

and the demonstrated potential of organizations which have not previously received USIA awards.

6. *Cost-effectiveness*: Overhead and administrative components including salaries should be economical while adequate and appropriate to provide the required services. Proposals should document plans to realize cost-savings and other efficiencies through the use of technology, administrative streamlining and other management techniques.

7. *Cost-sharing*: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing. Preference will be given to proposals which demonstrate innovative approaches to leveraging of funds, fund-raising and other sharing of costs.

8. *Support of Diversity*: Proposals should demonstrate the applicant's awareness and understanding of diversity and a commitment to its achievement through individual grant awards and institutional participation and in other ways in both administrative and programmatic aspects of the Fulbright program.

9. *Evaluation*: The grant recipient should anticipate working closely with USIA to evaluate the program consistent with requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further information.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: October 16, 1998.

Judith Siegel,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 98-28288 Filed 10-21-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0427]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed reinstatement of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on information needed to assess the health care disability compensation or rehabilitation needs of former Prisoners of War (POW).

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before December 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Ann Bickoff, Veterans Health Administration (191A1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0427" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann Bickoff at (202) 273-8310.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VHA invites comments on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VHA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VHA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4)

ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title and Form Number: Former POW Medical History, VA Form 10-0048.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0427.

Type of Review: Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

Abstract: The information is obtained from former POWs to assess the medical care needs of these veterans. The information will be used to determine the present and future needs of POWs in the areas of disability compensation, health care and rehabilitation.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 750 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent: 1 hour.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 750.

Dated: August 4, 1998.

By direction of the Secretary.

Donald L. Neilson,

Director, Information Management Service.

[FR Doc. 98-28295 Filed 10-21-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0496]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments for information needed to authorize payment of Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed

collection of information should be received on or before December 21, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0496" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title and Form Numbers: Claim for Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance, VA Form 29-0549.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0496.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: The form is used by the mortgage holder to claim the proceeds of Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance and to provide the information needed to authorize payment of the insurance. The information requested is required by law, Title 38, U.S.C., Section 2106, and is used by VA to process the mortgage holder's claim.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 250 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent: 60 minutes.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 250.

Dated: August 14, 1998.

By direction of the Secretary
Donald L. Neilson,
Director, Information Management Service.
[FR Doc. 98-28296 Filed 10-21-98; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Summary of Precedent Opinions of the General Counsel

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is publishing a summary of legal interpretations issued by the Department's General Counsel involving veterans' benefits under laws administered by VA. These interpretations are considered precedential by VA and will be followed by VA officials and employees in future claim matters. The summary is published to provide the public, and, in particular, veterans' benefit claimants and their representatives, with notice of VA's interpretation regarding the legal matter at issue.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jane L. Lehman, Chief, Law Library, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-6558.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: VA regulations at 38 CFR 2.6(e)(9) and 14.507 authorize the Department's General Counsel to issue written legal opinions having precedential effect in adjudications and appeals involving veterans' benefits under laws administered by VA. The General Counsel's interpretations on legal matters, contained in such opinions, are conclusive as to all VA officials and employees not only in the matter at issue but also in future adjudications and appeals, in the absence of a change in controlling statute or regulation or a superseding written legal opinion of the General Counsel.

VA publishes summaries of such opinions in order to provide the public with notice of those interpretations of the General Counsel that must be followed in future benefit matters and to assist veterans' benefit claimants and their representatives in the prosecution of benefit claims. The full text of such opinions, with personal identifiers deleted, may be obtained by contacting the VA official named above.

VAOPGCPREC 8-98

Question Presented

a. Does 38 CFR 3.317 preclude compensation for an illness manifested

by symptoms that could, in some circumstances, be attributable to a known clinical diagnosis, even if no such diagnosis has been made with respect to the individual seeking compensation?

b. May the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pay compensation under 38 U.S.C. 1117 for disability manifested by symptoms that either elude diagnosis or are attributed to a poorly-defined disease such as chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia?

Held

a. Compensation may be paid under 38 CFR 3.317 for disability which cannot, based on the facts of the particular veteran's case, be attributed to any known clinical diagnosis. The fact that the signs or symptoms exhibited by the veteran could conceivably be attributed to a known clinical diagnosis under other circumstances not presented in the particular veteran's case does not preclude compensation under section 3.317.

b. Section 1117(a) of title 38, United States Code, authorizes service connection on a presumptive basis only for disability arising in Persian Gulf veterans due to "undiagnosed illness" and may not be construed to authorize presumptive service connection for any diagnosed illness, regardless of whether the diagnosis may be characterized as poorly defined.

Effective Date: August 3, 1998.

VAOPGCPREC 9-98

Question Presented

1. When a knee disorder is rated under Diagnostic Code (DC) 5257 (instability of the knee), must the claimant have compensable limitation of motion under DC 5260 or DC 5261 in order to obtain a separate rating for arthritis?

2. Must 38 CFR 4.40, 4.45, and 4.59 be considered when assigning an evaluation for degenerative or traumatic arthritis under DC 5003 or DC 5010, and if so, how?

3. When a disability is rated under a specific diagnostic code that does not appear to involve limitation of motion, must 38 CFR 4.40, 4.45, and 4.59 be considered to determine the applicability of another diagnostic code that does involve limitation of motion?

4. What determines whether a particular diagnostic code is predicated on loss of range of motion so that sections 4.40 and 4.45 apply?

5. Are DC 5259 (removal of the semilunar cartilage) and DC 5284 (foot injuries) based on loss of range of motion, requiring consideration of sections 4.40 and 4.45?