



VA, Labor Department Officials Speak at VFW National Convention

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Officials from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor outlined their priorities to VFW members at the annual VFW National Convention last week.

Dr. Paul Lawrence, VA's under secretary for benefits, said the agency is focusing on the Forever GI Bill, the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP), and the Transition and Economic Development office. He also said the VA processed nearly 160,000 claims that came from the VFW in fiscal year 2017 and reminded VFW members that the VA is hiring. Fifty-five percent of Veterans Business Administration employees are veterans.

Matt Miller, deputy assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, said he is focusing on veteran unemployment, which was at just 3.7 percent in 2017.

"We all know the great benefits of hiring veterans," he said. Miller also touted the Labor Department's HIRE Vets Medallion Program Demonstration — an effort that will recognize up to 300 employers for their investments in recruiting, employing, and retaining our nation's veterans.

Dr. Carolyn Clancy, VA's acting under secretary for health, said her top priorities are implementing the VA MISSION Act, building the Electronic Health Record system and modernizing the VA. She said the EHR system will take some time, stating "The tech is about a third of the solution, the rest is humans."

The event was hosted by Ryan Gallucci, director of VFW's Veterans National Service, and Carlos Fuentes, director of VFW's National Legislative Service.

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