



TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

Contact Information

Duncan McGhee
1700 N. Congress, Suite 800
Austin, Texas 78711-2277
512-936-6677 / Fax 512-475-2395
duncan.mcgee@tvc.state.tx.us

Press Release

For Immediate Release: August 1, 2011

Release No. 201100801-11

Governor's Initiative to Reduce VA Backlog Ends in Success: More than 17,000 Cases Sent to the VA for Action

AUSTIN – The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) announced the final numbers from a successful initiative by Governor Rick Perry to assist Texas Veterans who have had their claims for monetary benefits pending with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regional offices in Waco and Houston. Since November 2009, special Claims Processing Assistance Teams (CPATs) at TVC returned to the VA 17,325 cases ready for decision or award action from the VA backlog of Veteran applications for federal benefits.

Governor Rick Perry launched the CPAT project in November of 2009 to help address the backlog of more than 39,000 pending disability and health benefit claims in Texas. As of Friday, July 15, all the funding for the CPATs provided by Governor Perry was officially exhausted.

“While we can never fully thank the brave men and women of our armed forces, ensuring they receive the services and benefits they deserve is one way of showing our gratitude for their selfless sacrifice to protect freedom around the world,” Gov. Perry said.

“Alleviating the claims backlog helps our veterans have a smoother transition back into civilian life with their families and in our communities, and I’m proud of the work by the Texas Veterans Commission and the Claims Processing Assistance Teams to address this important issue.”

After the governor announced his initiative, the CPATs immediately began by streamlining the evidence gathering process, normally the most time-consuming stage in the entire VA claims process. TVC counselors directly contacted veterans and health care providers to gather the evidence necessary for the claim to be considered and processed by the VA.

“Our strong partnership with the VA and our successful track record of working on special initiatives with them was crucial in helping these veterans and their families,” says Thomas Palladino, Executive Director for the Texas Veterans Commission.

“Expediting these claims meant Texas Veterans can have their claims considered and may now receive their much needed benefits, rather than continue continuing to await action due to the growing backlog of Veterans claims.”

Claims backlogs had delayed decisions on veterans' disability compensation and pension claims, causing physical and economic hardship for veterans and their families.

"Governor Perry's quick and decisive action ensured these 17,325 cases would receive the attention they merit. We thank Governor Perry for expanding our capacity to help these deserving veterans," Palladino added.

For more information about the Texas Veterans Commission, visit www.TexasVeteransCommission.org.

-- ### --