

March 2, 2016

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PARTNERS WITH VETERANS' AFFAIRS FOR VA SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY PROGRAM



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**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health and Department of Veterans' Affairs have implemented the VA Service-Connected Disability program which will assist veteran's families in obtaining benefits and compensation for which they qualify. Florida becomes the first state in the nation to develop a program giving funeral directors the ability to notify the certifying physician that the decedent may have a service-connected disability.

"In Florida, we strive to be the most veteran-friendly state in the nation," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "The new VA Service-Connected Disability program is a tremendous resource that will ensure veterans, family members and spouses get the compensation they so rightfully deserve."

The veteran's spouse and/or other family members may be entitled to VA compensation and other benefits if the service-connected condition was the underlying cause of death or a contributing factor in the veteran's death. A death certificate indicating the cause of death was service-connected is evidence needed by survivors when applying for the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefit.

"While it is often difficult for families to discuss estate planning, the active dialogues between veterans, their families and physicians concerning service-connected disabilities is important to have," said Mike Prendergast, executive director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. "Armed with information about this earned benefit, eligible veterans and their families will be better prepared for their financial future."

With more than 1.5 million veterans, Florida is the most veteran-friendly state in the nation. The VA Service-Connected Disability program is the latest step taken by the state to show appreciation for our veterans' service.

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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