



COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

March 2024

BENEFITS AWARDED

\$569,972.95

SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

178

WALK-IN CLIENTS

425

CLAIMS FILED

176 Auditable

584 Total

MEDI-CAL VERIFICATIONS

31

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The SF CVSO, is back to nearly full staffing and our numbers from February show it! Our newest Veterans Claims Representative, Morris Karo, passed his California Dept. of Veterans Affairs accreditation exam in January and is learning the nuances of interviewing Veterans and their dependents and understanding what benefits they may be entitled to. We also anticipate County Veterans Services Officer Elena Kim to return this month, bringing the office back to being fully staffed.

We also welcomed aboard Work Studies Gregory Hurd, a U.S. Air Force Veteran attending City College of San Francisco and pursuing a degree in Computer Sciences, Nicholas Bristol Yaglinski, an Army Veteran attending CCSF's Fire Fighter program, and Brian Kestler, a US Marine Corps Veteran, also attending CCSF, with the goal of working with Veterans. We also welcome back Work Study Zera Meherete, who took a period of leave to address some medical issues.

In February, I attended the CA Association of County Veterans Services Officers Winter Conference near Sacramento where I learned valuable information about pending changes to the ratings schedule for certain





categories of disabilities, learned about legislation affecting our State's Veterans, networked with fellow CVSOs to discuss best practices for providing Veterans claims assistance, and learned from experts about how to best assist Veterans with challenging claims-related issues to report back to the team.

SUCCESS STORIES

Honoring Women Veterans:

The San Francisco CVSO recognizes the unique experiences and challenges that women Veterans face in the military, and the significant contributions they have made to the safety and security of our Nation despite this. In honor of Women's History Month, we would like to highlight the work we do to support and uplift the service and sacrifices of the women Veterans in our community by connecting them with the benefits they have earned through their service. They are deserving of our utmost respect and admiration.

A Veteran made an online appointment with this office in early 2022 to discuss filing claims for increase for several conditions that had worsened since she received her original 80% rating as part of an evaluation for medical discharge from the U.S. Air Force. When the Veterans Claims Representative met her initially, he reviewed what evidence she would need to show for an increased evaluation for her back condition, plantar fasciitis and pes planus, and her mental health condition, which was originally granted as depression and anxiety, but the Veteran now wished to claim as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder due to Military Sexual Trauma.

The Rep. filed an Intent to File to protect her effective date while she obtained the evidence. He also recommended she write a statement in support of claim describing the impact of the worsening conditions, and spoke with her mental health and primary care providers to discuss their assistance in writing letters supporting the conditions worsening. Nearly a year passed when the Rep. reached back out to the Veteran to discuss the status of the claim that needed to be filed shortly to protect the effective date. He reviewed the evidence the Veteran had obtained and filed the claim.

It took Almost a year from when the claim was filed in March of 2023 for the Veteran to receive a decision. The evaluation of her back condition was increased from 10-40%, and her bi-lateral plantar fasciitis and pes planus increased from 30-50%. Additionally, the VA inferred from the C&P examination lower extremity radiculopathy and knee and and lower leg conditions, the combination of which increased her combined rating to 100%. The VA has not yet made a decision on her PTSD claim. As a result of filing the Intent to File and the VA taking nearly a year to develop the claim and render





a decision, the Veteran received a more than \$36,000 retroactive payment in addition to almost \$4,000 in monthly compensation.

If you know a woman Veteran who is not aware of or does not think she is eligible for VA benefits, please refer them to the San Francisco or their nearest County Veterans Services Office for assistance in understanding and applying for their deserved benefits.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On March 14 the SF CVSO will join with the San Mateo CVSO and the SF VAMC Student Veterans Health Program to present to City College of San Francisco and Skyline College Veterans, as well as a State-wide online audience, about presumptive claims and the PACT Act as part of the California Dept. of Veterans Affairs California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP) outreach program.

On April 13 the SF CVSO will participate in the Golden State Warriors' Hoops for Troops Program's Veterans Wellness Day in Thrive City Plaza (outside of Chase Center). The event will include wellness resources and activities for Veterans, employment opportunities and résumé review, and Veterans resources. This event will be free to participants, however does not include entrance to the game. Link to event will be provided once available.

