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1. VFW Helps Lower TRICARE Select Copayments: Today, after months of pressure by the VFW and other veteran, military and family service organizations, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) reduced copayments for the new TRICARE Select plan. DHA initially announced the new copay concept and costs, which will replace the percent-of-services-used model in place under TRICARE Standard and Extra, in the Interim Final Rule released in September. The new copay scale released today shows a reduction in the cost of Group A primary care visits from \$27 to \$21 for active-duty family members, and from \$35 to \$28 for retirees. Group A beneficiaries are those who were in uniform or retired prior to the Jan. 1, 2018, implementation date. Similar reductions will be seen in specialty care, urgent care, emergency room visits, and ambulance service. The new copay amounts were included in the “Notice of TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select Plan Information for Calendar Year 2018.” The document also includes details on new covered care, enrollment requirements, and a change in the urgent care referral requirements. [Read the full details.](#)

2. VFW-SVA 2018 Student Veterans Fellowship Class: The VFW and Student Veterans of America announced the names of 10 student veterans who will comprise the fourth legislative fellowship class. The announcement was made during the SVA's 10th National Conference and continues efforts by both organizations to train grassroots advocates. The semester-long program includes policy research and six days in Washington, D.C., for the VFW's Legislative Conference. [Learn more about the fellowship.](#)

3. VFW Welcomes New Army Secretary: The VFW joined with other veteran and military service organization leaders today to welcome aboard Dr. Mark T. Esper as the 23rd secretary of the U.S. Army. The secretary was commissioned as an infantry officer in 1986 from West Point. He would go on to serve with the 101st Airborne Division in Operations Desert Shield/Storm, as well as command an airborne rifle company in Europe before retiring from the Reserve Component in 2007. He is a recipient of the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He is also a Life member of the VFW Department of Pennsylvania. Esper has served in

senior positions with Raytheon, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Aerospace Industries Association, the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations and Government Affairs Committee. He also served as a deputy assistant secretary of defense for negotiations policy, and was the legislative director and senior policy advisor to another VFW Life member, Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska.

4. Veterans Legislation Roundup: Congress recently passed three pieces of legislation supported by the VFW — [S.1393](#), the *Jobs for Our Heroes Act*, [S.925](#), the *Veterans E-Health and Telemedicine Support (VETS) Act of 2017*, and [H.R.4323](#), the *Supporting Veterans in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Careers Act*. S.1393 amends existing law in order to allow VA physicians and nurse practitioners to provide medical certifications to veterans who currently operate or wish to operate commercial vehicles. Additionally, it applies commercial driver's license standards for former members of the armed forces to current members. Passed by both the House and Senate, this bill now goes to the president. S.925, passed by the Senate, amends Title 38 to improve the ability of licensed health care professionals employed by VA to treat veterans via telemedicine at any location in any state, regardless of where the professional and patient are located. H.R. 4323, passed by the House, directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to promote veteran involvement in STEM education, computer science, and scientific research by increasing outreach to veterans and by expanding certain NSF scholarships, grants and fellowship opportunities to veterans and military families.

5. National Veterans Day Poster Contest: Calling all artists! The 2018 National Veterans Day Poster Contest is now open for submissions. Each year the Veterans Day National Committee publishes a commemorative Veterans Day poster. See samples of [previous winners](#). With 2018 marking the centennial of the end of World War I, this year's poster theme will be "The War to End All Wars." The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2018, and the Veterans Day National Committee will convene a selection subcommittee in May 2018 to review submissions and make a final selection. Read more about [submission details](#).

6. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the burial update of one American serviceman who had been missing in action from Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:

-- **Army Sgt. 1st Class Eugene J. Colley**, 48, of Edenton, N.C., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried Jan. 9 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Colley was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. In late November 1950, his unit was assembled with South Korean soldiers into the 31st Regimental Combat Team on the east side of the Chosin River, North Korea, when his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. Colley was among 1,300 members of the RCT killed or captured in enemy territory and was declared missing on Dec. 2, 1950. [Read about Colley](#).

To sign up new veterans' advocates, click here: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/mlm/signup.htm>.

As always, we want to hear your advocacy stories. To share your stories or photos with us, simply email them directly to vfwac@vfw.org.