



A NEW CADENCE

ALIGNING VETERANS' CARE AND BENEFITS IN OREGON



2013 Advisory Committee to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Annual Report to the Governor



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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August 30, 2013

The Honorable John A. Kitzhaber
Governor of Oregon
State Capitol Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Governor Kitzhaber,

As outgoing Chair of the Advisory Committee to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), it is my privilege to present our Annual Report. In reviewing the report, we can be pleased with our work for veterans over the past year, but we also know much work still remains.

For the first time in history, the nation is striving to provide appropriate services, benefits, and outreach to veterans spanning four generations and five major wars. While the statistics on veterans are national in scope, our success in serving veterans continues to be community by community.

We are fortunate to have a vast array of federal and state benefits, but we know our veterans and their families will thrive only if we pursue a larger strategy that can be summed up in one word: partnerships.

ODVA is a natural center of gravity for veterans when they reach out for resources and benefits. In the agency's strategic review going forward, we will take a hard look at how we can strengthen service and benefit delivery, communication and outreach, as well as align essential partnerships. A more focused and coordinated system is the only way to reduce gaps in services and improve outcomes for veterans, their families, and survivors.

While we are proud of our national and state efforts to serve veterans, we recognize no single agency or organization can wholly address the diverse needs of our veterans across areas such as health care, mental health, homelessness, education, and employment. We look forward to continuing to help ODVA connect across state agencies and other diverse partners.

It has been my honor to be the Chair of the Advisory Committee this past year and to serve our veterans and military families. Thank you for the opportunity and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns regarding Oregon's efforts.

Sincerely,

Kevin Owens
Advisory Committee Chair



A NEW CADENCE

ALIGNING VETERANS' CARE AND BENEFITS IN OREGON



VETERAN COMMUNITY

Throughout Oregon's history, veterans returning home after serving their country have significantly contributed to building our communities, advancing our economic development goals, and strengthening families. These men and women are proven, trained, committed, patriotic, community-oriented Americans.

Although the challenges all veterans face when returning home and in the decades that follow are well known, many veterans do not immediately seek the help of the government until they have exhausted their own capabilities and resources. Since veterans began returning home after WWII, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) has stood as the center of gravity when they do reach for the assistance and resources their service entitled them to. In 2012, this assistance equated to more than \$1.9 billion in federal dollars being drawn into the state in the form of veteran health care, disability and pension payments, education benefits, employment resources, and burial benefits to name a few.

Estimates vary, however, according to the National Center of Veterans Analysis and Statistics and the 2005 American Community Survey, the approximate number of veterans who call the state of Oregon home ranges from 328,000 to 350,000. More than 7% of Oregon veterans are females, 7.3% are minorities and 28.5% have varying degrees of disability.

As the Armed Forces begin to draw down their combat ready forces, the VA's work is just beginning.

The service era demographics of the state's veterans are diverse: 14.2% Gulf War veterans (including Iraq and Afghanistan), 37.1% Vietnam era veterans, 12.5% Korean War veterans, 15.5% WWII veterans, and 20.7% peacetime veterans. For the first time in history, the Agency is working with war veterans spanning 4 generations and 5 major wars, and striving to provide appropriate services, outreach and benefits to match the needs of this expansive group. Also of consideration is more than 54% of veterans who live in rural areas of Oregon, making delivery of and access to services difficult.

Nearly 31,000 Oregonians have served in-theater in the most recent Gulf Wars. Current war era veterans pose a new challenge to our traditional means of outreach and engagement, in that they have a different worldview, communicate differently, and are often very busy getting reestablished. As the Armed Forces begin to draw down their combat ready forces, the VA's work is just beginning. In the next decade alone, ODVA anticipates filling nearly 60% more disability claims directly related to this war – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, orthopedic, and respiratory issues – that develop and become acute years after service.

Forty years following the end of the Vietnam War, the Agency has seen a heavy increase in disability claims filed on behalf of Vietnam vets due to triggered responses to the current wars and the manifestation of acute diseases brought on by exposure to Agent Orange, an herbicide used to clear jungles in Vietnam. In 2010, three additional major

conditions were identified as being associated to the exposure to herbicides: non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, Parkinson’s disease, and B-cell leukemia. This exposure is also linked to fatal and chronic conditions like Hodgkin’s disease, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer, heart disease, and Type 2 diabetes.

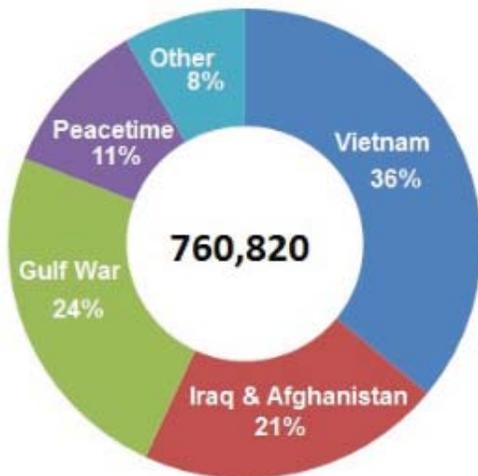
As the WWII and Korean War veterans age, the Agency continues to experience a spike in claims for medical care, long-term care, and burial benefits by service members of these conflicts. Assistance for their widows has also increased significantly, and ODVA works closely with the federal VA to ensure this generation’s claims are expedited. Unfortunately,

since this generation has not typically accessed their benefits in the past, they have unknowingly become victims of veteran benefit scams aimed at their Aid and Attendance benefit. ODVA identified this trend, raised it to the federal level, and has worked closely with DOJ to shut down companies who prey on our most vulnerable veterans in Oregon.

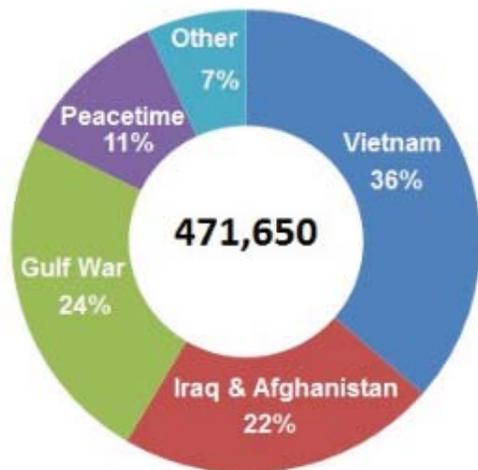
To Oregon veterans, earned veteran benefits assist them in being more productive and self-sufficient citizens. In fact, the median annual income for veterans is \$31,655 -- 30% more than the nonveteran population. Disability compensation is awarded for both physical and mental injuries incurred while serving their country, which helps pay for normal monthly expenses. Federal VA health care ensures veterans will not need to use state resources, like the Oregon Health Plan. Education benefits increase the number of college graduates and vocationally trained people in the work force. Severely disabled veterans receive significant compensation, which ensures they will not need unemployment, food stamps, Medicaid, or other state programs.

VBA Claims Inventory by Era

Total Pending Claims



Total Backlogged Claims



Source: Dept. Veterans Affairs, 8/24/13
 Backlog: Claims pending longer than 125 days

DELIVERY OF VETERAN BENEFITS

Despite the national attention on the Federal VA Claims backlog, in 2012 Oregon was ranked number seven in the nation for the amount of disability compensation it obtains on average for its veterans. Oregon has been in the top 10 in this category for more than a decade and is considered a model state for its veteran advocacy program.

According to the USDVA’s FY12 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDx) Report, Oregon veterans received more than \$924 million in Compensation and Pension Payments, \$120.6 million in Education and Readjustment benefit, and more than \$784 million in Health Care. Nearly 1 in 10 Oregonians are veterans and approximately a third of the veterans in the state receive one or more federal benefits.

The core mission of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs is to connect veterans to these federal benefits, deliver state funded benefits, and partner with other agencies extending benefits and programs that assist veterans.

AGENCY PROGRAMS AND DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Administration

Last year was one of change for the Agency. With this change came new leadership; expanding relationships within the veteran community; and an opportunity to re-evaluate key operations, policies, and outcomes to better serve Oregon veterans.

In February 2013, Cameron Smith was nominated by Governor Kitzhaber and later confirmed by the Senate as the new Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs after long-time director Jim Willis announced his retirement, following approximately 10 years of service to the Agency. The Advisory Committee held a special meeting and unanimously voted to support the nomination.

Historically, the Agency has been one of the longest tenured agencies in state government. In this last year, the Agency has lost nearly 20% of its staff and key leadership to retirements. In November 2012, Edward VanDyke was selected by then Director Jim Willis as the Agency's Acting Deputy Director and confirmed as the Agency's Deputy Director in April 2013.

While the loss of key leadership has presented some immediate challenges within the Agency, it has also presented an opportunity to begin identifying systemic improvements that can be made to ensure the best in benefit delivery for future generations of veterans, their families, and survivors.

Following are some key Agency program and department performance highlights, progress on important veteran initiatives, and some observations that impact plans for the future.

Veteran Home Loans

As the economy slowly recovers from the past five years of recession, the ORVET Home Loan interest rates again have become the lowest in the state, which in turn makes the program attractive to its niche market. The Agency believes that the program can make between \$35 to \$50 million of loans per year under the right conditions and has begun implementing a new strategic plan to that end.

The Agency has taken several actions to expand and enhance the ORVET Home Loan Program. These steps have included:

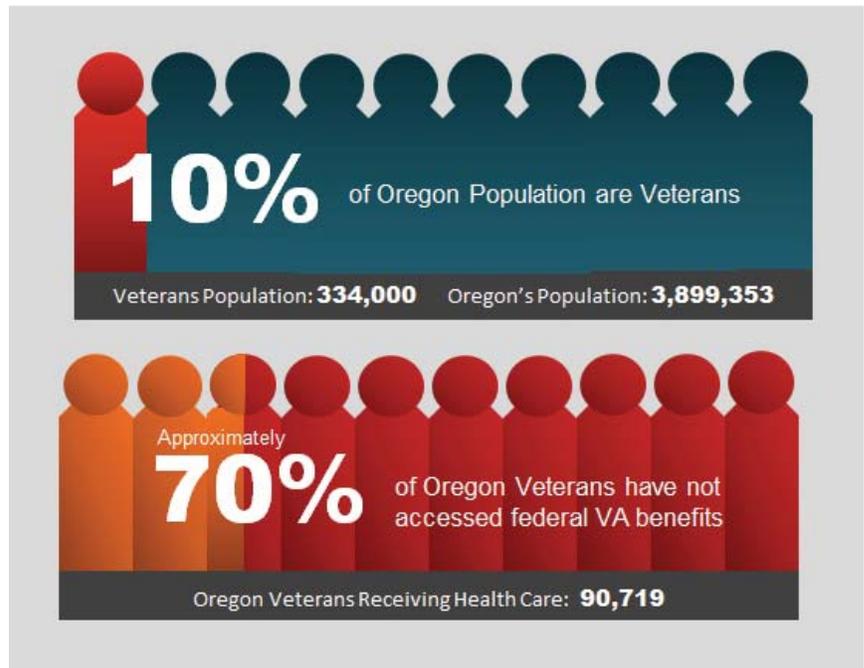
- Legislation to expand the number of loans allowed in a lifetime from two to four.
- Legislation to allow the loan program to take advantage of the USDVA Home Loan Guarantee Program.
- Administrative Rule changes to align borrowing standards with statute, specifically allowing every ORVET Home Loan to be made up to the current lending limit of \$417,000.
- Working toward implementation of credit reporting.
- Implementation of a new strategic vision and plan for the Home Loan Department.

The success of the Home Loan Program in large part defines the financial success of the Agency in that the vast majority of the Agency is funded through those Other Fund dollars. The Agency is confident in this new direction and excited about the changes made in this past year and implementation of strategies in the coming year.

Veteran Services

In an effort to improve timeliness of claims adjudication, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) will implement electronic claims filing for veterans seeking VA benefits. The portal known as e-Benefits has gone online and veterans can use that portal to file for benefits, check the status of their benefit claims, contact the VA, and more.

Further, the USDVA (in partnership with the Department of Defense) has implemented what is called Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) so that out processing service members can file a VA disability claim even before leaving the service. The intent again is to speed up the process of benefits delivery.



Both these programs have a significant impact on veterans' benefits advocacy and representation in Oregon. As more service members and veterans file their claims without the help of an advocate, the advocate's role may change. State and County veteran service officers accredited by VA to represent veterans in their claims before the VA may see less initial claims and an increase in appeals of those claims.

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs is adjusting to these changes by focusing on the following strategies:

- Implementation of a cloud-based claims management system used by all State and County veteran service officers that will allow claims to be "packaged" and submitted electronically to the Portland VA Regional Office and the various VA hub locations.
- Implementation of new outreach strategies focused on meeting veterans where they are instead of driving business to government offices. A key focus will be Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, as well as Vietnam veterans who never have filed for VA benefits.
- Increased cooperation and coordination with traditional and non-traditional strategic partners, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Human Services, and ad hoc veteran advocate groups to locate veterans who have never filed for benefits.

The Agency suspects there will be some growing pains as VA implements its new systems; however, in the next three to five years the veterans' benefits system may, indeed, be better for it.

Veterans Homes

The Oregon Veterans' Home maximizes the opportunity to bring federal funding for care of seniors into Oregon. Through our nation's promise to care for its veterans, the Oregon Veterans' Home offers a veteran benefit that not only costs significantly less than other private nursing care facilities or in-home care arrangements where significant care is required, but also employs federal benefit dollars to flow into Oregon through reimbursement for cost of care, VA healthcare, and grants to facilitate safety and health upgrades to the Home.

In recent years, attention has increasingly turned to ways to improve clinical decision making, patient safety, and quality of care. In 2013, the Home implemented software to facilitate an electronic health records system and has submitted a federal grant for facility improvements such as a wandering patient management system for the memory-care unit. The Veterans' Home has also partnered with the Veterans Health Administration to share electronic medical records. These improvements and upgrades should reduce medication errors, better monitor diseases and other health risks, and help ensure a safe and secure environment for residents that also allows maximum freedom for the residents.

At the beginning of 2013, the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles, was named one of the top-rated nursing homes in Oregon. U.S. News & World Report released its fifth annual Best Nursing Homes ratings on February 26, highlighting the top nursing homes in each state and nearly 100 major metropolitan areas. The ratings cover more than 15,000 nursing homes nationwide.



Oregon's second Veterans' Home, currently being constructed in Lebanon, is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2014.

In the fall of 2014, it is anticipated that the second 150-bed Veterans' Home, currently being built in Linn County (Lebanon), will open. During the 2013 Regular Session, the Legislature supported a request to help fill a funding gap for the local-matching funds required to build the Home. An unanticipated increase in project costs was due to a change in the federal design requirements for Veterans' Homes. The need for additional funding was essential to complete the project. The state met the local match increase by approving \$4 million in net bond proceeds.

OUTREACH

One of the biggest steps forward this year was in creating the ability to "push" veteran information from source to end user in a matter of a few key strokes. The implementation of email subscriptions, a news blog, partnerships with county veteran service offices to build CVSO websites, focused social media marketing, and a 40-page Veterans' Benefit

magazine (featuring federal and state benefit information) increased outreach to a measurable and impressive 62,000 veterans per month.

As the demographics of the veteran community continue to change, the Agency is committed to managing multiple outreach methods that are appropriate to the generations the Agency serves—including continued support for homeless veterans at stand downs, education and employment opportunities at job fairs, regular visits to community correctional facilities to meet with incarcerated veterans to assist with benefits upon release, and partnerships with organizations assisting with service members transition back into civilian life. A consistent focus of the Agency’s core mission is to meet veterans where they are and assist them in obtaining benefits.

Two major partnerships with ODOT and DHS to share veteran information will be implemented in 2013. Together, our agencies will build effective models that increase awareness of reaching veterans to deliver earned benefits.

LOOKING AHEAD: AGENCY STRATEGIC VISION

As the Agency looks forward, we have some very strong beliefs about how we must approach the enormous responsibilities and opportunities of being the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs. It starts with actively managing two timeframes: the present and future.

The present has tremendous and immediate impact: serving our current veterans who served in war eras spanning WWII to Afghanistan, using the existing benefits and systems in place.

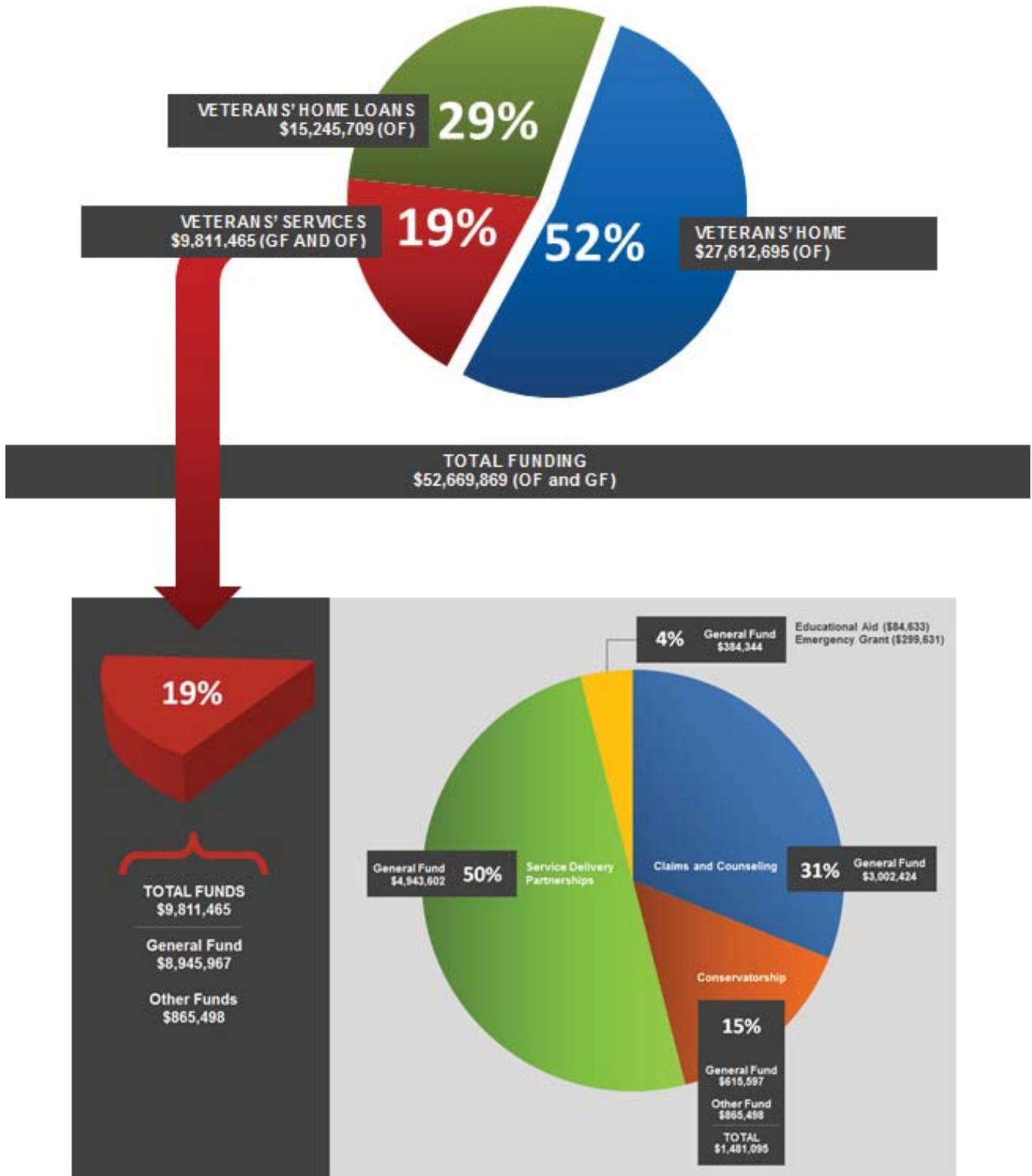
However, as the Agency is the natural center of gravity for veterans when they reach out for benefits and resources, we will be taking a hard look at our internal and external strategies impacting service delivery and begin to identify systematic improvements to strengthen service and benefit delivery, communication and outreach, as well as align essential partnership. A more focused and coordinated system is the only way to reduce gaps in services and improve outcomes for veterans, their families, and survivors.

Our job right now is to recognize and create the future; set a new cadence and align veterans’ care and benefits in Oregon.



APPENDIX

2013-15 Legislatively Adopted Budget
Agency Program Descriptions
State and Federal Benefit Information
Advisory Committee



OREGON VETERANS' HOME

Care at the Oregon Veterans' Home is an earned benefit available to veterans, their spouses, and parents who had a child die while serving in the United States Armed Forces. To be eligible for this benefit, qualifying veterans must have served as defined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (Federal VA) and received an honorable discharge from their branch of service.

Residents receive 24-hour, long-term skilled nursing, Alzheimer's and other memory-related, and rehabilitative care by a nursing staff whose skills and understanding have been enhanced to meet the unique and special needs of veterans. The Home's nursing team is complemented by physical, occupational, and speech therapists who provide specific physician-ordered services to help residents meet their maximum rehabilitative potential.

In addition, the Home offers residents engaging daily activities, transportation to and from community outings and doctor's appointments, customized nutrition based on individual resident needs by a dietitian, high quality meals prepared by the Home's full-time chef, and an environment that honors and remembers veterans. Most importantly, the Home enables what most veterans desire – a home where they are understood and are among other veterans.

ORVET HOME LOAN PROGRAM

Wanting to provide a benefit to World War II veterans returning home, Oregon citizens voted in 1945 to create a Veterans' Home Loan Program, establishing it in Article XI-A of the Oregon Constitution. Identified as the ORVET Home Loan Program, this historically self-sufficient program provides low-interest rate mortgages on single-family, owner-occupied homes to qualified veterans.

Oregon is one of only five states in the nation that has been grandfathered under federal tax law to offer a state veteran home loan program; the other four grandfathered states include Alaska, California, Texas, and Wisconsin. The concept behind the veteran home loan program is that these states want to provide an enhanced housing benefit to their veterans for their past service and sacrifice. Historically, this enhanced housing benefit has generally resulted in significantly lower home loan rates than are normally available in the marketplace and have been achieved through the issuance of tax-free, state general obligation bonds called Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bonds (QVMB). QVMB's have limitations on how they can be used; most notably, borrowers must apply for a loan within 25 years of discharge from military service, and funds cannot be used for refinancing. ORVET also has access to limited amounts of less restrictive bond monies from which it can also make loans to veterans who apply for a loan after 25 years from date of discharge. It is this money being used to finance loans made to Oregon's veterans that were made eligible as a result of the passage of Measure 70 in 2010. The ORVET program offers financing up to the Fannie Mae limit, currently \$417,000.

The ORVET program has provided more than \$7.7 billion of low-interest loans to more than 334,000 veterans, and, at one time, the ODVA was one of the largest lenders in the state with a portfolio of more than 140,000 loans. In addition to originating loans, the ORVET program services all of its loans. The benefit to the veteran of ODVA servicing its own loans is the enhanced customer service provided to the veterans and their families, as well as the flexibility and ability to restructure loans if the veteran borrower experiences financial hardship.

The program has been most robust when large numbers of veterans returned to Oregon, such as after World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. However, since those conflicts, warfare has changed, and large "draft" armies are not being deployed--which means large numbers of veterans are not returning to Oregon seeking loans. In recent years, that fact, coupled with the current housing market recession, high unemployment, low conventional mortgage rates, and the

inability to legally use QVMB monies for refinancing, has resulted in a significant portfolio reduction in this program. The portfolio as of June 30, 2013 was approximately 2,057 loans totaling \$200 million.

VETERAN SERVICES CLAIMS AND COUNSELING

The Veterans' Services Division (VSD) at the ODVA performs a key component of the Agency's core mission – providing advocacy and benefits to veterans, their dependents, and survivors. The program provides benefits counseling, claims representation and prosecution, conservatorship services, educational assistance, emergency financial assistance, and other service delivery partnerships across the state. VSD is the front line for all veteran benefits in the State of Oregon, ensuring that veterans obtain all the benefits to which they are entitled as a result of their service in the United States Armed Forces.

VETERANS' CLAIMS AND COUNSELING ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (Federal VA) benefit system actually is a legal system. In order to qualify for benefits, veterans must file a claim against the United States proving they are eligible for these benefits through the submission of legal, military, and medical evidence.

ODVA employs federally accredited and state certified Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) who are subject matter experts in Federal VA law (Chapter 38 United States Code and Chapter 38 Code of Federal Regulations) and are allowed to practice by taking Power of Attorney for veterans seeking benefits. These VSOs represent veterans, their dependents, and survivors before the Federal VA in their claims and appeals. With its County Veteran Service Officer and National Service Officer partners, ODVA provides claims and counseling advocacy and representation to Oregon's veterans, resulting in more than 32,000 claims filed on their behalf during 2011. Currently, ODVA holds Power of Attorney for nearly 70,000 Oregon veterans.

In addition to representing veterans, ODVA's Portland office also is the submission point for all claims under ODVA Power of Attorney. This office inputs, catalogs, provides quality assurance, and liaisons with the Federal VA on all claims--as well as represents veterans during various stages of appeal hearings.

COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS (CVSOS) PROGRAM

ODVA's statewide partnership with counties began in 1947 when the legislature appropriated money to aid counties in an effort to promote services to veterans on a local level. Today it is an effective network of trained VSOs, with 34 of 36 counties opting to have a County Veteran Service Officer.

CVSOs are not supervised by ODVA; however, the agency provides training, certification, accreditation, counsel, and outreach to the CVSOs. The vast majority of CVSO appeal cases also are handled by the Portland ODVA staff.

NATIONAL VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS (VSOS) PROGRAM

ODVA partners with national veterans' service organizations in Oregon. National VSOs provide the same veteran benefit and claims representation as VSOs. Currently, the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Military Order of the Purple Heart participate in this partnership.

CERTIFICATION, TRAINING, AND OUTREACH

ODVA is legally responsible for the training, certification, and accreditation of all VSOs and CVSOs. The agency holds initial onsite training for all new CVSOs, as well as two semi-annual conferences a year, conducting training on the latest in legal, medical, and Federal VA process information. The agency also conducts extensive outreach to veterans and partner organizations.

CONSERVATORSHIP

When veterans are deemed by a judge or the Federal VA to be incompetent to manage their own finances, ODVA is appointed to provide conservatorship services, which include managing all assets for the veteran as fiduciary. The agency currently has 153 clients under conservatorship and will soon be accepting new clients as the Representative Payee (which is a program in which the Agency will act in a more limited capacity to pay the bills of these veterans).

Educational Aid - Educational Aid is a state benefit that provides veterans \$150 a month for a full-time student and \$100 a month for a part-time student who has no other military or veteran education benefits. While the monthly stipend may seem insignificant, for a student veteran the money provides funds for monthly bills, school expenses, or other needs.

VETERANS' EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Emergency Aid offers a one-time grant to veterans who have emergency needs. Examples include a veteran whose car needs repair and without this repair cannot work or a homeless veteran who obtains a job, but needs help with rent and deposits for a place to stay. The key is sustainability; the veteran must be able to sustain their finances after receiving the bridge funding via this grant.

FEDERAL BENEFITS AND PROGRAM LIST

Compensation and Pension
Education/Readjustment
Medical
Vet Centers
Community Based Outreach Clinics
Medical Centers
VA Crisis Hotline
Burial Benefits
Survivor Benefits (Dependent Educational Assistance, Pensions)
Homelessness Resources
Home Loan Guaranty's and Adaptive Housing Grants
Adaptive Assistance for Service Connected Disabled Veterans

STATE OF OREGON VETERAN BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS

ODOT Medical Brokerage System
Dependent Tuition Waivers
In-state Tuition
Oregon Property Tax Exemptions and Deferrals
Veteran Preference and Interviews
Direct Professional Licensing
Veteran Employment Representatives
Veteran Designation on Driver's License
Veteran Recognition License Plates
Veteran Courts and Dockets
Recreational Passes

As a veteran community, we can be very proud of the support our veterans and military families received from the Oregon Legislature and Governor Kitzhaber during the 2013 Regular Session. Across the state, service organizations, agencies, and veterans in the community actively worked to support the passage of a number of legislative bills impacting education, employment, and further enhancing state benefits for veterans and their dependents.

Below is a full review of veteran-related legislation passed during the 2013 Regular Session.

VETERAN SERVICES

HB2206B allows money that would normally be dispersed to counties to provide county veteran services to be retained by the Director of Veterans' Affairs to provide veterans' services if the county does not have a County Veteran Service Officer.

HB2633 defines "honorable conditions" with regard to honorable discharge status in rules adopted by Department of Veterans Affairs.

HJM9 urges Congress to change funding of veterans' health care from a discretionary entitlement to a permanent and direct entitlement.

HJM1 urges Congress to overturn United States Department of Veterans Affairs regulation prohibiting the use of service or therapy dogs for veterans with emotional and mental disabilities.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

SB34A increases the number of home loans veterans may receive or assume from Department of Veterans Affairs from two to four loans over a lifetime.

SB35 modifies the maximum loan-to-value limit on home and farm loans made by Department of Veterans' Affairs.

HB2417A uses a portion of money collected through document recording fees to assist Oregon veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and expands Oregon's supply of homeownership housing for low and very low income veterans and families of veterans.

OUTREACH

SB762A directs Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs to create and coordinate a public information campaign to prevent suicide by veterans.

HB2421B and HB 2422 partners DHS and ODOT with ODVA to identify veterans who may be eligible for state and federal veteran benefits.

EMPLOYMENT

HB2037A encourages quick professional licensing for military spouses who move to Oregon by requiring certain regulatory boards to issue authorization to practice within Oregon.

SB1 requires employers to offer paid or unpaid time off on Veterans Day to employees who are veterans of the Armed Forces. This bill does provide exceptions for employers.

EDUCATION

HB2158B directs Oregon public universities and community colleges to charge nonresident veterans who are pursuing undergraduate studies tuition and fees no greater than the Oregon resident rate. Veterans must establish Oregon residency within 1 year of enrollment. This bill also extends a tuition waiver at Oregon universities for dependents of recipients of the Purple Heart after Sept. 11, 2001.

RECREATION BENEFITS

HB2252 allows non-resident uniformed service members to hunt or fish in Oregon for the same cost as an Oregon resident.

RECOGNITION AND HONOR

HCR3 recognizes Korean veterans for their service during the Vietnam War.

HCR4 honors Neil Swarthout for heroic acts as United States Navy pilot.

SCR13 honors Kenneth Allen Jernstedt, 1917-2013.

HB2708B directs the Department of Transportation to erect and maintain Fallen Hero roadside memorial sign for individuals killed in line of duty or who died as result of wounds received in action while serving in the Armed Forces of United States.

HB3014A requires public charter schools to make time available for salutation of the United States flag once per week and requires that a United States flag be displayed in each classroom.

HCR11 commends Brigadier General Julie A. Bentz on being the first female officer in the history of the Oregon Army National Guard to achieve the rank of brigadier general.

HCR23 recognizes the service and sacrifices of atomic veterans.

SB461 provides that Interstate 84 in Oregon shall be known as Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway.

SB832A designates the second Sunday of each August as Spirit of '45 Day.

HB3494A directs the Department of Transportation (ODOT) to erect and maintain the roadside memorial sign for Tyrone Woods on Oregon Route 213, near milepost 2 and directs ODOT to install and maintain the Fallen Hero roadside memorial sign for Adam Buyes, Eric McKinley, and Tyler Troyer on Highway 22, near milepost 20.

CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

HB2083B permits service members called into active service to suspend and reinstate telecommunications, internet, television, and health spa services without excess charges.

LEGAL

HB2433A prohibits court from considering a person's disability when awarding child custody or parenting time in domestic relations proceedings, unless it is shown by clear and convincing evidence that it would not be in the best interests of the child to award sole or joint custody. Directs court to only consider disability if likely to endanger child's health, safety, or welfare.

HCR24 expresses support for the creation of Veterans Treatment Court in all judicial districts.

SB124A allows courts to consider defendant's veteran status at sentencing for the purposes of mitigation, but does not mandate it.

SB125B directs agencies in a contested case hearing to comply with the Service member's Civil Relief Act by giving notice to parties of the rights of active duty service members and include with the notice a statement of the service member's right to postpone the proceedings. Also requires the agency to include with the statement the right of the service member to contact the Oregon State Bar and the Oregon Military Department with their respective phone numbers and the e-mail address of the United States Armed Forces Legal Assistance Locator website.

SB32 establishes the Oregon Code of Military Justice as law governing state militia.

SJM1 urges Congress to develop mechanisms that provide adequate notice to states in which persons convicted in military courts of sex crimes plan to reside.

Since the Advisory Committee was established in 1945, it has held a distinctive and fundamental role as advisors to the Director of ODVA. Advisory Committee members include:

Kevin Owens, Chair, North Bend
Irv Fletcher, Woodburn
Dennis Guthrie, Redmond
Al Herrera, Beaverton
Ryan Howell, Albany
Michael Jones, Ontario
Trisa Kelly, Portland
Gerard Lorang, Portland
Mary Mayer, Portland

VETERANS AFFAIRS ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

This annual report covers operations and key actions of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. The report is issued in compliance with ORS 406.220 and contains information selected by appointed members of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA).