



*(November 9, 2015)*

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: MESSAGE FROM THE VA CHIEF OF STAFF**

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The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a vast organization with a proud history of providing benefits and health care to our Veterans. Since our founding, we have cared for generations of Veterans and their families through a variety of programs and benefits. Please take a moment to see how each Administration and Staff Office in VA has had an impact on Veterans over the years.

1. Before World War II, college was, for the most part, an unreachable dream for the average American. Thanks to the GI Bill, millions of Veterans who would have flooded the job market after the war instead opted for education. In the peak year of 1947, Veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II Veterans had participated in an education or training program.
2. When VA's Home Loan Guaranty program started in 1944, many of the earliest VA-guaranteed loans were not for homes, but were for farming equipment and business inventory, including taxicabs and delivery trucks. More than 20 million loans later, VA is the largest no-down-payment home mortgage program in the Nation, guaranteeing a record 631,000 loans over the past 12 months—up 44 percent from the previous year—and boasting the lowest foreclosure rate in the industry for 25 of the last 28 quarters.

3. VA is the largest provider of health-care training in the United States and maintains more than 7,200 individual affiliation agreements at more than 1,800 educational institutions. Clinical training was provided to more than 120,000 interns, residents, fellows, and students in more than 40 professions in Fiscal Year 2014. VA health-profession educational programs have a major impact on the health-care workforce in VA and deliver a significant percentage of care to Veterans. Over the last 5 years, VA has expanded the mental health pipeline through targeted increases in training positions and approval of additional sites for mental health training, expanded the VA Nursing Academy, developed new residency programs in nursing and other associated health disciplines, and assumed a national leadership role in interprofessional education and collaborative practice.
  
4. For more than 90 years, VA's Research and Development program has improved the lives of Veterans and all Americans through health-care discovery and innovation. Notable VA Research and Development innovations and discoveries (<http://www.research.va.gov/about/history.cfm>) include:
  - 1960 - The first Veteran receives an implantable cardiac pacemaker
  - 1962 - The first long-term, successful kidney transplant is conducted at the Denver VA Medical Center
  - 1973 - Rosalyn S. Yalow receives the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for radioimmunoassay, a way to measure insulin.
  - 1984 - VA researchers led by Jed E. Rose, PhD, develop a transdermal nicotine patch.
  - 1996 - VA researchers find that an implantable insulin pump better controls blood sugar and weight for type 2 diabetes.
  - 2009 - VA researchers find that deep brain stimulation may hold significant benefits for those with Parkinson's disease.
  - 2011 - Developed an artificial lung prototype that mimics the structure of a natural lung and is described as a "significant step toward creating the first truly portable and implantable artificial lung systems."
  
5. National cemeteries were first developed in the United States during the Civil War. Due to mounting war casualties, on July 17, 1862, Congress empowered President Abraham Lincoln, "to purchase cemetery grounds and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." This was the first U.S. legislation to state and solidify the concept of a national cemetery.

Robert L. Nabors II

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ACCESS EMAIL DUE TO THEIR SPECIALTIES.**