

REHABILITATION GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

KENNETH G. CONNORS, CHAIRMAN

This year has been one of most challenging for VBA and the VHA. In the beginning as both entities had to deal with staff changes in both uncertainties of how they would continue to serve and provide the services that the veterans were requesting or are presently receiving.

The VBA was able to rebound to some degree and provide the services they are mandated to do. The VHA was able to continue its operations of providing health care to our veterans and continues outsourcing some of its health care to include C&P examinations as well as some other medical exams.

With the issue of outsourcing services comes the matter of scheduling the time and the location of the facility providing the contracted services and ensuring that the examiners continue to provide the services as prescribed under VHA regulations. Our organization continues to watch this matter very closely, including the treatment of mental health as well as the research into treating PTSD and the various options that are being proposed.

The concern for veterans' suicide remains at the top of priorities in mental health. Even with the addition of outreach resources that have been put in place over the past few years the search for more advanced treatment and resources will continue until this matter is resolved.

Our organization continues to push for better resolve of the issue of military sexual trauma which is a subject that is not limited to any one gender. Improved procedures must continue to be put in place to better address this issue. Medical care and treatment for female veterans is another area of concern. even through there has been improvement in the way female veterans receive care. More improvements are needed to address this issue.

Proper budgets for benefits and health care are always of concern, and our organization continues to ensure that proper funding is maintained

I would like to thank the members of this committee for their dedication and work during this past year. Thank you to Commander Dan Channel for his support and the endless hours that he has devoted to our veterans and for allowing this committee to serve this department. Also thank you to Department Adjutant John Baker and the entire Trenton office staff.