

VA Statement about 2010 Benefits and Programs - The VA sent out a press release this week notifying Veterans of the following changes that will take effect in 2010:

- **VA will Freeze Increase in Prescription Copayments:** Any increase in Veterans out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals will be delayed until June 30, 2010. This means the department will delay a scheduled \$1 increase – to \$9 – in the copayments facing Veterans for each 30-day supply of medicine for the treatment of conditions not related to military service. During this period, VA will also keep \$960 as the maximum, annual out-of-pocket payments for pharmaceuticals for non-service-related conditions. The yearly maximum out-of-pocket payment was scheduled to increase to \$1,080. There are no copayments associated with the treatment of conditions related to military service.
- **VA will Distribute Insurance Dividends:** Approximately 900,000 Veterans are in line to share \$286.4 million in annual insurance dividends during 2010. VA operates one of the nation's largest life insurance programs, providing more than \$1 Trillion in coverage to seven million servicemembers, Veterans, and family members. These payments will be made to insurance policy holders on the anniversary date of their policies. Payments will be sent automatically through different payment plans and the amounts will vary based on the age of the Veteran, the type of insurance, and the length of time the policy has been in place. Consistent with private mutual insurance company practice, the VA is returning a portion of premium payments back to policyholders because the agency had strong financial results.
- **No Adjustment in COLA for Disability Compensation + Pension Benefits:** As a result of negative inflation and the consumer price index going down over the past year the Social Security Administration has announced there will be no COLA this year for Social Security recipients. Under federal law VA's COLAs cannot exceed the Social Security COLAs. Therefore, VA is barred from making a COLA increase for recipients of its benefits. VA provides compensation and pension benefits to over 3.8 million Veterans and other beneficiaries. Presently, the basic monthly rate of compensation paid to Veterans ranges from \$123 to \$2,673. Annual income limits for disability pension begin at \$11,830 for a Veteran without dependents and increase for Veterans who have dependents, who are housebound, or who need regular aid and attendance.

Veterans who have questions about their benefits may contact their local County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer or the South Dakota Division of Veterans Affairs office in Pierre (605-773-3269) or the Sioux Falls office (605-333-6869).

JOB VACANCIES

The VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls has the following vacancies. These vacancies can be viewed at <http://www.sioxfalls.va.gov> and click on Careers, then click on All Sioux Falls VA Medical Center Vacancies or go to <http://vaww.visn23.med.va.gov> click on Employee, then click on Jobs

Vacancy: 438-10056
Title: RN (HBPC/CCHT)
Grade: VN-0610
Service: EC&R SL, Spirit Lake CBOC, Spirit Lake, IA
Issue Date: 01/07/10
Close Date: 01/13/10

Vacancy: 438-10057
Title: Social Worker (HCHV) Temporary; not to exceed 13 months
Grade: GS-0185-09/11 Grade and step determined by Professional Standards Board.
Service: Mental Health
Issue Date: 01/08/10
Close Date: 01/22/10

Vacancy: 438-10040
Title: Physical Therapist (HBPC)
Grade: GS-0633
Service: EC&R SL, Watertown CBOC
Issue Date: 12/23/09
Close Date: 01/13/10 (closing date extended)

Vacancy: 438-10038
Title: Clinical Psychologist (HBPC)
Grade: GS-0180
Service: EC&R SL, Watertown CBOC
Issue Date: 12/23/09
Close Date: 01/13/10 (closing date extended)

Vacancy: 438-10037
Title: Dietician (HBPC) Part Time (.5)
Grade: GS-0
Service: EC&R SL, Watertown CBOC
Issue Date: 12/23/09
Close Date: 01/13/10 (closing date extended)