **calls answered- 48,506**
    - 4) **Abandoned Call % 29.23 for 11,373 calls**. In this scenario, slightly less than a third of calls from VSOs are not answered by our agents.
4. VSO/ Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP) Live Chat and Co-Browse Pilot & eBenefits
  - a. The Nashville Call Center is using the VSO designated line for the National Call Center Chat Pilot. The pilot began on September 15, 2014. Phase One of the pilot addressed general questions. There have been **86,626** Chats with an average wait time of **4:19** minutes and a Chat duration of **12:05** minutes. Phase Two of the pilot began in January 2015 and focuses on PII/personal benefit information.
  - b. The Nashville Call Center currently has **11** eBenefits Remote Proofing agents, to assist Veterans with their premium level access to eBenefits, which allows them to self-service items to include check status of claim, status of payment, and generate benefit letter.
5. The Nashville Call Center is in the process of recruiting new agents, all of those are anticipated to be Veterans.

### Events: June - present

1. Congressman Cooper's Rally Point Event of Nashville

On June 20, 2015, staff participated in Congressman Cooper's Rally Point event in Nashville, Tennessee and provided outreach assistance to Veterans.

2. VBA/VHA Town Hall Meeting – Harriman, Tennessee

On June 30, 2015, Director Edna MacDonald and three staff members traveled to Harriman, Tennessee to join the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (TVHS) in conducting a joint Town Hall Meeting. The Nashville Regional Office staff assisted Veterans with claims related questions and issues.

3. Media Day – Murfreesboro, Tennessee

On August 3, 2015, Edna Mac Donald and two staff members discussed the accomplishments of the Nashville Regional Office and answered questions asked by members of the media.

4. Austin Peay State University (APSU) Veteran and Family Fun Day – Clarksville, TN

a. On June 23, 2015, APSU/VA VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) held their New Veteran Student and Family Welcome and Fun Day. The event was co-sponsored by VSOC and Staff from APSU providing services to Veterans. Information was provided on services offered by the VA and campus programs.

5. APSU Green Zone Training

On July 15-16, 2015, APSU/ VA VetSuccess on Campus counselor presented information on posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other service-connected injuries and disabilities, and their impact on Veterans as they make their transition to campus life. Staff, faculty and Veterans were educated on VA referral procedures.

6. Tennessee Department of Veterans Services Veteran Higher Education Event – Clarksville, TN

On July 21, 2015, the VSOC counselors from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and APSU attended the Veteran Higher Education Event. Information on the VSOC programs at both universities was provided to attendees. There were 21 Veterans that attended this event.