

## VVA CHAPTER 1069 BENEFITS PRESENTATION 1/13/2016

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2. **NO COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) FOR 2016.** There is no COLA for military retirees, veterans receiving benefits, and social security recipients for 2016. **REASON:** There is no inflation and that is what increases are tied to. This is only the third time in forty years there has not been an increase. The price of goods and services actually fell in 2015, particularly gasoline prices.
3. **BILL INTRODUCED FOR EMERGENCY COLA FOR 2016.** There is a bill that has been introduced in Congress to provide an emergency COLA of 3.9% for veterans, federal retirees, and social security recipients for 2016. The bill would apply to some 70 million Americans.
4. **NO INCREASE IN PHARMACY CO-PAYS.** The VA has extended a freeze on co-payment increases at its pharmacies through 2016. Veterans who obtain prescriptions at VA pharmacies will continue to pay \$8 or \$9 per 30 day prescription, depending on their eligibility status within VA's health system.
5. **VA PLANS TO PROPOSE EXPANDED DISABILITY BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO CONTAMINATED WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE.** On 12/17/2015, the VA announced plans to expand eligibility for veterans exposed from August 1, 1953-December 31, 1987 at Camp Lejeune from water that was contaminated with industrial solvents that are associated with certain health conditions. The following conditions will be classified as **PRESUMPTIVE** and include: kidney cancer, liver cancer, non-Hodgkin Lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma, scleroderma, Parkinson's disease, and aplastic anemia/myelodysplastic syndromes. Presently, veterans who served for 30 days or more during the above stated dates at Camp Lejeune are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for 15 health conditions. This new proposal would expand eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time between the dates stated. The veterans from Camp Lejeune now join Vietnam veterans and the veterans from the Gulf War and Iraq and Afghanistan for **PRESUMPTIVE** diseases and the connection to their service in those areas.
6. **DISABILITY COMPENSATION IS NON-TAXABLE.** For those veterans that received disability compensation for the first time in 2015, disability compensation is a non-taxable monetary benefit paid to veterans who are disabled as a result of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.