

The Department of Veterans Affairs Budget: Fiscal Year (FY) 2009

Message points: Below are The American Legion's Budget Recommendations for FY 2009

Program	FY 2008	HR6599	Appropriations Committee S 3301	The American Legion's FY 2010 Recommendations
Medical Services +	\$29.1 billion	\$30.9 billion	\$35.6 billion (see + note.)	\$42.8 billion (includes medical and prosthetics research)
Medical Administration +	\$3.5 billion	\$4.4 billion	(see + note.)	
Medical Facilities	\$4.1 billion	\$5 billion	\$5 billion	
Medical Care Total	\$36.7 billion	\$40.3 billion	\$40.6 billion	
Medical Care Recovery Fund	(\$2.4 billion)	(\$2.5 billion)	(\$2.5 billion)	*
Medical and Prosthetic Research	\$480 million	\$500 million	\$527 million	\$532 million
Major Construction	\$1.1 billion	\$923 million	\$1.2 billion	\$1.8 billion
Minor Construction	\$630 million	\$991 million	\$729 million	\$1.5 billion
State Veterans Homes Grants	\$165 million	\$165 million	\$250 million	\$275 million
State Veterans Cemetery Grants	\$40 million	\$45 million	\$42 million	\$49 million
National Cemetery Administration	\$195 million	\$240 million	\$ 230 million	\$249 million
Information Technology	\$2 billion	\$2.5 billion	\$2.5 billion	\$2.7 billion
General Operating Expenses	\$1.6 billion	\$1.8 billion	\$1.8 billion	\$2.8 billion

Issue: Annual State of VA Medical Facilities Report

Resolution No. 206-2004 National Convention

Message Points:

- The first hand information gained through site visits by the National Commander to VA Medical Centers across the nation has proven invaluable in The American Legion's efforts to urge Congress and the Administration to fully fund VA at a level that will enable all eligible veterans to receive quality health care in a timely manner.
- The American Legion will continue to visit VA Medical Centers and health care facilities nationwide and provide full reports of all findings. By 2005, we had finished a complete survey of all VA medical centers. In fiscal year 2006, National Commander appointed Task Force Members and National Staff revisited designated medical centers and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs). The 2007 report focused on services provided by Vet Centers that were located near demobilization sites and various Polytrauma sites (polytrauma rehabilitation centers and polytrauma network sites). The 2008 report is centered on long-term care services provided via VA Nursing Home Units/Community Living Centers throughout the VA Medical Center system.
- The information gathered in these reports, coupled with answers to questionnaires filled out by VA facility leadership, is compiled in a final "State of VA Facilities Report".
- The sixth National Commander's "State of VA Medical Facilities Report" will be presented to Congress and the Administration in October 2008.

Issue: Budget Reform for VA Health Care Funding

Resolution No. 313-2008 National Convention

Message Points:

- The American Legion strongly supports legislation to guarantee that Congress provides sufficient, timely and predictable resources to cover the expenses of the veterans' health care program.
- The current funding for VA Health Care is a discretionary program, which means that it is in the discretion of Congress to determine when and how much money it will allocate each year for veterans' medical care.
- Despite the continued efforts of the American Legion, the cumulative effects of insufficient and inconsistent funding endangers the overall viability of the system and specialized programs the VA has developed to improve the health and well being of our Nation's service connected disabled veterans.

Issue: Medicare Reimbursement for VA

Resolution No. 145-2008 National Convention

Message Points:

- The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) continues to seek other revenue streams to supplement annual federal appropriations.
- VHA is authorized to bill, collect and retain payments from enrolled veterans and their health insurance insurers for inpatient and outpatient care, outpatient medications, and long-term care services, except Medicare.
- Medicare is a prepaid, federally mandated health insurance program for all eligible Americans.
- Medicare-eligible veterans should have the same opportunity as every other Medicare participant, to use their Medicare coverage in the health plan of their choice.
- The American Legion continues to urge Congress to pass the necessary legislation to allow Medicare Reimbursement to VA for the treatment of non-service connected conditions of enrolled veterans.
- The Indian Health Service has demonstrated the ability to bill and collect Medicare Reimbursement.