

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 58,628.*

#### Request for Comments

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: April 1, 2004.

**Vicki S. Thorpe,**

*Manager, Graphics, Printing and Records Branch.*

[FR Doc. 04-7846 Filed 4-6-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810-39-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Bureau of the Public Debt

#### Proposed Collection: Comment Request

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently the Bureau of the Public Debt within the Department of the Treasury is soliciting comments concerning the Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**DATES:** Written comments should be received on or before June 7, 2004, to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Bureau of the Public Debt, Vicki S. Thorpe, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328, or [Vicki.Thorpe@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:Vicki.Thorpe@bpd.treas.gov).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information should be directed to Vicki S. Thorpe, Bureau of the Public Debt, 200 Third Street, Parkersburg, WV 26106-1328, (304) 480-6553.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Voluntary Customer Satisfaction Survey to Implement Executive Order 12862.

*OMB Number:* 1535-0122.

*Abstract:* The information from the survey will be used to improve customer service.

*Current Actions:* None.

*Type of Review:* Extension.

*Affected Public:* Individuals.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 7,000.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 876.

#### Request for Comments

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Dated: April 1, 2004.

**Vicki S. Thorpe,**

*Manager, Graphics, Printing and Records Branch.*

[FR Doc. 04-7847 Filed 4-6-04; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Cost-of-Living Adjustments and Headstone or Marker Allowance Rate

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As required by law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is hereby giving notice of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in certain benefit rates and income limitations. These

COLAs affect the pension, parents' dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), spina bifida, and birth defects programs. These adjustments are based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the one year period ending September 30, 2003. VA is also giving notice of the maximum amount of reimbursement that may be paid for headstones or markers purchased in lieu of Government-furnished headstones or markers in Fiscal Year 2004, which began on October 1, 2003.

**DATES:** These COLAs are effective December 1, 2003. The headstone or marker allowance rate is effective October 1, 2003.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul Trowbridge, Consultant, Compensation and Pension Service (212B), Veterans Benefit Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-7218.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under 38 U.S.C. 2306(d), VA may provide reimbursement for the cost of non-Government headstones or markers at a rate equal to the actual cost or the average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which the non-Government headstone or marker was purchased, whichever is less.

Section 8041 of Pub. L. 101-508 amended 38 U.S.C. 2306(d) to eliminate the payment of the monetary allowance in lieu of VA-provided headstone or marker for deaths occurring on or after November 1, 1990. However, in a precedent opinion (O. G. C. Prec. 17-90), VA's General Counsel held that there is no limitation period applicable to claims for benefits under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 2306(d).

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers during any fiscal year is determined by dividing the sum of VA costs during that fiscal year for procurement, transportation, and miscellaneous administration, inspection and support staff by the total number of headstones and markers procured by VA during that fiscal year and rounding to the nearest whole dollar amount.

The average actual cost of Government-furnished headstones or markers for Fiscal Year 2003 under the above computation method was \$112. Therefore, effective October 1, 2003, the maximum rate of reimbursement for non-Government headstones or markers purchased during Fiscal Year 2004 is \$112.

**Cost of Living Adjustments**

Under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312 and section 306 of Pub. L. 95-588, VA is required to increase the benefit rates and income limitations in the pension and parents' DIC programs by the same percentage, and effective the

same date, as increases in the benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act. The increased rates and income limitations are also required to be published in the **Federal Register**.

The Social Security Administration has announced that there will be a 2.1 percent cost-of-living increase in Social

Security benefits effective December 1, 2003. Therefore, applying the same percentage and rounding up in accordance with 38 CFR 3.29, the following increased rates and income limitations for the VA pension and parents' DIC programs will be effective December 1, 2003:

TABLE 1.—IMPROVED PENSION

Maximum annual rates	
(1) Veterans permanently and totally disabled (38 U.S.C. 1521):	
Veteran with no dependents, \$9,894	
Veteran with one dependent, \$12,959	
For each additional dependent, \$1,688	
(2) Veterans in need of aid and attendance (38 U.S.C. 1521):	
Veteran with no dependents, \$16,509	
Veteran with one dependent, \$19,570	
For each additional dependent, \$1,688	
(3) Veterans who are housebound (38 U.S.C. 1521):	
Veteran with no dependents, \$12,092	
Veteran with one dependent, \$15,156	
For each additional dependent, \$1,688	
(4) Two veterans married to one another, combined rates (38 U.S.C. 1521):	
Neither veteran in need of aid and attendance or housebound, \$12,959	
Either veteran in need of aid and attendance, \$19,570	
Both veterans in need of aid and attendance, \$25,498	
Either veteran housebound, \$15,156	
Both veterans housebound, \$17,355	
One veteran housebound and one veteran in need of aid and attendance, \$21,765	
For each dependent child, \$1,688	
(5) Surviving spouse alone and with a child or children of the deceased veteran in custody of the surviving spouse (38 U.S.C. 1541):	
Surviving spouse alone, \$6,634	
Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$8,686	
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,688	
(6) Surviving spouses in need of aid and attendance (38 U.S.C. 1541):	
Surviving spouse alone, \$10,606	
Surviving spouse with one child in custody, \$12,654	
Surviving Spouse of Spanish-American War veteran alone, \$11,291	
Surviving Spouse of Spanish-American War veteran with one child in custody, \$13,338	
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,688	
(7) Surviving spouses who are housebound (38 U.S.C. 1541):	
Surviving spouse alone, \$8,109	
Surviving spouse and one child in his or her custody, \$10,157	
For each additional child in his or her custody, \$1,688	
(8) Surviving child alone (38 U.S.C. 1542), \$1,688	

*Reduction for income.* The rate payable is the applicable maximum rate minus the countable annual income of the eligible person. (38 U.S.C. 1521, 1541 and 1542).

*Mexican border period and World War I veterans.* The applicable maximum annual rate payable to a

Mexican border period or World War I veteran under this table shall be increased by \$2,244. (38 U.S.C. 1521(g))

**Parents' DIC**

DIC shall be paid monthly to parents of a deceased veteran in the following amounts (38 U.S.C. 1315):

*One parent.* If there is only one parent, the monthly rate of DIC paid to such parent shall be \$474 reduced on the basis of the parent's annual income according to the following formula:

TABLE 2

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$474 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00 .....	\$0	\$800
.08 .....	800	11,256

No DIC is payable under this table if annual income exceeds \$11,256.

*One parent who has remarried.* If there is only one parent and the parent

has remarried and is living with the parent's spouse, DIC shall be paid under

Table 2 or under Table 4, whichever shall result in the greater benefit being

paid to the veteran's parent. In the case of remarriage, the total combined annual income of the parent and the parent's spouse shall be counted in determining the monthly rate of DIC.

*Two parents not living together.* The rates in Table 3 apply to (1) two parents who are not living together, or (2) an unmarried parent when both parents are living and the other parent has

remarried. The monthly rate of DIC paid to each such parent shall be \$342 reduced on the basis of each parent's annual income, according to the following formula:

TABLE 3

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$342 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00 .....	\$0	\$800
.06 .....	800	900
.07 .....	900	1,100
.08 .....	1,100	11,256

No DIC is payable under this table if annual income exceeds \$11,256.

*Two parents living together or remarried parents living with spouses.* The rates in Table 4 apply to each parent living with another parent; and

each remarried parent, when both parents are alive. The monthly rate of DIC paid to such parents will be \$321 reduced on the basis of the combined

annual income of the two parents living together or the remarried parent or parents and spouse or spouses, as computed under the following formula:

TABLE 4

For each \$1 of annual income		
The \$321 monthly rate shall be reduced by	Which is more than	But not more than
\$0.00 .....	\$0	\$1,000
.03 .....	1,000	1,500
.04 .....	1,500	1,900
.05 .....	1,900	2,400
.06 .....	2,400	2,900
.07 .....	2,900	3,200
.08 .....	3,200	15,129

No DIC is payable under this table if combined annual income exceeds \$15,129.

The rates in this table are also applicable in the case of one surviving parent who has remarried, computed on the basis of the combined income of the parent and spouse, if this would be a

greater benefit than that specified in Table 2 for one parent.

*Aid and attendance.* The monthly rate of DIC payable to a parent under Tables 2 through 4 shall be increased by \$256 if such parent is (1) a patient in a nursing home, or (2) helpless or blind,

or so nearly helpless or blind as to need or require the regular aid and attendance of another person.

*Minimum rate.* The monthly rate of DIC payable to any parent under Tables 2 through 4 shall not be less than \$5.

TABLE 5.—SECTION 306 PENSION INCOME LIMITATIONS

- (1) Veteran or surviving spouse with no dependents, \$11,256 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (2) Veteran with no dependents in need of aid and attendance, \$11,756 (38 U.S.C. 1521(d) as in effect on December 31, 1978).
- (3) Veteran or surviving spouse with one or more dependents, \$15,129 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (4) Veteran with one or more dependents in need of aid and attendance, \$15,629 (38 U.S.C. 1521(d) as in effect on December 31, 1978).
- (5) Child (no entitled veteran or surviving spouse), \$9,201 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)).
- (6) Spouse income exclusion (38 CFR 3.262), \$3,591 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(a)(2)(B)).

TABLE 6.—OLD-LAW PENSION INCOME LIMITATIONS

- (1) Veteran or surviving spouse without dependents or an entitled child, \$9,853 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(b)).
- (2) Veteran or surviving spouse with one or more dependents, \$14,205 (Pub. L. 95-588, section 306(b)).

### Spina Bifida Benefits

Section 421 of Pub. L. 104-204 added a new chapter 18 to title 38, United States Code, authorizing VA to provide certain benefits, including a monthly monetary allowance, to children born with spina bifida who are natural children of veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam

era. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1805(b)(3), spina bifida rates are subject to adjustment under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312, which provides for the adjustment of certain VA benefit rates whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 *et*

*seq.*). Effective December 1, 2003, spina bifida monthly rates are as follows:

Level I: \$237  
Level II: \$821  
Level III: \$1,402

### Birth Defects Benefits

Section 401 of Pub. L. 106-419 authorizes the payment of monetary

benefits to, or on behalf of, children of female Vietnam veterans born with certain birth defects. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 1815(d), birth defects rates are subject to adjustment under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5312, which provides for the adjustment of certain VA benefit rates whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 *et seq.*). Effective December 1, 2003, birth defects monthly rates are as follows:

Level I: \$108  
Level II: \$237  
Level III: \$821  
Level IV: \$1,402

Dated: March 26, 2004.

**Anthony J. Principi,**

*Secretary of Veterans Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 04-7822 Filed 4-6-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Office of Research and Development; Government Owned Invention Available for Licensing

**AGENCY:** Office of Research and Development, VA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Government-owned invention available for licensing.

**SUMMARY:** The invention listed below is owned by the U.S. Government as represented by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and is available for licensing in accordance with 35 U.S.C. 207 and 37 CFR part 404 to achieve expeditious commercialization of results of federally funded research and development. Foreign patents are filed on selected inventions to extend market coverage for U.S. companies and may also be available for licensing.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Technical and licensing information on the invention may be obtained by writing to: Robert W. Potts, Department of Veterans Affairs, Director Technology Transfer Program, Office of Research and Development (12TT), 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420; fax: 202-254-0473; e-mail at [bob.potts@hq.med.va.gov](mailto:bob.potts@hq.med.va.gov). Any request for information should include the Number and Title for the relevant invention as indicated below. Issued patents may be obtained from the Commissioner of Patents, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The invention available for licensing is: International Patent Application No.

PCT/US02/37988 "Use of Gingko Biloba Extracts to Promote Neuroprotection and Reduce Weight Loss".

Dated: March 30, 2004.

**Anthony J. Principi,**

*Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 04-7820 Filed 4-6-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Privacy Act of 1974; System of Records

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**ACTION:** Notice of amendment to system of records.

**SUMMARY:** As required by the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a(e), notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending the system of records currently entitled "Patient Medical Records-VA" (24VA136) as set forth in the **Federal Register** 56 FR 6048. VA is amending the system by revising the System Number, the System Location, Categories of Records in the System, Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System, Including Categories of Users and the Purposes of Such Uses, Policies and Practices for Storing, Retrieving, Accessing, Retaining, and Disposing of Records in the System, and System Manager(s) and Address. VA is republishing the system notice in its entirety.

**DATES:** Comments on the amendment of this system of records must be received no later than May 7, 2004. If no public comment is received, the amended system will become effective May 7, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** You may mail or hand-deliver written comments concerning the proposed amended system of records to the Director, Regulations Management (00REG1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420; or fax comments to (202) 273-9026; or e-mail comments to "[OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov](mailto:OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov)". All relevant material received before May 7, 2004 will be considered. Comments will be available for public inspection at the above address in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Privacy Act Officer, Department of

Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420; telephone (727) 320-1839.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The System number is changed from 24VA136 to 24VA19 to reflect the current organizational alignment.

The System Location is amended to reflect current organization structure with Veterans Integrated Service Network Offices having replaced Regional Director Offices. The System Location is also amended to reflect the transition from maintaining paper medical records to computerized medical records. This includes computerized medical record data stored in the VA Health Data Repository (HDR). The HDR is defined as a repository of clinical information normally residing on one or more independent platforms for use by clinicians and other personnel in support of longitudinal patient-centric care. Data will be organized in a format that supports the clinical decision-making process requisite to patient care, independent of the physical location of that patient information. The key objective of the HDR project is the ability to create a composite, portable, legal medical record that will enable providers to obtain integrated data views (computable views) and acquire the patient-specific clinical information needed to support treatment decisions. Initially, data from existing Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) systems will be used to populate the HDR. Thus, current VistA files (and the service processes using the files) will continue to be used. As VistA files and processes are replaced by commercial off-the shelf (COTS) applications, data will be mapped from these new locations. The HDR functionality will include notifications, clinical reminders, decision support, and alerts. The HDR will be located at the VA National Data Centers. Addresses of VA facilities are removed from the System Location and can be found in Appendix 1 of the biennial publication of the VA Privacy Act Issuances.

Categories of Records in the System are amended to remove specific titles of VA databases, as these are included in the VA National Database system of records. As of August 1992, paper perpetual medical records, which included the applications(s) for medical benefits, hospital summary(ies), operation report(s), and tissue examinations(s) for all episodes of care, and if applicable, autopsy reports and certain Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts related records, are no