

## Warren County Veterans Service Officer's Report for October 2013

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**Change Affecting TRICARE for Life Beneficiaries who Use VA:** Beginning October 1, TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries who are Priority Group (PG) 8e and 8g (non-service connected, over income and not enrolled as of January 16, 2003) will be responsible 80 percent of the cost of the care they receive at VA medical facilities. Earlier this month, TRICARE sent out letters to the approximately 12,000 beneficiaries affected by this change, which resulted from a review of previously overlooked provisions of the 2001 NDAA. Until now, PG 8e and 8g TFL beneficiaries have only been responsible for 20 percent of the cost of their care at VA, in accordance with a 1995 Memorandum of Understanding between VA and DOD. It is highly recommended that those affected by this change should seek care from Medicare-authorized community providers in order to avoid the increased costs. It is important to realize that this change will only affect vets who are Priority Group 8 and ineligible for VA enrollment but choose to use their TFL benefits at VA anyway. TFL vets who are eligible for VA enrollment will still only be responsible for standard VA copays which generally range from \$15 to \$50 per visit for non-service connected care. Care for service connected conditions remains free of charge. More information can be found here: [http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/8\\_14\\_13\\_TFLVA.aspx](http://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/BenefitUpdates/Archives/8_14_13_TFLVA.aspx)

**Veterans Career Transition Program:** The program is delivered entirely online and runs between 6 and 15 weeks, depending on the goals and interests of the participant. It consists of non-credit certificates from Syracuse University's School of Information Studies and University College, focused on preparing veterans for the transition from the military to their next careers in Information Technology or Operations. Veterans can participate in any of the tracks below, again depending on their goals and interests. Students who go through the Professional Skills Track or the Tech Track become SU students and are assigned an academic advisor who can help them with their resume and cover letter, mock interviews, and provide guidance as they progress through the program. Within these tracks, classes begin quarterly and students can have access to the courses for up to one full year.

**Changes to disability compensation rules are based on the most current medical science as reported by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.** The Institute of Medicine's 2010 update to Veterans and Agent Orange provided sufficient medical evidence to support a positive association for Early-Onset Peripheral Neuropathy. *Previous Rule (in plain language):* Peripheral neuropathy is presumed to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides used in Vietnam if it is diagnosed *within one year* of the last exposure to such herbicides AND the condition resolves within two years of diagnosis. *New Rule (in plain language):* Peripheral neuropathy is presumed to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides used in Vietnam if there is evidence showing it was diagnosed within 1 year of the last exposure to such herbicides, *regardless of whether the condition resolves or persists.*