

Veterans Newsletter

Broome County Executive Office
PO Box 1766
Binghamton, NY 13902



HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Broome County Veterans Service Agency

To provide assistance in determining eligibility and applying for VA benefits.

Broome County Office Building
60 Hawley St., 4th Floor
PO Box 1766 Binghamton, NY 13902
Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm
(Please make appointment)
607-778-2147

Binghamton Veterans Center

Providing counseling to combat veterans.

53 Chenango St. Binghamton, NY 13901
Monday – Friday 9:00am-5:30pm & by appointment
607-722-2393

VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic Binghamton

Provides Primary Care. Can refer to additional services and provide transportation to Syracuse VA Hospital.
Garvin Building 425 Robinson St.
Binghamton, NY 13901
Monday – Friday 8:00am-4:30pm
607-772-9100

Veterans Crisis Hotline

Confidential help for Veterans and their families.

1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
www.veteranscrisisline.net
Text 838255

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Provides information and assist in processing benefit claims.

(Purple Heart Award not necessary for services.)
VA Outpatient Clinic 425 Robinson St.
Binghamton, NY 13904
607-772-3087

NYS Division of Veterans Affairs

To provide assistance in determining eligibility and applying for VA benefits.

Broome County Office Building
60 Hawley St., 4th Floor
PO Box 1766 Binghamton, NY 13902
Mon., Wed. & Fri. 8:30am – 4:30pm
(Appointments (607) 724-1299)
Veterans Home Oxford
Tues. & Thurs. (607) 843-3299

Welcome from the County Executive

On behalf of the residents of Broome County, I'd like to present the spring 2016 edition of your Veterans Newsletter.

I've often told you that Veterans hold a special place in my heart. We do a great deal in our community to make sure you are not forgotten.

We have done some great things for our Veterans over the past few months. You will read about a new memorial honoring our Korean War Veterans, as well as information on the Veterans of Distinction program through the Broome County Legislature.

And it has information on upcoming events that are geared toward our community's Veterans and services that are aimed to help the Veterans in our community.

I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for your service and your sacrifice, past or present.

God bless you and your families and God Bless America.

Debbie Preston

Broome County Executive

Preston, Local Leaders, Unveil New Memorial For Korean War Veterans Plaque is Part of the All Wars Memorial at Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena

Binghamton, NY – Broome County Executive Debbie Preston joined Broome County Legislative Majority Leader Dan Reynolds, local veterans and more to unveil a brand new plaque honoring the veterans who bravely served our Country during the Korean War.



"The addition of this plaque to the All Wars Memorial has been a long time coming," says Broome County Executive Debbie Preston. "This is for the men and women who put their lives on hold to fight for our Country. They deserve this recognition and we are proud to be able to put up a permanent thank you for their service."

"Honoring our Korean War Veterans with this memorial is just one of the many ways the County thanks those who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms," said Broome County Legislature Chairman and Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena Board Member Dan Reynolds.

The new plaque will be placed right next to the current glass case display of uniforms on the second floor of the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena.

In addition to the new plaque, the medals of local Veterans Floyd Maines, Joseph Mann, Lynn Matthews, Joseph Kapral, Thomas Corgel, Timothy Grippen, Samuel Posten, Andrew Bourne, Darlene Croston and Joseph Merrill were added to the display.



"When this memorial was designed, the intention was to have it constantly evolving to recognize all of our Veterans both past and present," says Broome County Veterans Director Brian Vojtisek. "Having it at the Arena is the perfect spot because it will be seen by the hundreds of thousands of people who come to events there every year."

(Continued on page 8)

Broome County to Host New York State American Legion Convention

Binghamton, NY – Nearly a thousand people will come to Broome County this summer to take part in the 98th annual New York State American Legion Convention, as well as the 96th annual New York State Auxiliary Convention and the 42nd annual Sons of the American Legion Convention.

Broome County Executive Debbie Preston joined Broome County Legislature Chairman Dan Reynolds and other Legislators, Binghamton Mayor Rich David, Broome County Director of Veterans Services Brian Vojtisek and American Legion Convention Chairman Frank Konopka to announce those three conventions will take place from Thursday, July 13th through Saturday, July 16th.

“We are thrilled to welcome hundreds and hundreds of veterans to our community to host this event for the 4th time since 1999,” says Broome County Executive Debbie Preston. “Not only will this be a large economic boost, but it shows people from around the state how much we care about our Veterans.”

Convention Chairman Frank Konopka expects around a thousand people and has already booked most of the hotel rooms in downtown Binghamton to accommodate the guests.

“We welcome the opportunity to host the 98th annual American Legion Convention in Broome County,” Konopka says. “We know that people enjoyed their visit back in 2011 and we hope to show them the same great time or event better time this year.”

The Holiday Inn in Downtown Binghamton, along with the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena will serve as the headquarters for the Legion Convention.

The Arena Board has graciously waived the rental fee for the Arena, saving the convention thousands of dollars in costs.

The Doubletree by Hilton in Binghamton will serve as the headquarters for the Auxiliary and the Quality Inn and Suites in Vestal will serve as the headquarters for the Sons of the American Legion convention.

“There’s no better place to hold this statewide Convention and recognize the contributions of our Veterans, than right here at our very own Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena,” said Chairman Daniel Reynolds. “As a member of the Arena Board of Directors I was glad we were able to waive the rental fee for our Veterans. We take great pride in helping and honoring our Veterans in the community, from the new DAV Van, to the Honor Flights, the Legislature’s Annual Veterans of Distinction Ceremony and helping secure the statewide convention is another example of one of the many things Broome County is doing to support our Veterans.”

“We’re a community that respects and values our veterans, and having so many distinguished individuals come to Binghamton for the state American Legion convention is a bright spot for both the City and the Southern Tier,” says Binghamton Mayor Richard C. David.

Some of the planned highlights of this year’s convention include a parade on Friday night, starting at American Legion Post 80 on Main Street in Binghamton and going to the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena.

The B.C. Transit Trolley will also be available to take the guests on a tour of the carousels in Broome County, known as the Carousel Capital of the World.

“This is a great opportunity to showcase the great features we have to offer in Broome County,” says Preston. “Our guests will be eating in our restaurants, shopping in our stores, visiting our parks and much more.”

This convention will take place the weekend following the Dick’s Sporting Goods Open, which is another economic boost to the community.

WANTED!



WORLD WAR II, KOREAN, VIETNAM AND TERMINALLY ILL VETERANS OF ANY CONFLICT

“HONOR FLIGHT IS FREE TO ALL VETERANS”

“TWIN TIERS HONOR FLIGHT”

Transports Veterans to Washington, DC to visit their National Memorials

Each Veteran is accompanied by a Guardian to ensure the Veteran experiences the trip of a lifetime!

Download Veteran & Guardian Applications:

www.twintiershonorflight.org

Additional Information: twintiershonorflight@gmail.com **or (914)-420-2545**

NY Connects: Choices for Long Term Services and Supports

NY Connects is an Aging and Disability Resource Center that is easy to access and available to all individuals who may need help with their long term needs, regardless of age, income or source of payment.

NY Connects empowers individuals and families to consider available services and supports whether in the community, or in an assisted living or nursing home facility. The core services offered by NY Connects include information and assistance, conflict free referrals, assistance for applying for public benefits, and person centered planning including care transitions and individualized options counseling.

NY Connects serves anyone needing information on long term services and supports: a child or adult with a disability, a family member or caregiver, friends and neighbors, older adults or professionals.

Call NY Connects at 607-778-2278 for information on long term services and supports.



Broome County Veterans Memorial Association *A Long and Proud Tradition of Service*

Our Association is committed to assisting active duty and reserve members of the various Armed Forces to provide dignified burial honors for Broome County's Veterans as well as providing color guards for various civic and patriotic ceremonies. It is not affiliated with any governmental agency but is a recognized non-profit Veterans Organization, originally incorporated in 1986.

We have remained steadfast in fulfilling our mission despite the dramatic increase in requests for our services over the last decade. Currently, we receive between 220 and 250 requests for burial honor details annually across Broome County's 700 square miles.

To continue our mission we need more volunteers!

If you are interested in joining our dedicated group of volunteer veterans and committed to helping us fulfil that most sacred trust between Veterans please contact:

Tony Moran (607) 217-5821 or
Walt Loveless at (607) 765-1798

Veterans DAV Transportation

The DAV Van is available Monday through Friday for Veterans with appointments scheduled from 8:00am - 1:00pm at the Syracuse VA Medical Center.

48 hour advance notice is requested for DAV Transportation.

Please call 778-3037 to reserve your seat.

You will need to provide the following information when calling:

- ◆ Your Name
- ◆ Last 4 digits of your Social Security number
- ◆ Phone Number
- ◆ Address and directions to your home
- ◆ Date and time of your Appointment
- ◆ Which clinic your appointment is at

The driver can only wait 5 minutes for you, so please be ready.

The van cannot accommodate wheelchairs. A wheelchair will be available at the Syracuse VAMC if you need one.

The van cannot accommodate any side trips or personal errand requests.

Broome County Legislature



Please join Chairman Daniel J. Reynolds and the County Legislature on Thursday, May 19, 2016 for the 6th Annual Veterans of Distinction Ceremony to honor Veterans from Broome County.

The Legislature will present Certificates of Appreciation to Veterans of Distinction who have been nominated through one of the local Veterans organizations such as the VFW or American Legion.

Our goal is identify men and women of all branches of service and all conflicts to represent the thousands of Veterans living in Broome County.

Nominations for the Annual Veterans of Distinction ceremony are now being accepted.

To nominate yourself or someone you know, please contact your local Veterans organization.



The Binghamton Vet Center and NY State Division of Veterans Affairs are pleased to offer a series of informational meetings entitled "What Every Veteran and Family Should Know! " All sessions are Wednesdays from 5-6:15 pm at the Binghamton Vet Center, 53 Chenango Street in Binghamton. Please RSVP to the Vet Center at 722-2393.

Topics and dates are:

- 3/30 Disability Claims - Gulf War, OIF/OEF update
- 4/27 Eldercare & the Aging Veteran

- 5/18 Disability Claims - Agent Orange update
- 6/15 Disability Claims - Camp Lejeune water contamination update



Broome County to Offer Defensive Driving Course for Veterans

In an effort to reduce the number of Veterans involved in motor vehicle crashes, the Broome County STOP-DWI Program is hosting a Defensive Driving Course specifically for Veterans. Defensive Driving presents valuable information and safe driving tips to even the most experienced drivers. The Point & Insurance Reduction Program (PIRP) course is approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and will be held on Saturday, April 16th from 9am to 4pm on the SUNY Broome campus, Decker Building, Room 117.

The cost of the course is just \$5 and is open to veterans only. Lunch is included and will consist of a presentation focused on the common traffic safety challenges Veterans face in the months and years following overseas deployments. Seating is limited to 24 registrants.

Veterans may register by calling the SUNY Broome Continuing Education Department at (607) 778-5012 and telling the clerk they wish to register for the Defensive Driving Course for veterans being held on Saturday, April 16. SUNY Broome accepts Mastercard and VISA over the phone. If the Veteran wishes to register in person, they may go to the SUNY Broome Continuing Education Office in the Wales Building, Room 115. If registering in person, acceptable forms of payment include Mastercard, VISA, cash, personal checks, and money orders.

There are no online or mail registrations for this class. Students will be issued receipts with class location and time details along with a parking pass by e-mail or regular mail. Registration closes on Wednesday, April 13th or when the class is full.

The course is organized and funded in part by the Broome County Veteran Service Agency, the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group, the Downtown Binghamton Vet Center, and the STOP-DWI Returning Warrior 10 & 5 Miler.

Broome County SENIOR GAMES

August - November 2016



•GOLF •TENNIS •VOLLEYBALL •SOFTBALL •BOWLING •BASKETBALL •BILLIARDS
•BOCCE •SHUFFLEBOARD •PICKLEBALL •PING PONG •DISC GOLF

The Senior Games help people stay active through fun, competitive, adventurous, athletic events!
Senior games give people the opportunity to stay fit by enjoying outdoor and indoor activities, while meeting new people and just having fun!
The games are open to anyone 55 years and older.

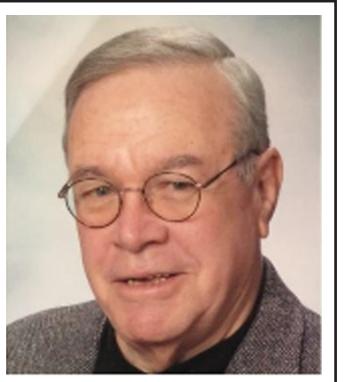
For more information call

(607) 778-2411
or visit our website at

www.gobroomecounty.com/senior/games

New Memorial *Continued from Page 1*

As part of the ceremony, County Executive Preston took a moment to honor local veteran Joe Laughney, who passed away. Laughney was not only a veteran and a member of the Arena board, but was instrumental in getting the All Wars memorial started and was working on today's ceremony when he passed away.



"Joe was one of a kind," says Preston. "He worked tirelessly and without fanfare to make sure the efforts of our Broome County Veterans from all wars and conflicts would be recognized. We thank him for his years of dedicated service, not only to his Country, but also his fellow Veterans. He will truly be missed."

"The passing of Joe Laughney is loss for the entire community. I first met Joe almost 25 years ago and he was a mentor to me as I got my start in government and politics. Over the years Joe and I became good friends. As a United States Marine Corps Veteran, Joe was a tireless advocate for Veterans in Broome County. And as a fellow member of the Floyd L. Maines Veterans Memorial Arena Board of Directors, I saw first hand Joe's outstanding work to recognize the contributions of those who have served our Country. On behalf of the Broome County Legislature, we thank Joe Laughney for his service to our community and country," says Reynolds.



Syracuse VA Medical Center Holds Town Hall Meeting in Binghamton

Meeting featured an overview of the plans and progress underway for the new Binghamton Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Syracuse, NY- Syracuse VA Medical Center Director James Cody, and key members of the Medical Center Staff as well as the staff of the Binghamton VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic, hosted a "Town Hall Meeting" on Thursday, Jan 21, 2016 in the Decker Conference room at the Broome County Public Library. The meeting was attended by a cross section of stakeholders consisting of Veterans, family members and Veteran advocate groups.

The meeting featured an overview of the plans and progress underway for the new Binghamton Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) which is currently under construction. The new, 25,000 square foot CBOC will be located at 203 Court Street, in Binghamton, New York. The facility currently occupies approximately 9,500 square feet in the Garvin Building on the campus of the Greater Binghamton Healthcare Center. The new facility is expected to be completed and operational on the fall of 2016.

"The Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Binghamton currently provides health care to approximately 4,200 Veterans. There are approximately 17,000 Veterans in and around Broome County.

While not all of those Veterans would need or be eligible for VA health care under current eligibility guidelines, we want to continue to reach out to those who need and desire care...in order to do that, we need more capacity", said Richard Kazel, External Medical/Surgical Care Line Manager for the Syracuse VA.

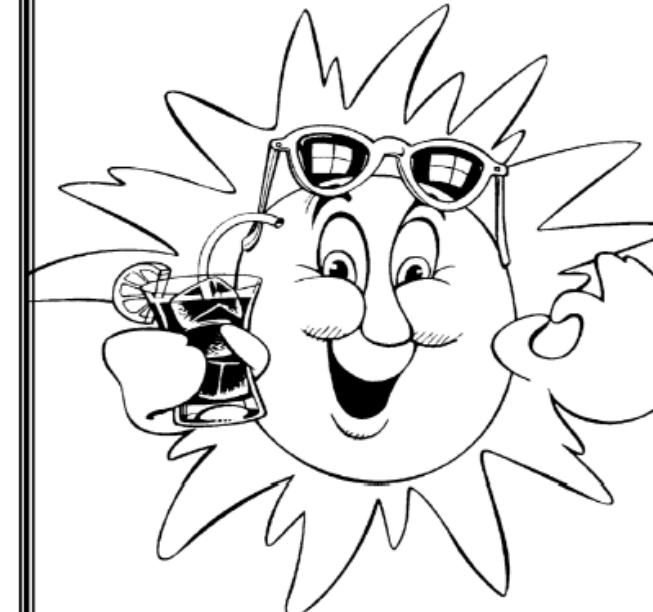
Kazel commented that the new facility will allow for significant expansion of specialty care and services already provided at the current location. He said that new services will in large part be dependent on the needs of an expanded number of Veterans the clinic serves.

"Our overall goal is to provide as many services as possible to our Veterans in their community to eliminate, where possible, the need to travel to the Medical Center in Syracuse", he concluded.

Kick the summer off right, with family, friends, great food and a ton of fun! Join Broome County Office for Aging at our annual...

Senior Picnic & Fun Fest!

SAVE THE DATE!



When: Wednesday, June 22nd 10am-2:00pm

Where: Broome Community College (Front Street in Binghamton)

Lunch will be served at noon!

We will be enjoying rotisserie chicken with all the picnic fixings and strawberry shortcake for dessert!

\$4 contribution for Lunch

“HOW CAN I HELP YOU?”

He

**Immediately call the 24-hour National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at
1-877-4AID-VET**

Benefit Eligibility Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Videos and easy to understand 30 second eligibility quiz are available on explore.va A hardcopy and online handbook is for available benefits and qualifications information Comprehensive benefits and eligibility information are available at ebenefits.va 	<p>VA National Call Center: 1-800-827-1000</p> <p>Benefits Handbook: www.va.gov/opa/</p> <p>Easy to understand videos about all VA programs and eligibility: http://explore.va.gov/</p> <p>Applications and detailed eligibility: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p>
Benefit Application/Claim Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information, forms, and phone numbers are available online for Veterans and their dependents 	<p>All forms and applications available at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p> <p>Videos that explain how to fill out select forms: http://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/videos.aspx</p> <p>VA National Call Center: 1-800-827-1000</p>
Disability Compensation Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability compensation is a tax-free benefit paid to eligible Veterans Eligibility is determined by injuries/diseases from/aggravated by service 	<p>All forms and information available at: https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p>
Dependency & Indemnity Compensation for Veteran's Dependents	<p>Dependents may be awarded tax-free benefits for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Death during military service or post-service related to a service-connected disability Death after extended period of 100 percent disability 	<p>Information available at: http://benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency_and_indeemnity.asp</p> <p>https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p>
Education and Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post-9/11 GI Bill pays higher education tuition, housing and stipends for Veterans, service members or their dependents Eligibility - served at least 90 days on active duty after 9/10/2001 	<p>Information available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/</p> <p>GI Bill Hotline :at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (442-4551)</p>
Insurance and TSGLI/SGLI Questions	<p>Veterans are eligible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Service members' Group Life Insurance Veterans' Group Life Insurance Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance TSGLI - SGLI Traumatic Injury Protection 	<p>All forms and information available at: http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance</p> <p>VA Life Insurance Call Center: at 1-800-669-8473</p>
Home Loan Guaranty Program Questions or Payment on a VA-Provided Home Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA guarantees loans made by private lenders such as banks, savings and loan associations, and mortgage companies The VA provides Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grants for severely disabled Veterans 	<p>All forms and information available at: www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/index.asp</p> <p>Payment Assistance:1-877-827-3702</p>
Transition Assistance Program (TAP)	<p>TAP may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from service briefings and assistance 	<p>https://www.dodtap.mil/</p>
Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Information	<p>VR&E includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational assessments, counseling and planning for education and employment Payment for tuition, books, fees, supplies, and monthly subsistence Job-seeking skills and assistance in finding employment 	<p>https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs</p>



**For information about benefits or VA services, call the VA National Call Center at
1-800-827-1000 Monday-Friday 8am-9pm EST***
**Call back service may be available after hours*

As of 5/5/15



**To help a Veteran in crisis, call the 24 hour Crisis Hotline
at 1-800-273-8255 option 1**

“HOW CAN I HELP?”

“HOW CAN I HELP?”		Veterans Health Administration
Health Benefits or Application Questions	<p>VA provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary care Mental health care (including Veteran-specific treatment for PTSD, TBI care, etc.) Preventative care A wide variety of specialty care Inpatient and outpatient pharmacy Geriatric care Long term care and support 	<p>Application, program and eligibility Information available at:</p> <p>http://www.va.gov/health/AboutVHA.asp</p> <p>www.va.gov/healtheligibility</p> <p>https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p> <p>1-877-222-VETS (8387)</p>
Locating the nearest VA Medical Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VA medical facilities can be found across the country, divided into 23 regional networks 	<p>Information available at:</p> <p>www.va.gov</p> <p>VA National Call Center: 1-800-827-1000</p> <p>And Veterans Health Administration Helpline: 1-877-222-VETS (8387)</p>
Access to Patient Medical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My HealtheVet is VA's online personal health record system designed to help VA patients manage their healthcare records and notes from medical providers 	<p>Information available at:</p> <p>https://www.myhealth.va.gov/index.html</p> <p>1-877-327-0022</p>
Rural Veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VA Office of Rural Health helps rural Veterans access medical care through VA facilities 	<p>Information available at:</p> <p>http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov</p>
Burial and memorial Benefits Information	<p>VA offers Veterans and their dependents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burial and honoring services, including gravesites and grave liners Maintenance of national cemeteries Headstones, markers, and presidential memorial certificates 	<p>Information available at:</p> <p>www.cem.va.gov</p> <p>https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/</p> <p>National Call Center: 1-800-827-1000</p>
Whistleblower Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Inspector General Hotline receives, screens, and refers complaints within VA Cases are accepted on a select basis based on the most potential risk to veterans, VA programs, and operations 	<p>Reporting information available at:</p> <p>www.va.gov/oig</p> <p>1-800-488-8244</p> <p>vaoighotline@va.gov</p>
Support Services for VA Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Employee Assistance Program helps employees manage personal issues in a confidential manner Local Union representatives are available to provide additional information 	<p>EAP Information available at: 1-202-461-5931</p> <p>Union information available at: http://www.va.gov/LMR/laborunions.asp</p>
Veteran (Vet) Center information	<p>Vet Centers provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual and Group Counseling Discharge Upgrade Information Community, Social Service and Medical Referrals Employee Assistance Referrals VA Benefits Assistance Referrals 	<p>Information available at: 1-877-WAR-VETS</p>
Claims Appeal Process information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Veteran or dependent/caregiver has a full year to appeal a denied claim regarding any benefit offered by VA - disability, healthcare, or burial related To appeal, Veterans must file a Notice of Disagreement (NOD) with the Administration that denied the benefit The appeals process has many stages, and most of the appeals processing and resolutions take place in the Administration that made the initial claims decision. If Veterans or dependents/caregivers are not satisfied with the appeals decision/statement of the case, they may continue to pursue their appeal before the Board of Veterans' Appeals 	<p>Information available at:</p> <p>http://www.bva.va.gov/How_Do_I_Appeal.asp</p> <p>1-800-923-8387</p>
VA Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on VA's organizational structure and Administrations 	<p>www.va.gov</p>