



October 2014

YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Dear Jessica,

One of our nation's most sacred promises to veterans is that we will take care of them if they are hurt in battle. But that promise is too often broken. As Veterans Day approaches on Nov. 11, we take a closer look at the issue of veterans' benefits.



THE DOCKET /

[> CHECK OUT OUR BETTER HEALTH CARE](#)

Five Common Errors to Avoid When Filing Claims

Backlog Improves, But Vets Still Struggle for Benefits

Right now more than 240,000 veterans have been waiting longer than 125 days for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to review their initial requests for disability and pension benefits. Meanwhile, the wait is much longer for the additional 280,000 veterans and their families who were denied benefits and filed an appeal. So long in fact, some of them died waiting. Veterans shouldn't risk life and limb on the battlefield only to battle bureaucratic red tape right here at home.

[Read more. >>>](#)



"The common refrain we hear from many veterans is, 'Delay, deny, wait till I die,'" said Rep. Jeff Miller, chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

BY THE NUMBERS /

522,421
Waiting ...

Approximately 522,421 veterans are waiting to have their benefit [claims reviewed](#), down from 833,930 in July 2012. [Average wait time](#): 344 days.

19,500
... Dying

An estimated 19,500 [veterans died](#) while waiting for benefits from the VA in 2012, a sharp increase from 6,400 three years earlier. The VA has since [refused](#) media requests for updated numbers.

NEWSLETTER.

> LATEST NEWS FROM OUR PATIENT SAFETY BLOG

> CHILD SAFETY TIPS AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION FROM OUR CHILD PROTECTION BLOG

> MALPRACTICE A-Z: ANSWERS ON SPECIFIC TOPICS

74% Wrong

The Board of Veterans' Appeals considered 44,300 cases in 2012, overturning 28.4 percent of the VA's initial decisions while sending another 45.8 percent back to the agency because of staff errors [\[PDF\]](#).

BOOKMARK FAVORITES /



Map Shows Claims Backlog Where You Live

Wondering how bad the claims backlog is where you live? This interactive map from The Center of

Investigative Reporting shows real-time backlog data for 58 VA regional offices. [View map.](#)



PBS NewsHour Follows Vets in Fight for Benefits

Just back from combat, vets tell PBS NewsHour about facing a new battle at home: waiting for a year or more

for VA medical claims to be processed. [View video.](#)



VA Videos Feature Step-by-Step Benefits Information

The VA home on YouTube features multiple playlists with how-to videos on the claims process and the full

range of benefits available to veterans and their families. [View benefits playlist.](#)



Odds, Ends and More

And the winner of a free iPod shuffle from last month's Seventh Amendment survey is ... Click below to find out, see the survey results and browse AWESOME reader comments.

[Your turn](#)



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