



76 SOUTH RIVERSIDE DRIVE  
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My name is Rodger Young, I'm a Veteran's Service Officer for the Clermont County Veteran Service Commission. Veteran Service Officers assist veterans in obtaining their VA benefits. This can include enrolling into healthcare, applying for compensation/pension, education benefits, burial benefits, VA Home Loans, and financial assistance. We are also charged with aiding veterans with their appeals and dealing with overpayments and billing issues. We are the preverbal "one-stop-shopping" for VA benefits.

Our office was invited to attend this committee to provide feedback on the services Veteran Healthcare Administration (VHA) provides and also comment on the programs/stigmata associated with Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD).

**1) Positive Feedback:**

- a) The nursing teams are working well; open communications is the key to successful healthcare.
- b) MyHealthVet is a great way to open the communication channels from veteran to doctor.
- c) Love the Ebenefits website which is the main hub for VA benefits/downloading VA correspondence ect...
- d) I commend the staff at CBOC Clermont County Ohio...great service, great teams, very cooperative/friendly with VSOs and they treat every veteran with the utmost respect.
- e) The quick reference flipbooks are great for passing on information concerning healthcare

**2) Areas to improve upon (our feedback from the veterans):**

- a) Non-VA care (FEE Basis) – I attached the handout VHA mailed concerning paying for outside medical care due to a medical emergency. Many veterans are confused about the program and when VA will pay for emergency care/transportation. VHA needs to be clear on what VA will pay and the requirements before the care is covered; the handout makes it sound easy. There should also be a claim form to send to VHA along with the hospital bills. The processing time is another concern. It takes so long to obtain an answer many veterans are turned over to collections/credit ruined while waiting for an answer; appeal take even longer. VHA needs a call center for billing/non VA care alone; normally will get an answering machine and no return call.
- b) Average wait time for surgeries
- c) Still getting complaints about the professionalism at VAMC Cincinnati (friendliness), little to no complaints on Georgetown/Clermont CBOCs
- d) DBQs
- e) If doctors refer veterans to file a claim, please ensure diagnosis/notes are annotated in CAPRI. Makes everyone's life much easier when filing a claim.

Veterans endure many adjustments when returning from deployment to include indoctrination back into family life, adjusting back into their home station and their rules, and trying to process what had happened while deployed. In general, many veterans are reluctant to seek help for mental issues due to the stigmata associated with PTSD (employment to include separation from the military, family and current gun laws). Feedback from the CBOC staff indicate cognitive therapy is working on many veterans. Success stories to be honest I don't have any.



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Many who seek help for PTSD receive some relief through medications (to tone down the symptoms) but I've never seen a veteran completely cured. Realize in past wars veterans would endure 1-2 deployments into the warzone; contemporaneously, it's not uncommon to see 5-8 deployments. PTSD programs have prevented many suicides but I think we still have a long road ahead in treating PTSD. In my opinion, we need to fix the stigmas associated with PTSD so more veterans will seek help and then we need to rehabilitate them to function in today's society outside the military.

Our office appreciates the invitation today to outline some of the hurdles VA faces and the vast improvements it has made to ensure the veterans are taken care of. Partnerships within VHA/VBA/VSO will solidify a smooth transition for the returning veterans and their families. Standardization, consistency and communication within these three agencies are essential to minimizing the confusion within the veteran communities.

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"... to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan..."

**Abraham Lincoln**

*Second Inaugural Address*

*March 4, 1865*

