April 18, 2017

WDVA Bulletin No. 1053

TO: County Veterans Service Officers

 Tribal Veterans Service Officers

SUBJECT: WDVA/CVSO/TVSO VBATS Access and Data Sharing Agreement

In the pursuit of enhancing the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) valued partnerships with the Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) and the Tribal Veterans Service Officers (TVSOs), we are pleased to announce the attached Veterans Benefits Application Tracking System (VBATS) Access and Data Sharing Agreement (Agreement) for each CVSO and TVSO office. The Agreement recognizes that CVSOs and TVSOs are professional veterans advocates and constitute a critical partner with WDVA. WDVA and the Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin (CVSOA-WI), with input from the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), have all worked in partnership towards this final version of the Agreement.

The purpose of this Agreement is two-fold: (1) to allow Wisconsin CVSOs and TVSOs access to the WDVA VBATS database without restriction and remove the requirement for release forms signed by the veteran, dependents, survivors, or duly authorized representatives (excluding current and former WDVA staff); and (2) to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information created, processed, stored, aggregated, and transmitted by the Disclosing Party.

The development of this Agreement is first the result of WDVA's renewed commitment to our partnership and the need to cooperate and provide the greatest possible access to CVSOs and TVSOs. The privacy and security aspect of this agreement stems from an investigation in 2015 by the Federal Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding unauthorized disclosure of confidential veteran information at the claims office. WDVA reported to OIG that all necessary steps would be taken to protect the privacy of veteran information maintained in our Department and shared with outside agency.

CVSOs and TVSOs access under this Agreement will allow the following:

1. Statewide access to VBATS records.
2. Ability to "add," "edit," and "upload documents" in VBATS without WDVA verification.
3. View VBATS Veteran records without a Request for Release of Records (Form 1042), except

for WDVA former/current employee VBATS record.

1. Elimination of the annual requirement to submit a VBATS Account Authorization Request Form

to maintain access to VBATS. Note: An initial WDVA Form 2419 will still be required for Officers who have not submitted one to date; and, additionally, for new employees of an office when there is a change in staff. If there is a current WDVA Form 2419 on file for the Officer, the office does not need to provide a new form with the signed VBATS Access and Data Sharing Agreement.

1. Access to Recently Separated Veterans contact information/report in VBATS.
2. Access to the Department of Defense Personnel Records Retrieval System (DPRIS) for DD214 information (with DoD approval).
3. Access to reports on a statewide basis.
4. Ensured mutual safeguards and security of the confidentiality of Veteran Personal Records.

CVSOs and TVSOs will have until **Friday, June 30, 2017** to return a signed copy of this Agreement to James Bond at the e-mail address or mailing address below.

Only one Agreement is required from each CVSO or TVSO office.

Due to system design and limitations, there are only two options to VBATS access: (1) unrestricted access as outlined above or; (2) no access. If a CVSO or TVSO office is unable to return a signed Agreement within the time limit, access to VBATS will be terminated at that time. However, upon receipt of a signed Agreement, that CVSO or TVSO office will be granted access. This process will allow WDVA to comply with the OIG report.

Again, we are pleased to announce this Agreement and appreciate the hard work of the CVSOA-WI and WCA in working with us to make this happen. If you have any questions, please contact James Bond at (608) 2778 or james.bond@dva.wisconsin.gov.