

Scott Walker, Governor  
John A. Scocos, Secretary



**STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

201 West Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7843  
Madison, WI 53707-7843  
Phone: (608) 266-1311  
Toll-free: 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387)  
Fax: (608) 267-0403  
Email: WisVets@dva.wisconsin.gov  
Website: www.WisVets.com

July 17, 2015

**WDVA Bulletin No. 1029**

**TO: County Veterans Service Offices**

**SUBJECT: Internal Policy Changes/Information**

The internal office policy changes listed below took effect on April 22, 2015.

Accreditation Training: The next WDVA Bureau of Claims (BOC) Accreditation training is being planned for February or March of 2016 in Milwaukee.

Privacy Protected Information: The BOC has updated our Privacy Act procedures to comply with those used by the Veterans Administration. These procedures are outlined below.

Release of Veteran-Claimant Information To other Accredited Representatives: Similar to Regional Office procedures, the BOC will only release information (by telephone or encrypted emails) to those CVSO and CVSO staff who are officially "accredited" for VA purposes. If a CVSO office does not have an accredited representative, the Claims Officer will not be able to discuss or provide any information *specific* to the pending claim. If present in your office, the WDVA Claims Officer can speak directly to the claimant (after proper verification of identity using established VA protocol).

Identification Protocol: When answering questions or inquiries by phone, the WDVA Claims Officers will be following the same *Identification Protocol* used by the VA. Under this protocol, once it has been determined that the caller is entitled to receive protected information, the claims officer must ask the following additional questions: Veteran's Claim or Social Security Number; Veteran's Full Name; Branch of Service. BOC staff will be required to document any telephone call or in person visit by completing a Report of Contact and entering the information in the comments section of the VIMS record. This includes calls from a veteran or CVSO to check on the status of a claim.

Third Party Release Documents: Any CVSO or Staff can contact our office for general information on VA benefits. However, in order to discuss case-specific information, you must hold accreditation with WDVA. The NACVSO-1 or other third party releases will no longer be required to communicate with other WDVA accredited representatives (including accredited CVSO and Staff). Additionally, the VA Form 21-0845 will no longer be accepted by the BOC. VA Form 21-0845 was created to allow VBA to release specified information normally protected under privacy provisions to a family member or other designated person. The VA Form 21-0845 only allows for third party release when the contact is directly with the VA. The VA Form 21-0845 does not authorize release of information between a third party and the WDVA.

Fax Messages: The BOC will accept fax messages; however, it cannot fax a veteran's information to others. Document sharing and transmission will only be accomplished by encryption and scanning of documents within the VA.gov system.

Information Management (IT) Assistance: CVSO offices were provided an email from Ron Cox, VA information Officer, dated Feb 4, 2015, regarding new procedures at the USDVA in order to obtain assistance for computer support. WDVA BOC is unable to provide IT support to CVSO offices. You can contact Mr. Cox by e-mail at: [Ronald.cox@va.gov](mailto:Ronald.cox@va.gov). You may also contact him by phone at 414-902-5613.

PIV Cards: WDVA BOC has been notified by the USDVA that, in a few months, all personnel working claims must have an issued PIV card in order to use the Claims system. If you have not applied for or received a PIV card, please contact the VA Milwaukee Regional Office (Gus Sparangis: [Gus.Sparangis@va.gov](mailto:Gus.Sparangis@va.gov) or 414-902-5051; or Lori Tucek: [Lori.Tucek@va.gov](mailto:Lori.Tucek@va.gov) or 414-902-5067).

Changes to the VA Compensation & Pension System: Accredited CVSOs and staff have the ability to access the VA's Compensation Service Intranet Home Page. The VA's Intranet Page contains valuable information on policy, procedures, quality and business management. It is highly recommended that you subscribe to and/or regularly review this page. The link for access to this page is: <http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/bl/21/index.htm>

Encrypted Messages Other than VA: The BOC is unable to accept encrypted messages other than those associated with the VA.gov system (such as Zix Corp). Therefore, all CVSO's and accredited staff are highly encouraged to register for an e-mail account through va.gov.

Encryption – Use of Microsoft Lync: In addition to being able to accept encrypted messages, as referenced above, obtaining an e-mail account through va.gov allows for access to the "Microsoft Lync" program. Microsoft Lync is an alternate source of *secure communication* between network users (through same-time instant messaging). Both CVSO's and BOC Service Officers can log into the network and use Microsoft Lync to communicate with one another. Thus, you can now use instant messages to contact the BOC. **On June 1, 2015, the BOC requested Microsoft Lync access for all accredited users with a network account.** Access was granted for all CVSO's accredited with WDVA as of June 1, 2015. Please note that you must have your va.gov email set up in order to utilize the Microsoft Lync system.

VA Voice: The VA Regional Office in Milwaukee is now publishing a quarterly newsletter. The Change Management Analyst at VA has indicated that he plans to distribute a .pdf copy to all CVSO's beginning with the summer edition. You can find the Spring VA Voice on the News & History page of VA's intranet site: [http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/ro/milwaukee/news\\_history.htm](http://vbaw.vba.va.gov/ro/milwaukee/news_history.htm).

Incomplete Claims Packets: When an incomplete or incorrect claims package is received from a CVSO, the WDVA Claims Officer will initially attempt to rectify the situation by phone. Incomplete or incorrect claims that cannot be corrected in this manner will be returned to the CVSO office by mail. A cover sheet (identifying the error) has been created and will be sent with all incomplete packets. If the claims packet is time sensitive (end of month), the BOC staff will scan the evidence and return only the incorrect documents (by mail).

End of Month Claims: Our office must submit all claims to the VA by 3:00 p.m. on the last workday of the month. In order to ensure that claims are timely filed with the Regional Office, it is being asked that end of month claims be mailed and/or faxed to our office by 1:00 p.m. on the last workday of the month. WDVA cannot guarantee that claims submitted after the 1:00 p.m. deadline will be processed for end of month filing.

Although not routinely recommended, claims received by a CVSO after the 1:00 p.m. deadline may be faxed directly to the Evidence Intake Center in Janesville, Wisconsin at 1-844-822-5246 or 608-373-6690.

WDVA Madison Offering CLE: VA Regulations require the completion of qualifying **Continuing Law Education** (CLE) as a condition of accreditation. The WDVA Central Office in Madison is committed to providing CLE to both CVSO's and their staff on any issues related to: representation before VA; claims procedures; basic eligibility for VA benefits; right to appeal; disability compensation; VA Computer Programs. You are invited to request training (our office or yours) on any topic in the above-cited areas. To request individual or group training on a specific topic, please send an e-mail to Ken Grant, Division Administrator, at [Ken.Grant@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Ken.Grant@dva.wisconsin.gov). You may also contact him by phone at 608-267-7207.

New: Claims Bureau - CVSO Tool Box: We are creating a Claims Bureau CVSO Tool Box which will contain a variety of tools that should assist you and your staff in regard to providing services to veterans through the VA accreditation process. A separate email through WDVA Gov Delivery will initially go out to the CVSOs providing the location of the tools box with various tools. As we find more tools updates will go out through our email system. We hope the tool box will be helpful as a place to locate the tools and for availability when staff turn-over occurs. The Tool Box will include some of the following tools: Instructions on Microsoft Lync, Power Point Presentations and a FAQ sheet on VA's SEP Program (Stakeholder Enterprise Program) and VBMS (Veterans Benefits Management Program), YouTube hyperlinks for videos on both SEP and VBMS, and more.