

VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND



President Signs Bipartisan Legislation to Extend the Veterans Choice Program

For those of you whom receive our Veterans Disability Benefits e-newsletters, last month we touched on bipartisan legislation the Senate and House had been working on throughout the summer and ready to go to the President's desk to "sign, seal and deliver." The Veterans Administration Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 has now been signed. The legislation authorizes \$2.1 billion in additional funds for the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). The law reflects the ongoing commitment of the Veterans Administration (VA) and Congress to make sure Veterans get the right care, at the right time, from the right provider.

The new funds represent a short-term, temporary funding solution for VCP that will enable the VA to increase the number of appointments scheduled and ensure payments are made to community providers.

Impact to Veterans

The new funding helps ensure VCP-eligible Veterans continue to have access to care in their communities.

Impacts to Community Providers

The new funding helps ensure that community providers are able to continue to provide care to VCP-eligible Veterans and receive payment for authorized VCP care.

Impacts to VA Medical Facilities

Funding will allow VA medical facilities to refer Veterans to VCP to the maximum extent possible. In addition to referring those Veterans eligible for VCP based on distance (residing more than 40 miles from the closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care provider) and wait times (30 days from the clinically indicated date). VA medical facilities may

Continues on back page >>

INSIDE

Veterans Administration Promises to Complete Claims within 30 Days

OFFICE INBOX
Office News and Events

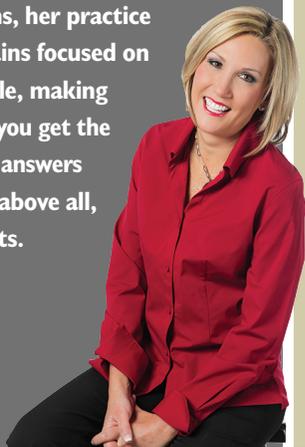
WHAT'S COOKING!
Scrumptious recipe for Pumpkin Roll





JAN'S Letter

Jan Dils brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. While her knowledge spans the critical areas pertaining to Personal Injury, Veterans' benefits, Social Security disability benefits and related appeals and claims, her practice remains focused on people, making sure you get the right answers and, above all, results.



In this newsletter we have two bits of good news for Veterans and their families as it relates to actions within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But first, I want to recognize a very important date: November 11, 2017 - Veterans Day - when our country comes together to honor all of whom have served in the United States Armed Forces. Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, salute you!

Since the last time we communicated via our email newsletter, we are pleased to follow up on the official signing of the 2017 Veterans Choice Program (VCP). Now officially signed by the President, the legislation authorizes \$2.1 billion in additional funds for the VCP. This impacts Veterans residing more than 40 miles from the closest VA medical facility and all Veterans' wait times.

Now also under 30 days, the VA has rolled out a new electronic claims submission option that will shorten claim payments. Veterans will receive their benefits within a month by filing online. It not only improves timeliness, but accuracy of the payment. The Jan Dils team works hard to help you receive your benefits and are pleased to announce there will be fewer delays.

And as always, I want to extend an open invitation to please call us should you or your family have any questions or concerns about your benefits. We have the answers and the expertise to help you rest easier.

Sincerely,
Jan Dils



STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE
Want the scoop on what's new with our business and the team? You can find it right here, so stay plugged into the practice.

We are pleased to welcome ten new members to our team: **Joyce Kirl, Joe Fortuno, Amanda Hartline**, Veterans' Leads and Intake team; **Meagan Conley, Elizabeth Holloway, Rachel Matson**, and **Alese Scarbrough**, C-File Reviewers; **Jessica Scott**, Medical Records Reviewer; **Chelsey Frederick** and **Ashleigh Harris**, requestors. It's great to have them onboard!



SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE Carrie Russell

Carrie has an Associate's Degree from Hocking College and is a valuable member of our team. She works as an appeals clerk in our Veterans Department.

"The work can be challenging, but when I get to call a client with amazing news, it's worth every obstacle. I feel like I am helping make a difference in Veteran's lives, and that is very rewarding."

Carrie has been a single mom of two amazing children - a 12-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter - for most of her parental life. Then something magical happened. Carrie connected with a man she's known since childhood in 2013. The two tied the knot last April. Hubby is a combat medic Veteran.

"Being an army wife has given me an even deeper understanding and compassion for our Veterans and their families."

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law was proud to host a benefit dinner for Operation Transportation on August 31, 2017. More than 300 people came out to enjoy a spaghetti dinner served with salad, bread, and assorted drinks. It was a great dinner for a great cause! The event raised over \$2,000 for Operation Transportation. Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law has partnered with the Mid-Ohio Valley Transit Authority for this unique program that is able to provide free bus passes for Veterans. Since January 2017 more than

200 passes have been issued and they've been used more than 5,000 times. We thank everyone who came out.



Veterans Administration Unveils Claims Submission Option That Promises to Complete Claims within 30 Days

Going back to October of 2016, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) submitted a plan to Congress to improve timeliness and accuracy of payments. The plan called for more automation in claims processing, ways to submit more information electronically and the creation of a dedicated customer staff.

Answering the call and part of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) continued efforts to improve timeliness of services for Veterans and their families, the VA unveiled the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) initiative, a disability claims submission option with accredited Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) that promises to deliver faster claims decisions to Veterans and their families.

"The DRC initiative is a collaborative effort between VA and the VSO to help Veterans receive faster decisions on disability claims," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "VA works closely with the participating VSO to make sure they are properly trained in this new process and given the tools they need to participate successfully in the program on behalf of the Veterans they serve."

Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a decision within 30 days from the time VA receives the claim. The VSO will ensure all supporting evidence — such as medical exams, military service records, etc. — is included with the claim submission. This advance preparation by the VSO allows claims to be assigned immediately to claims processors for a quick decision.

DRC was first implemented May 1, 2017, at the St. Paul (Minn.) Regional Office, and is now available at all VA regional offices. While DRC is currently limited to claims for increased compensation (commonly known as claims for increase), and requires Veterans to work with the VSO, VA's goal is to expand the types of claims accepted under the initiative and allow Veterans other ways to submit their claim under DRC.

DRC is another key step in aggressively modernizing VA's benefits delivery to Veterans in a fully digital operating environment. With electronic claims



processing as a foundation, VA's innovation will improve service to Veterans, their families, and survivors.

The Jan Dils team works hard to make sure our heroes get the benefits they deserve. We continue to be advocates. Timeliness of claim payouts is critical to the clients we serve. We are pleased to share improvements and happy to answer any questions you may have. Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law is always on your side.

"The DRC initiative is a collaborative effort between VA and the VSO to help Veterans receive faster decisions on disability claims"

Dr. David J. Shulkin
VA Secretary

Sources: www.modernhealthcare.com/article/20160603/NEWS/160609961 / www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2944

Enjoy a little slice of holiday heaven with this scrumptious recipe for **Pumpkin Roll** from Veterans Affairs Team Leader, Jess Hacker.



INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup powdered sugar (to sprinkle on towel)
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
1 cup granulated sugar

2/3 cup LIBBY'S® 100% Pure Pumpkin
1 cup walnuts, chopped (optional)
FILLING:
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, at room temperature
1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
6 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Powdered sugar (optional for decoration)

DIRECTIONS: PREHEAT oven to 375° F. Grease 15 x 10-inch jelly-roll pan; line with wax paper. Grease and flour paper. Sprinkle a thin, cotton kitchen towel with powdered sugar. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves and salt in small bowl. Beat eggs and granulated sugar in large mixer bowl until thick. Beat in pumpkin. Stir in flour mixture. Spread evenly into prepared pan. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes or until top of cake springs back when touched. (If using a dark-colored pan, begin checking for doneness at 11 minutes.) Immediately loosen and turn cake onto prepared towel. Carefully peel off paper. Roll up cake and towel together, starting with narrow end. Cool on wire rack. **FOR FILLING:** Beat cream cheese, 1 cup powdered sugar, butter and vanilla extract in small mixer bowl until smooth. Carefully unroll cake. Spread cream cheese mixture over cake. Roll cake. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least one hour. Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving, if desired. **TIP:** Be sure to put enough powdered sugar on the towel when rolling up the cake so it will not stick.

WORD GAME

A mumbo jumbo is a list of words/hints for you to unscramble. You then take designated letters from each word/hint to come up with the final message that is associated with each hint you have unscrambled.

GSGE □ □ □ □ □
SOTTA □ □ □ □ □
LACREE □ □ □ □ □
CAAKPNE □ □ □ □ □
NAABAN □ □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □ □ F □ □ □ □

Final Message: BREAKFAST
Answers: eggs, toast, cereal, pancakes, banana

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NEWS FOR EVERYONE**

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Continued from cover story

use the "Choice First" business process to refer Veterans to community providers when services are unavailable. VA medical facilities may also use traditional community care when services are unavailable. This local flexibility is important to ensure Veterans get the care they need and that VCP and traditional community care funds are used in the most optimal manner.

VA will continue to work with stakeholders to secure funding for VCP for the remainder of FY2018 and to establish a single, consolidated community care program that is simple to understand, easy to administer, and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff.

Next Steps

VA will continue to work with stakeholders to secure funding for VCP for the remainder of FY2018 and to establish a single, consolidated community care program that is simple to understand, easy to administer, and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers, and VA staff. This includes combining existing accounts for VA community care into one account or ensuring flexibility between accounts.

These are important issues Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, continue to follow for our Veterans. If you have questions regarding this program or any VA law and benefits, know that we are always here for you. Please give us a call.

