

# VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND



## Mark Your Calendar And Don't Miss The Bigger, Better Walk4Vets Event!

**V**eterans, volunteers, and members of the community will come together again to show their support by participating in the third Walk4Vets event! On Saturday, September 13th, Parkersburg City Park in Parkersburg, WV, will be the place to be for live music, entertainment, games, food, fun, and activities for adults and children. "Walk4Vets has become known as an event with a patriotic theme that is appropriate and fun for the whole family," said Jan Dils. "We are excited to continue that tradition this year, and look forward to honoring our Veterans."

Created and hosted by Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law, the 2011 and 2012 events raised nearly \$31,000 for local Veteran's charities. In 2013, the Jan Dils team hosted multiple smaller events to raise funds to benefit Veterans, while planning the 2014 event. These efforts are expected to elevate this year's Walk4Vets to the most exciting event to date. Plans to increase attendance and participation from Veterans, volunteers and community participants are expected to draw a record number of participants.

A new beneficiary has been named for the 2014 Walk4Vets, as well. This year's proceeds will benefit the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Veterans Corps, which supports Veterans and their families through a variety of noble community service efforts. "We are so excited to work with the Veterans Corps, and look forward to seeing what this relationship will lead to in the future," said Jan Dils.

The Jan Dils team has always felt that working with Veterans every day to help them fight for the benefits they so richly deserve is more than a job; it's truly an honor. "Hosting this event is just one small way to thank our Veterans," said Jan Dils. "It provides the whole community with a unique opportunity to be involved in this expression of appreciation."

Be sure to mark your calendar for this exciting event for the whole family, and join the Jan Dils team in honoring the sacrifices made by our brave Veterans on Saturday, September 13th at

Parkersburg City Park in Parkersburg, WV.  
Hope to see you there!



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# JAN'S LETTER

There's no denying that Veterans Affairs (VA) has experienced a lot of difficulties in the past months. But now it appears that making sure our Veterans have timely access to the highest quality health care has become a priority, and new leadership has been appointed to continue working toward that goal. I think you will agree that some good news on this topic is overdue—so our latest newsletter includes an article about recent improvements that have been made to help make the system more accessible. We have also included a statement from Robert McDonald, the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs, that outlines his dedication and commitment to improving VA across the board.

And there's more good news waiting for you our new newsletter: our 3rd Walk4Vets is almost here! We are so excited to host this year's event to honor and support our Veterans, with an incredibly exciting lineup of food and fun, all with a patriotic theme

and all for a great cause. This year, a new beneficiary has been named, so be sure to read the article for all of the details!

I am so happy to share some good news with you, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our Walk4Vets event. Being able to give something back to our Veterans who have sacrificed so much for our freedom is truly and honor and a privilege that we take very seriously. If you have questions pertaining to your VA benefits or about the services we provide, please feel free to call us today. We are always happy to hear from you, and we look forward to helping in any way we can.

See you at the Walk4Vets on Saturday, September 13th at Parkersburg City Park!

Sincerely,  
Jan Dils



JAN DILS brings her expertise to issues that affect you and millions of other Americans every day. Her knowledge across vital areas – including Veterans' benefits, disability benefits and related appeals and claims – and a practice that focuses on the people, ensures you get answers and the right results.

## Good News About Health Care For Veterans.

**B** now, we've all heard the news reports about Veterans waiting far too long for the health care they need and are entitled to receive. Now, slowly but surely, improvements are being made, and we are slowly but surely receiving some long-overdue good news. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has taken significant steps to improve Veterans' access to quality health care. In keeping with the commitment to improve transparency in the department's processes, VA recently released the latest update of facility-level patient access data.

"VA is fully committed to fixing the problems we face in order to better serve Veterans," said Sloan D. Gibson, who was Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs at the time of this data release. "VA must restore the public's trust, but more importantly restore the trust of our Veterans who depend on us for their health care."

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has reached out to over 160,000 Veterans to get them off wait lists and into clinics. VHA has also made over 543,000 referrals for Veterans to receive care in the private sector – 91,000 more than in the comparable period a year ago. Additionally, VA has reduced the New Enrollee Appointment Report (NEAR) from its peak of 46,000 on June 1, 2014 to 2,000 (as of July 1, 2014). As of July 1, 2014, there has been a reduction in over 17,000 Veterans on the Electronic Waiting List since May 15, 2014.

Acting VA Secretary Gibson traveled to 11 VA medical centers across the country in an effort to hear directly from Veterans and employees about obstacles to providing timely, quality care and how VA can immediately address them. "We have to rebuild trust by creating an open and transparent culture that is focused on better serving Veterans," said Gibson. "That's what these site visits are all about – listening to Veterans and employees around the country about how we can better serve Veterans and deliver the quality healthcare that they have earned."

VA has added approximately 7,000 appointments provided to newly enrolled Veterans who had requested an initial appointment at the time of enrollment. VA is continuing to address systemic challenges in accessing care, as quickly as possible and will provide the most immediate information on its progress to Veterans and the public via the VA website, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).



**"VA is fully committed to fixing the problems we face in order to better serve Veterans"**

(Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2587](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2587))



### SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE

## Jon Corra

Jon is much more than just someone who updates Facebook all day. As the Social Media Specialist for the Jan Dils team, Jon is able to combine his two passions: working with Veterans and, of course, social media. "My passion for helping those who serve is actually more organic than most," explained Jon. "It's not because I grew up with a father or uncle who had served. It came from my experiences in college, instead. Getting to know several Veterans in both undergrad and graduate school led me to where I am now. Over three years after joining the team, I am happy to say that I'm working with Vets now more than ever. This includes developing our annual Veterans Day cookout and working with our Walk4Vets Benefactors, not to mention working as an intake specialist. To me, working with Vets is the ultimate reward." When he isn't working to help our Veterans, Jon spends his spare time writing a personal blog about product placement in film, enjoying racing, cars, watching hockey, and playing fantasy football.

Please join us in thanking Jon for the tremendous difference he makes in the lives of the Veterans he helps each day!

## BRAIN GAME

A wuzzle is a saying/phrase that is made up of a display of words, in an interesting way. The object is to try to figure out the well-known saying, person, place, or thing that each wuzzle is meant to represent.



ANSWERS: 1. Too Good to Last 2. Pat on the Back 3. A Touching Moment 4. Look Before You Leap

# 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.

### Baby News!

This newsletter edition features a lot of additions—to the Jan Dils family!

Attorney **Charlisa Powell** welcomed Landon Christopher Powell, born July 28th, weighing 8lbs. Mother and baby are doing great.

Attorney **Angie Thompson Lowe** is ready to welcome a new baby, due October 30.

Our Parkersburg office is set to welcome not one but TWO new additions, due just a week apart!

**Amber Sims** is due October 22, and **Camy Dight** is due November 9. We will keep you posted!

### Wedding Bells!

Love is definitely in the air! Workup Specialist **Kayla Cox** was married to Michael McCoy on August 23rd on the Valley Gem Sternwheeler.

Attorney **Ambria Adkins** will marry her law school sweetheart Travis Britton on October 18th at the Elk Springs Resort in West Virginia.

And Attorney **Linda Pettit** recently became a mother-in-law when her son Nathan married Mary Kelly in Seattle on July 19th!

Join us in wishing all of the brides and grooms, as well as the new moms and dads, all the best!

### Art with a Heart!

Approximately 120 Veterans will exhibit their artwork or perform musical, dance, dramatic or original writing selections at the **2014 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival**. All Veterans invited to participate were selected winners of year-long, national fine arts talent competitions in which thousands of Veterans entered, from VA medical facilities across the nation.

VA medical facilities incorporate creative arts into their recreation therapy programs to further rehabilitation for inpatients and outpatients. This annual competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through that therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our Nation's Veterans after disease, disability or life crisis.

For information on entering the 2015 competition, contact recreation/creative arts therapy staff at the VA facility in which you are enrolled. If you need assistance in identifying a VA staff person from your facility, contact Amy Kimbler at (320) 255-6486 or Elizabeth Mackey, National Director, at (320) 255-6351.



## Set It And Forget It—Slow Cooker Pulled Pork Sandwiches Are Easy And Delicious!

Jan Dils team member **Tricia Watkins**, a Case Development Work Up Specialist, shares her tasty recipe for pulled pork sandwiches that will have your family and friends lined up for seconds—or more!

### INGREDIENTS

8 boneless, pork chops, fat trimmed  
2 (15 ounce) cans tomato sauce, no sugar added, low or no sodium is best  
3 tablespoons onion powder  
2 tablespoons garlic powder

1 tablespoon cumin  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne  
Salt to taste, after cooking

**Directions:** Place the chops in your slow cooker. In a medium mixing bowl, blend the tomato sauce together with all the spices. Pour the sauce over the chops. Cook on low heat for 5-7 hours, or until the pork easily shreds with a fork when pulled at. You should be able to shred it simply by stirring the pot. Load up your favorite sandwich buns and enjoy!



## IT'S TIME TO...

...Relax and take it easy. **September 1st is Labor Day.**

...Remember those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on the United States. **September 11th is Patriot Day.**

...Take a moment to thank our brave prisoners of war and those missing in action. **September 19th is POW/MIA Recognition Day.**

...Be glad Christopher got lost on his way to India. **October 12th is Columbus Day.**

...Trick or Treat! **October 31st is Halloween.**



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WWW.VETERANDISABILITYBLOG.COM

## A New Secretary of Veterans Affairs Has Been Appointed.

**M**ore good news appears to be on the horizon as a brand new leader rolls up his sleeves and begins tackling the less than favorable conditions that have affected far too any Veterans seeking the quality health care they deserve.

Robert A. McDonald released the following message to VA employees shortly after his appointment as the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs:

"I am grateful to President Obama and to Congress for this opportunity to join the dedicated employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and I am honored to serve as your Secretary and lead VA. We are immensely fortunate to work in an organization with the noblest and most respected mission in Government—serving this Nation's Veterans.

We have strong institutional values—Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence. We will all need to depend on and live by our values as we rise to meet the challenges ahead. Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson—my West Point

**"I am proud of the work you do and the mission we share, and I am determined to move forward to ensure that VA is the provider of choice for care and benefits for every generation of America's Veterans."**

**- ROBERT A. MCDONALD**  
SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



classmate, a trusted friend, and a great leader—had it right in his recent statement to Congress: 'We can turn these challenges into the greatest opportunity for improvement in the history of the Department.'

I recognize that the last few months have been difficult—and the days ahead will not be easy. In fact, many tasks that we must accomplish will be difficult, but I assure you that I will be with you each step of the way. I want to hear your ideas for improving the Department, and I will not tolerate those who stifle initiative, seek to punish people who raise legitimate concerns or report problems, or lack integrity in word or deed. Trust is essential in everything we do.

I am proud of the work you do and the mission we share, and I am determined to move forward to ensure that VA is the provider of choice for care and benefits for every generation of America's Veterans.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the coming days. God bless you all. "

(Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2595](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2595))