The Veterans Administration provides medical coverage in many instances to veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Like Medicare, it is a federal program, and like Medicare, has the ability to lien a Workers’ Compensation file and seek repayment for any amounts the V.A. feels have been made for a work-related condition.

These liens must be honored as they are covered by federal law with federal enforcement procedures. Just as in a situation with Medicare in the second blog in this series, when an injured worker opens a compensation claim with a Workers’ Compensation attorney it is absolutely necessary for the worker to tell the attorney whether the V.A. provides benefits to the worker.

If for whatever reason the V.A. has provided some treatment for a condition that is work-related, the V.A. has the right to look for repayment of those amounts. Accordingly, once an attorney has a client who is V.A. eligible that attorney should immediately take steps to notify the V.A. and determine if the V.A. is going to claim any amounts paid for a work-related condition.

The V.A. does have some machinery in place to deal with these liens but it is not easy to reduce or eliminate them so as soon as a worker has an injury and is V.A. eligible he or she should notify the attorney immediately.

As was the case with Medicare in the earlier blog, an individual covered by the V.A. who is suffering from a work-related injury should not discuss that if at all possible with a family physician or other physician treating non-work related issues.

As in the case with Medicare a physician can often note a work-related injury, and then that note is picked up by the clerical staff which bills the V.A. along with the non-work related issues as well and a lien results. It is absolutely necessary to separate the two if problems are to be avoided in the compensation claim.

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