

VVA CHAPTER 1069 BENEFITS PRESENTATION, 7/13/2016, PAGE 1

1. **Dwight Winkler**, 2254 CR 291, East Bernard, TX 77435; (979) 335-4464; lerwinkdd@aol.com. **Don Montoya**, Wharton County Veterans Service Officer, 1017 N. Alabama Road, Wharton, TX 77488; (979) 532-1311; don.montoya@co.wharton.tx.us. **Vanessa Hicks-Callaway** (Congressman Blake Farenthold's Veteran Advocate), (361) 894-6446, email: Vanessa.Hicks-Callaway@mail.house.gov. **Matt Minor** (Texas State Representative Phil Stephenson's Veteran Advocate), (281) 232-7900, his e-mail is Matt.Minor@house.state.tx.us, his Wharton office is 1603 North Richmond Road, Wharton, TX 77488. **VA INQUIRY ROUTING & INFORMATION SYSTEM (IRIS)**, website is <https://iris.custhelp.com>. **24/7 VETERANS CRISIS LINE (VCL)**: Veterans can call the national suicide prevention hotline number, 1-800-273-8255, and then "PRESS 1" to reach a highly skilled responder trained in suicide prevention and crisis intervention.

2 VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM PRIORITIES GROUPS: The VA administers a patient enrollment system that is based on priority groups to ensure health care benefits are readily available to enrolled veterans. There are eight priority groups with PRIORITY GROUPS FOUR and FIVE being the next two groups. Eligibility for PRIORITY GROUP FOUR are Veterans who are receiving Aid and Attendance or Household benefits from the VA OR VETERANS who have been determined by the VA to be catastrophically disabled. PRIORITY GROUP FIVE eligibility are VETERANS who are non-service connected disabled and non-compensable service-connected VETERANS who are rated 0% disabled by the VA with an annual income below the VA's income limits OR VETERANS receiving VA pension benefits OR VETERANS eligible for MEDICAID programs. Benefits are determined by your HEALTHCARE BOOKLET you received from the VA upon enrollment.

3. POTPOURRI OF INFORMATION: In JACKSON County, there are 163 veterans receiving VA disability compensation or pensions from the VA. Of these 31 are 10-20%, 30 are 30-40%, 32 are 50-60%, 41 are 70-90% and 14 are 100%. Fifteen receive a veterans pension (VVA 10/8/2014).

4. DISTRIBUTION OF VA EXPENDITURES 2005-2015 FISCAL YEARS: On the next page is a chart (from the web site www.va.expenditures.fiscal.year.2015 and click on EXPENDITURES -US Department of Veterans Affairs) that depicts the number of Veterans in Wharton County, Jackson County, and Colorado County for the Fiscal Years 2005-2015 and the VA expenditures per county for those Fiscal Years. As an example, Waller County has 2598 Veterans in the county (32 more than Wharton County) for Fiscal Year 2015 but the VA is expending only \$11,583,000 compared to Wharton County's \$18,201,000. I believe this is because the Waller County VSO is only paid for 16 hours a week and the more opportunities for Veterans, family members and survivors to become aware of, or learn about, or discuss, or be provided information about benefits and services, the larger the VA expenditures will be for the county.

Dwight Winkler 7/8/2016