

VA Disability Claims Backlog Hits 1.1 Million

By: Doral Tuttle

Congress and major news outlets are taking note of the purported VA's 1.1 million backlogged disability claims, as recently reported in the New York Times.

Although the VA has begun rolling out updates to the agency's computers, the claims are piling up at a rate faster than ever imagined. Since 2008, the rate of newly filed disability claims has spiked a whopping 48 percent, with every VA office reporting claims older than 125 days, and veterans waiting months for an initial determination. The agency expects the backlog to increase another 4 percent by 2013.

The VA believes the computer upgrades will bring the backlog claims in line by 2015, but with more than 1 million service personnel expected to leave military duty with 5 years, the VA's goal appears lofty at best.

In my practice, I have certainly seen delays in processing claims even in the area of non-service connected benefits. When applying for non-service connected benefits such as service connected pension, homebound or aid and attendance, I often see delays as long as nine months. In cases where the Veteran is over ninety, it is possible to request that the application be expedited. Another technique to hasten the application approval process is to prepare a perfectly complete application and file an EZ form. This technique will greatly increase the efficiency of application but requires the applicant to have a complete application submitted with no mistakes in the paperwork.

Getting Legal Help

I offer free assessments to determine if you or a loved one is currently eligible for benefits that might help pay for long term care to include service or non-service connected benefits such as special monthly pension, aid and attendance, or homebound. This eligibility report will also alert you to the possibility of eligibility for Medicaid through the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or COPES. To start, simply request that a Client Worksheet be sent to you. Call today at **253-272-1904** **begin_of_the_skype_highlighting** **253-272-1904** **end_of_the_skype_highlighting** or request by email at info@daroltuttle.com.