

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

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Jared Polis
Governor

Major General
Michael A. Loh
The Adjutant General

October 1, 2019

Senator Dominick Moreno
Chair, Joint Budget Committee
200 East 14th Avenue, 3rd Floor
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Senator Moreno,

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is pleased to submit its FY 2019-20 response to Request for Information (RFI) #1 which reads as follows:

1. By Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Executive Director's Office; and Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Executive Director and Army National Guard – The Departments are requested to explore further the potential benefits to veterans and the State of a pilot program to identify and conduct outreach to veterans enrolled in the Medicaid program who may be able to make better use of their federal Veterans Administration (VA) benefits.. The Departments are requested to submit a report by October 1, 2019.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing collaborated to compile a list of 100 Medicaid enrollees with access to VA benefits. The report provides the results of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' outreach to this sample.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Dorman".

Greg Dorman
Resource Director and Legislative Liaison
Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Cc:

Representative Daneya Esgar, Joint Budget Committee
Representative Chris Hansen, Joint Budget Committee
Representative Kim Ransom, Joint Budget Committee
Senator Rachel Zenzinger, Joint Budget Committee
Senator Bob Rankin, Joint Budget Committee
Carolyn Kampman, Joint Budget Committee, Staff Director
Amanda Bickel, Joint Budget Committee, Staff
Seth Walters, Office of State Planning and Budgeting, Staff

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is please to submit its response to Request for Information #1 which reads as follows:

Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, Executive Director's Office; and Department of Military Affairs, Executive Director and Army National Guard -- The Departments are requested to explore further the potential benefits to veterans and the State of a pilot program to identify and conduct outreach to veterans enrolled in the Medicaid program who may be able to make better use of their federal Veterans Administration (VA) benefits.

The two departments are requested to work together to refine the process for identifying which veterans might benefit from further outreach. This may include individuals with high prescription drug costs to determine if they would benefit from accessing VA prescription drug benefits; ensuring that veterans who are discharged from a nursing facility have their pension and aid and attendance benefits restored from the \$90 institutionalized amount; outreach to individuals receiving \$0 monthly VA compensation benefits; outreach to Vietnam-era veterans to ensure they are receiving benefits related to "agent orange" exposure, when relevant; exploring opportunities to increase veterans' service-connected disability ratings; and any other categories the departments believe should be targeted.

HCPF is requested to extract relevant data samples and to work closely with DMVA to help refine the process for identifying veterans most suitable for outreach.

The DMVA is requested to conduct outreach to a small sample of veterans, such as those with high Medicaid pharmacy costs, to test the lists provided and veterans' responses.

o The DMVA is also requested to investigate the potential for using work-study students, funded by the federal Veterans Administration, to assist in outreach to veterans.

Based on the results of this preliminary research, by October 1, 2019, the Departments are requested to submit a report to the Joint Budget Committee with recommendations on how the State should proceed. If the Departments continue to recommend a pilot program, they are requested to submit a detailed plan for how the pilot will be structured, including how they will identify veterans who should receive outreach, the estimated number who will receive outreach, the form of such outreach (letter/phone/etc.), the recommended length of the pilot, and how they will assess the impact of the pilot. The plan should include the proposed mechanism for determining whether a veteran has increased VA benefits as a result of the Department's outreach and a plan for determining whether the program has resulted in any General Fund savings to the State. The assessment may include a comparison with a randomized control group, if appropriate.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs collaborated with the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, as per the RFI to compile a list of 100 random names and addresses of Veterans and Veterans Widows that are receiving benefits from Medicaid.

The Department sent out letters to all 100 individuals. Included in the letter was a stamped and labeled post card to return with two response options: "Yes, I am interested in finding out about VA benefits I may be eligible for"; or "no, I am not interested, please remove my name from the list."

The results of this outreach is as follows:

- 67 individuals did not respond. 11 were returned with no forwarding address.
- 1 individual was determined to be deceased.

- 21 'yes' responses were received by the Department. A follow-up personal phone call was made to each to find out their circumstances of living, health care and finances. The respondents fell into the following categories:
 - 5 of the Clients were getting the maximum benefits possible from the VA
 - 2 were not eligible for VA benefits
 - 7 did not respond to phone messages – 2 messages left for them.
 - 4 were not interested in changing their circumstances
 - 3 said they will follow up at a later date. These Veterans were Service Connected with conditions that were not eligible for increase until there is a change in severity (such as hearing loss).

In summation the Department had a 21% response rate and a 0% success rate in transitioning veterans on Medicaid to the VA health system.

In the first RFI we did, we tried to see what the Veterans were getting through the VA to see if they needed to be contacted for benefits in that pilot we looked up 100 Veterans and Widows we were only able to contact 14 of them due to HIPPA restrictions. Of the 14 individuals 6 were Service Connected at low rates thus were not eligible for any increase. Two of the individuals were getting smaller amounts of pension, but there were concerns about putting them over the Medicaid threshold if their pensions were increased. And 6 were receiving 100% pension benefits, thus receiving as much as allowed.

DMVA also looked into the availability and applicability of utilizing federal VA work study participants. The VA Vocational Rehab center which coordinates this activity stated they didn't have many respondents who want to do work study. We explained the role and missions of the Department and they responded that they had no available veterans with the requisite technical expertise to perform the work required.

Due to the low response rate and even lower participation rate the Department does not believe that a return on investment is possible for this program.