

Jan Dils Veterans Disability Benefits Newsletter

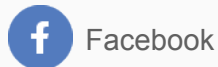
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The Jan Dils team wishes you a very happy and prosperous New Year! We are ringing in 2018 with an overview of tremendous strides made by the U.S. Administration of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2017. All of these accomplishments have resulted in raising Veteran “Trust” Scores from a low of 46% in 2014 to 70% today.

The second article is more somber as it addresses something we often don't like to think or talk about: suicide. Too often, our Veterans find themselves hopeless. At Jan Dils, the work we do for our disabled Veterans and their families is designed to support our heroes in our area of expertise. However, know that suicide is the culmination of complex interactions between biological, social, economic, cultural and psychological factors operating at the individual,

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community and societal levels. Much of the work we do can make a difference as it relates to social and economic issues. We are always here to help families navigate the system and get the benefits you and your loved ones deserve.

Know that the information provided isn't designed to "alarm," but rather be a source to prevent self-harm. We hope it is a resource you will never need, but it is certainly healthy to be aware and prepared. And not just for families, but for true friends.

Please know that if you ever need us, do not hesitate to contact one of our five West Virginia offices or Charlotte, NC toll free at 1.877.526.3457 or send us an [email](#). We are here for you!

Sincerely,



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A YEAR IN REVIEW



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**Contact a Jan Dils
Case Manager**

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A Year in Review – Accomplishments of The U.S. Administration of Veterans Affairs in 2017

Ending 2017 on a high note, VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin reflected on a year of achievement and acknowledged the hard work of the teams of people who helped make it all happen in an annual address. Here is a quick recap:

In 2017, President Trump signed nine bills to improve the U.S. Administration of Veterans Affairs (VA) ability to serve Veterans, as well as one Executive Order and three Presidential Proclamations. Secretary Shulkin noted the President personally participated in and led six events honoring Veterans.

“He was the driving force behind the White House Hotline for Veterans, which opened for 24-7 service in October and has served more than 16,000 callers,” stated Shulkin. “Vice President Pence has also been critical to every initiative involving Veterans. He personally led our Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington and demonstrated his concern for Veterans by supporting and attending Honor Flight ceremonies and events such as the Wounded Warrior bicycle ride.”

The Secretary also took time to thank Members of Congress for making 2017 a legislative success for Veterans. With the unwavering support and leadership of

our VA committees, Congress supported and passed groundbreaking legislation on VA Accountability, Appeals Reform, the Forever GI Bill, Veterans Choice Improvements, and Personnel Improvements and Extension of Choice funding.

He also applauded fellow Cabinet Secretaries and leaders of Administrations for their departments and agencies support for partnerships and specific achievements:

Department of Defense: The VA and DoD have developed a new Electronic Medical Record and shared purchasing to better serve both Veterans and Service Members and best use taxpayer resources.

Housing and Urban Development: Together, VA and HUD helped house more than 61,000 homeless Veterans last year alone.

Department of Energy: The DoE and VA launched an important Veterans Brain Health Initiative and Big Data Super Computing to dramatically expand our research into Veterans' health.

Department of Labor: Working together, the unemployment rate for Veterans has dropped to 2.6%, the lowest in 17 years.

Department of Education: With this department's support, the VA helped enable more than 1 million Veterans to use the GI Bill in 2017.

Health and Human Services: The collaboration has led 620,000 Veterans to participate in precision medicine initiatives, achieve a reduction of 36 percent in the use of opioids, and produce over 10,000 research papers that will help us better serve Veterans and all Americans.

Department of State: The DoS coordinating the visits of dignitaries from 16 countries to the Department of

Veterans Affairs.

The Department of Justice: The DoJ assisted with revising and coordinating new Telehealth regulations and regulations for prescriptions to improve Veterans' access to care and medications.

The Department of Interior: The department helped provide employment opportunities for Veterans through the Park Ranger Internship Program.

The Small Business Administration: Through their efforts the goal of 10 percent of federal contracts with Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business nearly doubled by achieving 19 percent.

The Secretary thanked and highlighted the many partners in the private sector for helping provide Veterans' care. In 2017, the VA authorized 6.1 million community care appointments, a 42 percent increase over 2016.

These and other collaborations have helped the VA make significant progress in serving Veterans and their families. The VA has become more transparent by posting wait times for Veterans' appointments, Veterans' satisfaction with VA care and services, facility quality scores and accountability actions.

The VA has also been able to reduce dropped calls to our Veterans Crisis Line from 35 percent to less than 1 percent, ensured Veterans have same-day access to primary and mental health care at all care facilities, identified 430 unused and under-utilized facilities for disposal, and improved claims processing times by 18 percent in 2017.

The VA acknowledges there is still much work to do to honor and support our heroes and their families. We, at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law will continue to follow the policies and programs coming out of the VA in 2018. We

look forward to keeping you as up to date as possible. Of course, if you have any question, feel free to [contact us](#).

If you'd like to view the Secretary's live video message [click here](#).

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=3991>



HELPING OUR VETERANS IN CRISIS



Suicide rates remain high among Veterans. Back in September of 2017, VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin stated, “We know that of the 20 suicides a day that we reported last year, 14 are not under VA care. This is a national public health issue that requires a concerted, national approach.”

Every suicide is a tragic loss to our nation and those impacted. The family and friends left behind who must deal with the aftermath of the event and put those events in perspective, may in some cases never know why the Service member or Veteran took their life. The Defense

Suicide Prevention Office is committed to fostering collaboration and cooperation to develop suicide prevention efforts among all stakeholders including the Military Services; Federal agencies; public, private, international entities, and institutions of higher education.

Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law want to start the New Year by recognizing this crisis and helping families of Veterans to be aware of the signs of mental illness and the resources available to them.

Family and friends can play an important role in helping to save a life. For information, please download this important [Suicide Prevention](#) handout.



CLICK TO DOWNLOAD HANDOUT

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) are also continuing efforts to address the alarming statistics through genuine actions, not just words.

For more information on the VA's suicide prevention campaign,

visit <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/bethere>. For information on SAMHSA's suicide prevention efforts, visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/suicide->

[prevention/samhsas-efforts](#).

Veterans in crisis or having thoughts of suicide – and those who know a Veteran in crisis – should call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Call 800.273.8255 and press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text to 838255.

Sources: <https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2951>

<http://www.dspo.mil>

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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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