



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 16, 2013

VA to Expand Benefits for Traumatic Brain Injury *Adds Five Illnesses Related to Service-Connected TBI*

WASHINGTON – Some Veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) who are diagnosed with any of five other ailments will have an easier path to receive additional disability pay under new regulations developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The new regulation, which takes effect 30 days from today, impacts some Veterans living with TBI who also have either Parkinson's disease, certain types of dementia, depression, unprovoked seizures or certain diseases of the hypothalamus and pituitary glands. This regulation stems from a report of the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM) regarding the association between TBI and five diagnosable illnesses. The IOM report, *Gulf War and Health, Volume 7: Long-Term Consequences of Traumatic Brain Injury*, found "sufficient evidence" to link moderate or severe levels of TBI with the five ailments.

"We decide Veterans' disability claims based on the best science available," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "As scientific knowledge advances, VA will expand its programs to ensure Veterans receive the care and benefits they've earned and deserve."

The new regulations, printed in the *Federal Register*, say that if certain Veterans with service-connected TBI also have one of the five illnesses, then the second illness will also be considered as service connected for the calculation of VA disability compensation.

Eligibility for expanded benefits will depend upon the severity of the TBI and the time between the injury causing the TBI and the onset of the second illness. However, Veterans can still file a claim to establish direct service-connection for these ailments even if they do not meet the time and severity standards in the new regulation.

Veterans who have questions or who wish to file new disability claims may use the eBenefits website, available at <https://www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits>.

Servicemembers who are within 180 days of discharge may file a pre-discharge claim for TBI online through the VA-DoD eBenefits portal at <https://www.eBenefits.va.gov/ebenefits>.

The final rule will be published in full on December 17 at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Information about VA and DoD programs for brain injury and related research is available at www.dvbic.org.

Information about VA's programs for Gulf War Veterans is available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/hazardous_exposures.asp.

#