



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 28, 2009

VA Staffs Office for Survivors of Vets, Service Members
Shinseki: “Voice of Survivors” Will Strengthen Existing Programs

WASHINGTON -- To strengthen the programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the survivors of the nation’s Veterans and military personnel, the Department has staffed an office to serve as their advocate, with a charter that includes creating or modifying programs, benefits and services.

“Taking care of survivors is as essential as taking care of our Veterans and military personnel,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki said. “By taking care of survivors, we are honoring a commitment made to our Veterans and military members.”

The office serves as the primary advisor to the secretary on all issues affecting the survivors and dependents of deceased Veterans and service members. It will monitor VA’s delivery of benefits to survivors, make appropriate referrals to VA offices for survivors seeking benefits and explore innovative ways of reaching survivors who are not receiving the VA benefits for which they are eligible.

VA benefits for eligible survivors include educational assistance, home loan guaranties, health care insurance and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, a monthly payment to the survivors of some people who die on active duty and some seriously disabled Veterans.

More than 554,000 spouses, dependents and other survivors of Veterans are receiving VA benefits. That figure includes nearly 5,000 spouses of World War I Veterans, 90 spouses and 94 children of Spanish-American War Veterans, and two children of Civil War Veterans.

The establishment of this office was authorized in the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2008.

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