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(202) 461-7600
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New VA Initiative Focuses on Combating Fraud, Waste and Abuse

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) announced it will launch the "Seek to Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse (STOP FWA)" initiative that will capitalize on existing departmental activities that prevent or identify FWA, as well as ensure a consistent approach to FWA risk management as a way to centralize organizational resources.

"VA will create an organizational culture that is committed to STOP FWA," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "The initiative will protect the resources that deliver services and benefits our nation's Veterans have earned."

Historically, VA has had a decentralized approach to identifying, responding and preventing FWA. For example, VA's three administrations — Health, Benefits and Cemetery — as well as its various staff offices all had separate budgets and programs dedicated to preventing FWA.

Under the decentralized approach, VA's Office of Community Care prevented \$27 million of potentially fraudulent payments in fiscal year 2016 and VA's Debt Management Center referred more than \$11 million in potentially fraudulent activity, so far in this fiscal year.

STOP FWA's centralized approach will consolidate VA's resources under one organization to achieve even greater success. The department-wide effort will eliminate duplicative activities and explore potential partnerships with other federal agencies to capitalize on their successes in detecting fraud, waste and abuse.

Finally, VA will establish a Prevention of Fraud Waste and Abuse Advisory Committee by July 2017. Secretary Shulkin is developing a list of potential co-chairs and committee members, and the department will also seek committee members through the [Federal Register](#).

The committee will provide insight into lessons learned and private-sector practices; identify analytical tools that can be used at VA to prevent FWA; and leverage a deep wealth of experience in building mature, effective STOP FWA programs that protect VA's resources.

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