

Jan Dils Veterans Disability Benefits Newsletter

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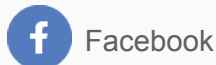
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Happy New Year to all our Veterans and your families. For our first edition of 2020, we have some good news regarding a year of modernization efforts at Veterans Affairs (VA). Disability claims waiting times are getting shorter on average; overall trust in the VA is improving.

Through our [newsletters](#), [eNews](#) and [blogs](#), we have shared many of these advancements with hopes of keeping you informed and on top of the latest and greatest services available. Now the results are in.

Another pilot program in the works will hopefully lead to dental benefits for Veterans. Dental care is about more

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Case Manager**

than a “Hollywood” smile. Severe gum problems can lead to heart disease, bacterial pneumonia and stroke. We are great supporters of preventing disabilities.


Last year was a fulfilling year for our firm. It was the inaugural year for our Freedom 5K Fun Run. We also continued our annual spaghetti dinner to raise funds for one of our favorite causes: Operation Transportation. This program provides free bus passes to eligible Veterans each month. It’s a proud tradition. We cannot wait for both events in 2020. Stay tuned for the details! Of course, in the meantime, do not hesitate to [contact us](#) regarding your disability benefits. We won’t take “no” for an answer[®].

Sincerely,



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The VA Sets a Record for Claims Processing Pace in 2020

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It's great to report that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [disability claims](#) backlog reached its lowest point ever, November 23rd, from its previous record low achieved May 2018.

Additionally, the percentage of the total inventory in backlog is less than 18%, surpassing the previous record from October 2016.

“I'm pleased with the Veterans Benefits Administration's delivery on our commitment to improve customer service and provide benefits in a way that honors Veterans for their service,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This is evidence that VA's unprecedented modernization efforts are yielding positive results.”

These milestones follow the VA's highest ever claims process output of 1.44 million claims completed at the end of fiscal year 2019, 4% more than its prior best-ever in 2015.



The VA's strategic target is to process disability claims within 125 days. Since October 1, 2019, approximately 75% of those claims have been completed in that time frame.

Veterans who apply for disability benefits currently receive a response in an average of 107 days. This includes first-time claims from recently discharged Veterans and older Veterans who file claims for additional benefits. Some claims take longer due to complex evidence requirements and medical examination scheduling necessary to decide the claim.

In summation, end of year research indicates the following:

- Veteran **trust in VA increased** from 47% in 2015 to 87% in 2019.
- **Patients' wait times are shorter** at VA facilities than the private sector.
- The new **VA.GOV simplifies** the experience for Veterans to access VA benefits and healthcare.
- The **Appeals Modernization Act simplifies** the appeals process and gives Veterans **choice** and **control**. Veterans can track appeals in real time.



At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we have been fighting for this kind of progress for decades. Nothing would make us happier than for the VA to work like the well-oiled machine our Veterans need and deserve. We applaud the progress. However, many Veterans and their families continue to fall through the cracks. We know this from our caseload and the heart-wrenching stories we continue to hear. So as long as there are lines and difficulties navigating the system, we will be here! If you need assistance, or have been denied benefits, do not hesitate to **contact** us or call 877.526.3457 for a free

disability evaluation.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5371>



The VA Announces a Proposal to Increase Access to Dental Care



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it has submitted to Congress a waiver request and pilot program under the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 ([MISSION Act](#)) to improve access to dental care for Veterans.

The MISSION Act authorizes the VA to submit statutory waivers to Congress for the purpose of testing innovative service delivery models to improve the quality of care for America's Veterans. Under existing statute, the VA has limited authority to provide dental services for Veterans. With this waiver request, the VA is submitting a proposal to increase access to dental services for enrolled Veterans ineligible for dental services through

the VA by connecting them with community-based, pro bono or discounted dental service providers.

“The MISSION Act gave Veterans real choice over their healthcare decisions,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert L. Wilkie. “Through this pilot proposal, we want to ensure Veterans have access to quality dental care through a network of providers who are proud to serve America’s heroes.”

Poor oral health can have a significant negative effect on overall health. Clinical research has found possible connections between gum problems and heart disease, bacterial pneumonia and stroke. Upon approval of this pilot, the VA will work with groups such as the American Dental Association and Federally Qualified Health Centers across the U.S. to offer pro bono and discounted dental services to Veterans.

“This waiver submission opens the door to years of groundbreaking innovation under the MISSION Act to improve care for our Veterans, who are top of mind for this President and this Administration every single day,” said Director Joe Grogan of the White House Domestic Policy Council.



This particular section of the MISSION Act led the VA to establish a Center for Care and Payment Innovation to test payment and service delivery models, with the goal of reducing expenditures while preserving or enhancing

the quality of care for Veterans. In implementing this section, the Secretary was granted authority to waive statutory requirements that may impede innovative approaches upon notification of and approval from Congress. The dental care proposal, titled the Care Coordination for Dental Benefits demonstration project under the Community Provider Collaborations for the Veterans Pilot Program, is the first waiver request and pilot program submitted to Congress under this authority.

The VA first published a proposed rule establishing the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment on July 29, 2019. This rule became effective on November 25, 2019.

“This pilot program enables us to explore leading practices across the U.S. healthcare system to meet Veterans’ needs today and into the future,” said Dr. Melissa S. Glynn, Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration.



Dental health is important for our Veterans to maintain active lives. At Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we will continue to follow this pilot and keep you informed about this and all issues that benefit our heroes.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5377>

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Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, handles Personal Injury Claims, Social Security and Veterans Disability for clients throughout West Virginia with offices located in Parkersburg-Beckley-Charleston-Huntington-Logan as well as one additional office located in Charlotte, North Carolina. But regardless of where you are located we are able to serve you or a family member Nationwide.

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