

# VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019

**JAN DILS**   
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, L C



## The VA Partners with The Independence Fund to Help Prevent Veteran Suicide.

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Before ringing in the New Year, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) took some critical efforts to assist our most vulnerable Veterans. The VA announced its partnership with The Independence Fund to provide wellness and mental health education to Veterans, caregivers and families.

The VA and The Independence Fund will collaborate on suicide prevention initiatives to connect Veterans with care and support before they reach a crisis point.

"Every Veteran suicide is a tragedy, and our goal is to prevent suicide among all Veterans nationwide - even those who do not seek care within our health system," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "The Independence Fund is an important ally to reach Veterans on this top clinical priority for the VA, as well as caregivers and their families."

The two organizations will work together on Operation Resiliency to encourage Veterans to take part in suicide prevention initiatives. This includes a 2019 retreat that will bring together

at-risk Veterans who served in the same unit during deployments.

Founded in 2007, The Independence Fund empowers the nation's severely wounded, injured or ill Veterans to overcome physical,

**"Every Veteran suicide is a tragedy, and our goal is to prevent suicide among all Veterans nationwide - even those who do not seek care within our health system"**

-VA Secretary Robert Wilkie

mental and emotional wounds incurred in the line of duty. It has a goal of improving the lives of both Veterans and their families through the

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# Jan's Letter

Time truly flies when you are doing something you are passionate about.

Our firm is proud to celebrate our 25th Anniversary. We thank the families who have put so much trust in us over the years. We are proud of our track record and results!

Our firm has grown so much over the years. While progress has been made, there is still so much work to be done to advocate for Veterans, especially in regards to mental health. According to the most recent data available by the VA, the suicide rate for Veterans was 1.5 times greater than for Americans who never served in the military. About 20 Veterans a day across the country take their own lives, and Veterans accounted for 14 percent of all adult suicide deaths in the U.S., even though only 8 percent of the country's population has served in the military. In our first article, we talk about the most recent actions taken by the VA to address this preventable issue.

In the second article, we have further conversations about the Community Care Network (CCN) – an initiative designed to expedite Veterans' success to healthcare. This is great news for the majority of the Veterans we represent in Region 1 and those in Ohio in Region 2.

When it comes to healthcare, no Veteran should be at the "back of the line." And for those who have come home disabled, this is particularly important – including attaining the benefits our Vets and families need and deserve. We have been here for you for 25 years and look forward to being your advocate for many, many more – for as long as our services are needed. Never hesitate to contact us at **877-526-3457** or **jandils.com** for a free consultation.

Sincerely,  
Jan Dils

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.



## Spotlight Employee

### Rachael Deem

Rachael Deem joined Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, back in July 2018. She is one of the outstanding members of the C-file review team. The VA claims folder is deemed one of the most important documents in a VA appeal. It's a comfort to our firm and our clients knowing that Rachael is on the job. As an Army Veteran herself, she has a unique understanding and a great amount of

compassion for the plight of disabled Veterans.

"I love working here because I know that what I am doing is helping Veterans receive the benefits they deserve," says Rachael.

When not working, Rachael loves spending time with her two boys – Christopher (13) and Nathan (8) years old. And if it's fall, winter and Sunday it's football in the Deem household. Favorite team? Definitely the Pittsburgh Steelers – the Black and Gold!



## Office Inbox

### 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.

Congratulations to **Sam Wolfe** on the arrival of her baby Aliza in December 2018. The best Christmas present ever. She came wrapped in pink.

And on the move, Social Security Work Up Specialist **Leslie Yetter** has joined the VA team as a case manager. **Alex Rickman**, from Social Security Medical Records, is also now with VA as a Hearing Clerk. Welcome Leslie and Alex to the VA pod!

## Community Spotlight

Right before our last bimonthly *Veterans Benefits & Beyond* newsletter, we were preparing for Veteran's Day and our **7th Annual Veterans Appreciation Spaghetti Dinner**. The event was held on November 8. We are pleased to announce we had an amazing turnout and served many Veterans. The event raised enough funds to supply 111 bus passes through Operation Transportation.

On December 11, Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, ended on a philanthropic high note. We'd like to give a shout-out to **Erie Insurance** and **McClinton Chevrolet Mitsubishi** for their donations toward the Walk4Vets Foundation's Operation Transportation Initiative.



# The VA Awards Community Care Network Contracts to Increase Healthcare Access.

Yet another milestone achieved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) just days before New Year's Eve 2018. On December 28, the VA awarded contracts to manage provider networks for Regions 1, 2 and 3 of the VA's new Community Care Network (CCN), the department's direct link with community providers that will ensure VA provides the right care at the right time to Veterans.

"These contract awards reflect our ongoing commitment to increasing Veterans' access to care," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "As part of the VA's modernization efforts, we designed the new network based on feedback from Veterans and other stakeholders, along with lessons learned from the Veterans Choice Program. We are confident this new network will greatly improve customer service for Veterans and timeliness of payments to community providers."

The network will be the standard contract vehicle allowing the VA to purchase care for Veterans from community healthcare providers using industry-standard approaches and guidelines in support of the VA Mission Act of 2018 to administer services and manage the network to its full potential. The VA will provide care coordination under this new contract. TriWest Healthcare Alliance has expanded

its network to support Veteran and provider care coordination across the nation until CCN is fully implemented. Contracts 1 - 3 were awarded to Optum Public Sector Solutions, Inc.

The contract award for Region 4 is expected by early April 2019. Contract awards for Regions 5 and 6 are expected by end of calendar year 2019.

The majority of the Veterans in the Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, service area will be in Region 1. This Region includes VA medical centers in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

Region 2 covers Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Region 3 will serve Veterans in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico,



South Carolina, Tennessee and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The VA is committed to delivering efficient, safe, timely and quality healthcare to all Veterans across the nation.

Equally, at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, we work to stay on top of the issues that impact our heroes. Additionally, our lawyers have years of experience helping U.S. Veterans with their applications for service-connected disability benefits. Over the past 25 years, we have helped countless Veterans get access to the VA benefits they deserve - through our careful attention to their claims and our refusal to take "no" for an answer.

Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5175](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5175)

## 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.

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Answers: pig, horse, chicken, lamb, calf  
Final Message: FARM ANIMALS

**Sweet but "Tart."** Just in time for the other "V" Day (Valentine's), enjoy this fruity sweetheart cookie tart recipe from the oven of **Clinton Johnson** in Mailing and Scanning.

### Ingredients:

1 pkg. (16.5 oz.) refrigerated sliceable sugar cookies, sliced

1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 tsp. vanilla

1/4 cup apricot preserves

1 tbsp. water

4 cups assorted fresh fruit (kiwi and strawberry slices, red and black raspberries, drained canned mandarin oranges)

**DIRECTIONS:** Heat oven to 375°F. Line 12-inch pizza pan with aluminum foil and spray with cooking spray. Arrange cookie dough slices in single layer on bottom of prepared pan; press together to completely cover pan area. Bake 14 minutes. Cool completely. Invert cookie crust onto plate; carefully remove foil. Turn crust over on plate. Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla with mixer until blended, and spread onto crust. Top with fruit. Press preserves through sieve to remove any lumps; discard strained solids. Mix preserves with water until blended; brush onto fruit. Refrigerate two hours.



## Important Veterans Benefits News For Everyone

1.877.VETERAN / FIGHT4VETS.COM



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WWW.VETERANDISABILITYBLOG.COM

*Continued from cover story*

organization's mobility, caregiver, adaptive sports and advocacy programs, while also bridging the gap of unmet needs of Veterans' caregivers. The Fund works to give Veterans the best mobility device options available, as well as promote their mental and physical health.

Suicide is a national public health issue that affects families everywhere. The VA is engaging communities nationwide to deliver care and support to Veterans where they live, work and thrive. Partnerships such as this with The Independence Fund are an important part of the VA's National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide.

While Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, has covered this issue before, we want to continue to bring you updates and remind our Veterans and their families that there is help and hope.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know



**The VA is engaging communities nationwide to deliver care and support to Veterans where they live, work and thrive.**

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a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veteran & Military Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

It is also worth noting that Veterans who have regular contact with VA health services are less likely to commit suicide than those

with little or no interaction. Please realize that, as a Veteran, you are among the bravest and most resilient. Never hesitate to reach out. This is a national crisis. But statistics show, largely because of what you have seen and been through, this makes you at greater risk for depression. Suicide is never the answer. At Jan Dils, we value the lives of our Veterans.

Sources: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5174](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5174)  
[www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2018/09/26/suicide-rate-spikes-among-younger-veterans/](http://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2018/09/26/suicide-rate-spikes-among-younger-veterans/)