

**Veterans Disability Benefits Commission
Meeting Minutes**

Date: Friday, October 14, 2005

**Location: Room 334 Cannon House Office Building, U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C. 20515**

Attendees:

Chairman

James Terry Scott, LTG, USA (Ret.)

Members

Nick D. Bacon, 1SG, USA (Ret)
 Larry G. Brown, Col., USA (Ret)
 Jennifer Sandra Carroll, LCDR, USN (Ret)
 Donald M. Cassiday, Col., USAF (Ret)
 John Holland Grady
 Charles "Butch" Joeckel, USMC (Ret)
 Ken Jordan, Col., USMC (Ret)
 James Everett Livingston, MG, USMC (Ret)
 William M. Matz, Jr., MG, USA (Ret)
 Dennis Vincent McGinn, VADM, USN (Ret)
 Rick Surratt (former USA)
 Joe Wynn (former USAF)

Topic	Key Points	Supporting Materials
October 14, 2005		
Opening Remarks Chairman Scott	The meeting opened at 9:00 a.m. with welcoming remarks and a reiteration of the Commission's objectives. Retired Army Major General William M. Matz, Jr., was introduced as the 13 th and final member of the Commission. The Chairman reiterated the general approach the Commission will use to fulfill its charter and continue to evaluate and monitor the research of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA).	
September 15-16, 2005, Meeting Minutes	On motion by Commissioner Jordan, seconded by Commissioner Bacon, the minutes were amended to include Commissioner Wynn's statement, and were unanimously adopted.	
Brief Statements by Commission Members	Statement made by Commissioner Wynn highlighting the importance of the study of the compensation	Statement of Commissioner Wynn

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	<p>levels and asked that any recommendations come directly from the Commissioners, based solely on an analysis of the facts and not on the basis of recommendations made by third parties.</p>	
<p>New Commission Business</p>	<p>A motion was made to strike question 5B from the list of approved research questions. (Should the Benefits Package be Modified: Would the results be more appropriate if the level of payment was higher before some normal “retirement age” and lower thereafter?) A discussion followed the motion, with a vote of ten “ayes”, one “nay” and one abstention. The motion passed.</p> <p>A vote was also called on question 15A to be stricken (To what extent should eligibility standards change for disabilities that occur as part of genetics?). The motion passed unanimously after a discussion of the question.</p>	
<p>Overview</p> <p>Ray Wilburn Executive Director</p>	<p>Research Process</p> <p>Following is a proposed breakout for answering the 31 research questions (RQs) approved by the Commission on September 16th:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 of these RQs will be included in CNA statement of work; • 8 RQs will be included in IOM statement of work; • 3 RQs will be addressed by staff, but with input from IOM; • 4 RQs will be completed by staff with input from CNA; • 15 staff papers will be completed using an analysis and summary of legislative and legal research, and various studies and reports that have been done in the past to address remaining research questions and overlapping topical areas. <p>Contracting</p> <p>The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has an existing contract with IOM, as the Navy has with CNA. The statements of work will be the basis for submitting a task order against the existing contracts. Once approved by the Commission, these two statements of work will be presented to IOM and CNA, respectively. IOM and CNA will, in turn, make formal technical and cost proposals back to the Commission. The negotiations and contract awards will follow.</p>	<p>Revision of Research Questions Version 1 (10-4-05)</p> <p>Process Overview</p>

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	<p>CNA performance period is anticipated to take 20 months, beginning in November 2005 through June 2007.</p>	
<p>Discussion of Draft IOM and CNA Statements of Work</p>	<p>IOM should look at standardized evaluations and training for PTSD.</p> <p>The Commission should not lose control of a research question, an issue, or allow recommendations to be shaped by an outside entity.</p> <p>Comments and changes on pages 1, 3 and 7 of IOM SOW, and pages 1 and 2 of CNA SOW.</p> <p>Impact of legal aspects on attached issue papers.</p> <p>Questions and comments on the duration of the review process and timelines.</p> <p>IU, percentages of disability evaluation and employability should be considered from a medical and policy standpoint.</p>	
<p>Discussion and Vote on Statements of Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 1, sub-bullet 3 changed • Disclaimer copied from CNA SOW and added to IOM SOW • Page 3, Arabic number 2 changed as worded by Commissioner Matz • Bullet 3, third line “offset” is replaced by “improve” • Item 4, Purpose 1, “Extra-schedular” added • Sub-bullet 7 changed • Sub-bullet 8 accepted as written • Sub-bullet 4 a sentence was added • Second sentence of task 4 deleted • Task 5 and 6 deleted • Task 7 becomes Task 5 <p>Discussion and approval of the CNA SOW were deferred until the next meeting in November.</p>	
<p>Public Comment Period</p>	<p>Ms. Knapp commented on survivors’ benefit plans on behalf of Gold Star Wives.</p> <p>Ms. Scott commented on VA’s Compensation and Pension (C&P) examination process and suggested the need to include the C&P physicians in the ratings.</p>	
<p>Chairman’s Close</p>	<p>Commissioners were asked to submit their priorities prior to the next meeting for a site visit plan to begin in early 2006. At a minimum, site visits will be conducted in teams of three Commissioners at approximately eight field locations.</p> <p>The Commission voted unanimously to authorize the</p>	

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	<p>Executive Director to start developing a survey of VA adjudicators.</p> <p>The Commission voted unanimously to accept the IOM SOW with the proposed changes.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 17, and Friday, November 18, in room 340 of the Cannon House Office Building, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.</p>	
Adjourned at 3:50 p.m.		

The minutes of the October 14, 2005, meeting of the Commission were unanimously approved by Commission members in attendance at the November 17, 2005, meeting in Washington, DC.