



Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Secretary

MARTIN O'MALLEY
GOVERNOR

ANTHONY G. BROWN
LT. GOVERNOR

EDWARD J. CHOW, JR.
SECRETARY

To: Governor O'Malley and Maryland General Assembly
From: Secretary Edward Chow, Jr. *EG*
Date: December 1, 2010
Re: Interim Report, Military Health Care Provider Transition Plan (HB 1353)
MSAR# 8299 SB 1033/Ch. 511, 2010 and HB 1353/Ch. 512, 2010

The legislation titled Veterans Affairs – Military Health Care Provider Transition Plan, 2010 Legislative Session Chapter 512, HB 1353, went into effect on July 1, 2010. The legislation requires the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) to develop a Military Health Care Provider Transition Plan. The purpose of the plan is to increase the number of military veterans with expertise in health care workforce shortage areas to transition into civilian health care provider positions. This document is an interim report of findings thus far by MDVA.

Workgroup

The MDVA Chief of Staff, Jerry Boden, has been working with the following individuals from state agencies on this plan:

- Paula Hollinger, Associate Director, Health Care Workforce, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)
- Mary O'Connor, Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB)
- Gareth Murray, Director of Legislative Affairs, Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)

A key advisor to our group is Jerral Behnke, Dean of Education Programs for the U.S. Navy Medicine Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education Command.

Coordination

The workgroup has met with the following individuals to gain further insight on this issue:

- Stan Seidel, Director, Veterans Employment and Training, U.S. Department of Labor
- Colonel Corinne Ritter, Commander, 48th Combat Support Hospital, U.S. Army Reserves, Ft. Meade, MD
- Captain Hajja Sahid-Hicks, Commander, 224th Area Support Medical Company, Maryland Army National Guard
- Dennis Wilkie, Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, Ft. Meade, MD
- Jeanne DeCosmo, Director of Workforce Activities, Maryland Hospital Association
- Mike Wingfield, Associate Chief, Talent Management, VA Maryland Health Care System
- Ann Bloesl, Manager, Transition Assistance Program, Bethesda Naval Medical Center
- Daniel Nichols, Executive Director, Military to Medicine Program, Inova Health System (Virginia)
- Ed Cramer, Military Relations & Field Services Manager, US Family Health Plan, Johns Hopkins Hospital
- Christopher Gruttadauria, Manager of Recruiting for CVS Pharmacy Minute Clinics

The workgroup also reviewed the recommendations identified in the Report of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene as required under Chapter 441 of the Acts of 2007, Identifying and Breaking Down Barriers: Easing the Transition from Active Duty to Civilian Health Care Provider, dated December 12, 2007.

Findings

Based on our discussions with military health care personnel in the U.S. Army Reserves and the Maryland National Guard, and after reviewing survey results from 65 military personnel and veterans, we have determined that our plan will need to focus on assisting U.S. Navy General Duty Corpsmen and Army Medics in their transition to the civilian health care industry, specifically into the LPN position.

U.S. Navy General Duty Corpsmen and Army Medics should be given credit for clinical and didactic experience that is substantially equivalent to requirements for a Maryland Licensed Practical Nursing education program. To that end the committee will involve educators representing Maryland nursing education programs and the Board of Nursing as well as individuals representing military programs attempting to integrate former military into the civilian workforce. If Maryland can make it easier for Corpsmen/Medics to transition into the LPN position, we will be able to retain more of these well-trained health care providers here in Maryland. Additionally, Maryland will have more highly trained LPNs in the pipeline to help address the looming nursing shortage.

Next Steps

Our workgroup will coordinate with appropriate health care industry, government and military personnel to identify specific steps Maryland can take to expedite the process for Corpsmen/Medics to become LPNs in Maryland upon release from active duty. We will provide our final recommendations to the General Assembly on or before January 1, 2012.