

Honoring the Service of Our Veterans

Having steered the economy back from the brink of a depression, the Administration is committed to moving the Nation from recession to recovery by sparking job creation to get millions of Americans back to work and building a new foundation for the long-term prosperity for all American families. To do this, the 2011 Budget makes critical investments in the key areas that will help to reverse the decline in economic security that American families have experienced over the past decade with investments in education, clean energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

But even as we meet the challenge of the recession and work to build an economy that works for all American families, we must also change the way Washington does business – ending programs that don't work, streamlining those that do, cracking down on special interest access, and bringing a new responsibility to how tax dollars are spent. The President's Budget takes the steps to help jumpstart job creation, works to strengthen the economic security of American families, and makes the tough choices to put our Nation back on the path to fiscal responsibility.

To honor the service of our veterans, the Budget will:

Increase Funding for the VA with a 20 Percent Total Increase Since 2009. The Budget provides \$60 billion for the VA, a \$4 billion increase over last year, and a 20 percent increase since 2009. This significant increase, done in a year of budget austerity, contributes to the President's pledge to increase funding for the VA, providing a foundation to transform the Department of Veterans Affairs and better serve veterans and their families today.

Provide Advance Appropriations for VA Medical Care. The 2011 Budget requests \$50.6 billion in advance appropriations for the VA medical care program so that care for the Nation's veterans is not hindered by budget delays. This funding will enable the Department to have timely and predictable funding from year to year, ultimately making it easier for veterans to rely on accessible VA care.

Continue to Increase Enrollment of Previously Ineligible Veterans into VA Health Care. The President's Budget continues enrolling more than 500,000 moderate-income veterans into the VA health care system by 2013 while maintaining high-quality and timely care for the lower-income and disabled veterans who currently rely on VA.

Provide Greater Benefits to Veterans who are Medically Retired from Service. For the first time, highly-disabled veterans who are medically retired from service will be eligible for concurrent receipt of disability benefits from VA in addition to the Department of Defense (DOD) retirement benefits. All medically retired servicemembers will be eligible for concurrent receipt of VA and DOD benefits by 2015.

Continue the Emphasis on Specialized Care for Veterans with Psychological and Cognitive Health Needs. The President's Budget strengthens VA's ability to provide veterans the best possible care for PTSD, TBI, and other mental health conditions by investing \$5.2 billion in specialized care. These conditions will continue to be urgent issues for the VA for many years to come. The Budget increases collaboration between joint DOD and VA programs that target psychological health; increases research to develop new evidence-based approaches; and increases outreach to veterans.

Support Timely and High-Quality Delivery of Health Care and Benefits through 21st Century Technology. VA and DOD are jointly implementing a virtual lifetime electronic record (VLER), which will enable VA to maintain a complete health record for each veteran and to deliver care and benefits to

veterans with efficiency and accuracy. The President's Budget also invests over \$200 million in automated processing to directly improve the accuracy and timeliness of veterans benefits, particularly disability compensation and the new Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit.

Work to Dramatically Reduce Veteran Homelessness. With an investment of almost \$800 million, the President's Budget expands VA's services for homeless veterans and those at risk of becoming homeless through the expansion of collaborative partnerships with local governments, non-profit organizations, and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor.

Focus on the Unique Needs of Women Veterans. The 2011 President's Budget responds to the growing number of women veterans by providing for their unique needs, from an appropriate environment of care to specialized medical and counseling services.

Support Veterans Employment and Job Training. The 2011 Budget provides \$262 million for the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service, which is a \$6 million (2 percent) increase over the 2010 enacted level. Of the increase, \$5 million is for outreach and employment reintegration services to help homeless veterans, including the expansion of an initiative that targets female veterans and their families. The remaining \$1 million will be used to make employment workshops more accessible to spouses of separating servicemembers.

Dramatically Expand Access to National Cemeteries for Eligible Veterans. VA will reduce the population threshold used to determine where new national veterans cemeteries should be built from 170,000 to 80,000 veterans living within 75 miles of a potential location. The lower threshold will provide a nearby national cemetery burial option to at least 500,000 additional veterans. As a result, 94 percent of all veterans will have a veterans cemetery burial option within a reasonable distance of their homes.