



*(April 12, 2016)*

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

**Alma L. Lee**  
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing: U.S. Medicine Direct - April Issue**  
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**HCV Update** Hepatitis C management is evolving. **GILEAD** UNBP1694

**U.S. MEDICINE NEWS UPDATE**

**Lack of VA IVF Payment for Urogenital Injured Veterans Called 'Tragic'**



WASHINGTON - Many veterans are unable to have children because of injuries sustained in Iraq and Afghanistan, and advocacy groups are arguing that VA should pay for in-vitro fertilization. Veterans service organizations told lawmakers that the procedure should be funded for veterans with a service-connected condition that requires it. [More](#)  
<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/lack-of-va-ivf-payment-for-urogenital-injured-veterans-called-tragic/>

Ryan Kules

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE APRIL ISSUE

### IOM: VA Should Focus on Gulf War Syndrome Treatment, Not Causes

WASHINGTON - A major scientific panel has recommended that the VA stop looking for the cause of Gulf War illness and focus instead on monitoring deployed veterans and treating the health problems associated with the conflict. Veterans' groups cried foul, however, warning the report will stop research just as studies into the cause of the broad range of symptoms and their treatment are making headway. [More](#)  
<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/iom-va-should-focus-on-gulf-war-syndrome-treatment-not-causes/>

### Caring for Older Women Veterans Presents Unique Challenges

SEATTLE - When it comes to health issues, older female veterans aren't always like other women, according to a series of new studies seeking to determine why. The differences range from lower self-perception of health in those aging veterans to higher smoking rates. Women who had previously served in the U.S. military also had greater declines in cognitive functions, more hip fractures and, for those serving before the Vietnam era, higher all-cause mortality rates. Those findings are detailed in 13 articles by VA researchers and colleagues, recently published in a gerontology journal. [More](#)  
<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/caring-for-older-women-veterans-presents-unique-challenges/>



Gayle Reiber, PhD,  
MPH

### Draft Bill Proposes Abolishing VA Compensation Panels

WASHINGTON - Currently, a panel composed of physicians or dentists recommends starting salaries for those professionals being hired by the VA. A draft bill in the House of Representatives would eliminate the compensation panels, however, and VA officials told lawmakers they support that provision, citing delays in hiring as one reason. [More](#)  
<http://www.usmedicine.com/agencies/department-of-veterans-affairs/draft-bill-proposes-abolishing-va-compensation-panels/>

### Opinion Poll:

[Please click here](#) to participate in this month's U.S. Medicine readership poll.  
**Do you think the VA always pays enough to attract high-quality physicians?**



## From the Editor-in-Chief

**"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile." - Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955).**



Editor-In-Chief, Chester  
"Trip" Buckenmaier III,  
MD, COL (ret.), MC, USA

The interval between my retirement from the Army and my hiring into federal service was one of the most anxious periods of my life. I had other employment opportunities and certainly could have taken my life in a very different direction, but I longed for the feeling of purpose that service to the country provides. For me and - as a [recent letter-to-the-editor](#) so eloquently noted - many other veterans, selfless service is a powerful motivator, and the abrupt loss of that motivation either through retirement or medical discharge can be extremely stressful and life-disrupting. [More](#)

<http://www.usmedicine.com/editor-in-chief/only-a-life-lived-for-others-is-a-life-worthy/>

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