

# VETERANS BENEFITS & BEYOND

APRIL/MAY 2018

JAN DILS   
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, L C



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Prevention of Fraud,  
Waste and Abuse in  
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Pizza Soup



## The VA Announces an Aggressive New Approach for Low-Performing Medical Centers

**A**s a nation, the U.S. has a moral obligation to provide timely, high-quality care for the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend our country. Yet many Veterans are not receiving the treatment they deserve. After careful consideration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is implementing an aggressive new approach to produce rapid improvements at the VA's low-performing medical facilities nationwide.

The VA defines its low-performing facilities as those medical centers that receive the lowest score in its SAIL star rating system. Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value Model (SAIL) is a system for summarizing hospital performance within

Veterans Health Administration (VHA). SAIL assesses 25 quality measures in areas such as death rate, complications, and patient satisfaction, as well as overall efficiency and physician capacity at individual VA Medical Centers (VAMCs).

The four immediate steps toward improvement include:

- **Central, national accountable leadership** – The VA has designated Dr. Peter Almenoff, Director of VA's Office of Reporting, Analytics, Performance, Improvement and Deployment (RAPID) Healthcare Improvement Center, to oversee improvement at each of the centers.

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# Jan's Letter

Our Veterans have earned the very best in healthcare. And while there are decent Veteran medical centers in areas of the country, there are many that are just not providing the best, high quality care. In this newsletter, we are pleased to share the Veterans Administration's action plan to produce rapid improvements at the VA's low-performing medical facilities.

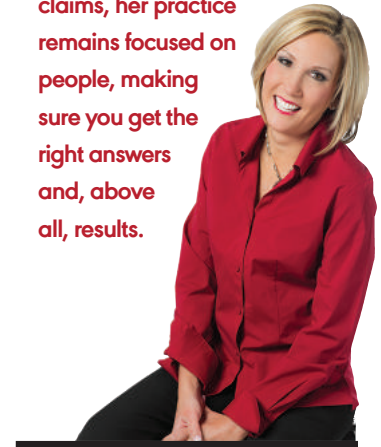
Another important topic in this newsletter is fraud, waste and abuse within the VA system. It is critical to our Veterans that taxpayer dollars and Government resources are not abused or wasted by VA employees, non-employees and high-ranking members of the Government. These are dollars that should go directly to Veteran care. To crack down on the abuses, the Department of Veterans Affairs has formed a partnership

with the U.S. Department of Treasury. Violations will be investigated and prosecuted by the VA Office of Inspector General.

As attorneys, we are watchdogs for the Veterans we serve. If you are having difficulty receiving your benefits, do not hesitate to give us a call. Our areas of practice include VA, Social Security and Personal Injury. It is unfortunate that without representation so many people are not getting the outcomes they deserve. We're here to change that one client at a time.

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

### Rachel Lynn Matson

Rachel Matson is a C-file Reviewer with the Veteran's Affairs Department at Jan Dils, Attorneys at Law. She grew up in Ligonier, Pennsylvania on a farm with three older brothers. She is a graduate of Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA with a BA in Political Science and a minor in Philosophy. Rachel then went on to Duquesne University School of Law in Pittsburgh where she earned her J.D. After law school, she moved to a home near Parkersburg with her fiancé, Tommy, who is a Parkersburg/Marietta Ohio native. Jan Dils is fortunate to have such a talented and compassionate attorney on our team.



"I love the people I work with, who have quickly made Parkersburg feel like a home full of friends, and I am proud of the work we do here to aid our Veterans in getting the support that they deserve."

When Tommy and Rachel aren't working, you can find them outdoors with their Doberman Pinscher, Hagen, or in the kitchen cooking up something new for friends and family.

## Office Inbox

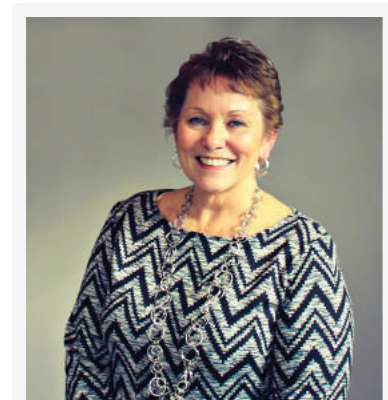
### STAY PLUGGED INTO THE PRACTICE

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.

We have several new faces, and some familiar faces in new places. Join us in welcoming **Macie Tenney** to VA Appeals. Also, **Carrie Russell** and **Beth Pack** are joining our VA Case Management Team.

## Community Spotlight

Prior to our 100th Golden Apple celebration we reached out to our very first winner from 2016, **Mrs. Tammy McKnight**. At the time of her award, she was working as a mathematics teacher for Hamilton Junior High, now Hamilton Middle school. Mrs. McKnight stated that she still remembers that day as if it were yesterday - sitting with her fellow teacher, and friends when her name was announced. She also remembered the student and parent who nominated her. Tammy now works for the Wood County School System. She helps many local teachers adjust their curriculum to better serve students.





# The VA and Department of Treasury Advance in Partnership to Strengthen Prevention of Fraud, Waste and Abuse

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it has formed a partnership with the U.S. Department of Treasury to develop new and innovative tools to combat fraud, waste and abuse, efforts that will help the VA understand and address program risks and create shared solutions for other federal agencies.

“The VA-Treasury partnership demonstrates VA’s commitment to identifying new and innovative ways to seek out fraud, waste and abuse, and ensure every tax dollar given to VA supports Veterans,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “VA’s vast array of programs supporting our critical mission to serve Veterans make the department the ideal choice for this partnership, and will ensure far-reaching outcomes that can be applied by other agencies.”

The projects, which have been underway since October 2017 and are set to be completed by spring 2018, concentrate on the following: identifying where and how VA can learn from industry leaders and bridge gaps in payment processes; creating a comprehensive methodology for identifying fraud risks across VA programs; and building data models to identify potential fraud in one of the VA’s most used Community Care programs. The next step will be



**“The VA-Treasury partnership demonstrates VA’s commitment to identifying new and innovative ways to seek out fraud, waste and abuse, and ensure every tax dollar given to VA supports Veterans”**

for Treasury to produce a government-wide framework to assist other federal agencies in addressing fraud, waste and abuse.

To support the initiative, there is a hotline run by the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) to ensure the proper and efficient use of taxpayer dollars and Government

resources for the care of our Nation’s veterans. The OIG investigates crimes committed against programs and operations of VA by employees and non-employees, as well as allegations of serious violations of policies and procedures by high-ranking members of the Department. This includes misuse of Government resources and official time, preferential treatment, abuse of authority, nepotism, and travel irregularities. Through prosecution, administrative action, and monetary recoveries, these investigations promote integrity, patient safety, efficiency, and accountability.

Source: [www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4006](http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=4006)  
[www.va.gov/oig/about/investigations.asp](http://www.va.gov/oig/about/investigations.asp)

## 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.

ROECTMUP

XAF

HENPO

SIFLE

Answers: computer, fax, phone, files  
 Final Message: HOME OFFICE

*Enjoy your next delicious pizza with a spoon! This crowd-pleasing recipe comes straight from the kitchen of VA C-File Reviewer, Mika Gregg.*



### Ingredients:

- 3 cups low or no-sodium beef broth
  - 1 (28oz. can) petite diced tomatoes
  - 2 cups tomato sauce
  - 1 tsp. dried oregano leaves
  - 1/4 tsp. coarse black pepper
  - 2 Tbsp. olive oil
  - 8 oz. sliced mushrooms (buy them sliced)
  - 1 green bell pepper
  - 1 small onion
  - 4 slices pre-cooked bacon (buy it cooked)
  - 4 oz. sliced pepperoni
  - 1/2 loaf of Italian bread
  - 2 cups grated mozzarella cheese (buy grated)
- Get Ingredients Powered by Chicory

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn on the broiler and position the rack 6-8 inches from the heat source. Put a large pot or Dutch oven on high. Add the broth, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, oregano and black pepper. Stir and cover. When it comes to a simmer, reduce heat to low. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Add the mushrooms, then chopped green peppers. Stir. Next add chopped onions and continue stirring. Then chop and add the bacon and pepperoni. Stir occasionally until onions and peppers are softened. Cut the bread into 4 thick slices and put it in a pan under the broiler to lightly toast. Remove and flip it over. Put 1/4 cup of the cheese onto each bread slice. Return it to under the broiler just until melted and browned in spots, 1-3 minutes. Stir the mushroom mixture into the soup. Ladle into bowls and top each serving with some of the remaining cheese. Serve with the cheese toast.

## Important Veterans Benefits News For Everyone

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*Continued from cover story*

- **Comprehensive analysis and identification of improvement targets** – The VA is employing a new initiative, known as Strategic Action Transformation (STAT), that uses a rigorous and formal approach based on clinical performance indicators to identify vulnerabilities in each low-performing facility and set specific targets for improvement.
- **Provision of national resources for improvement** – The VA's RAPID team of experts will use sophisticated statistical tools to track the progress of improvement against these targets, and, where warranted, will dispatch a team of expert improvement coaches quickly to the medical centers to assist them in meeting the goals.

- **Accountability for results** – The VA's Central Office will review each of the facilities quarterly, and if the facilities fail to make rapid substantial progress in their improvement plan, VA leadership will take prompt action, including changing the leadership of the medical center.

As long-time advocates of our Veterans, Jan Dils monitors actions at the VA closely. We are proud of our ongoing fundraising efforts to support Operation Transportation – a program that provides free bus passes to Veterans in the Mid-Ohio Valley – as well as our participation in Veterans' events. Of course, we are always here to make sure our heroes and their families get the benefits they need and deserve. If you have any questions, concerns or

issues receiving benefits, please do not hesitate to give us a call at **877.526.3457**. We are on your side.

