

information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on information needed by lenders to determine whether any benefits related debts exist in the veteran-borrower's name prior to the closing of any VA-guaranteed loans on an automatic basis.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before January 5, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420 or <mailto:irmnkess@vba.va.gov>. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0406" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-7079 or FAX (202) 275-5947.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Verification of VA Benefit-Related Indebtedness, VA Form 26-8937.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0406.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Lenders authorized to make VA-guaranteed home or manufactured loans on the automatic basis have been required to determine through VA

whether any benefits related debts exist in the veteran-borrower's name prior to the closing of any automatic loan.

Lenders may not close any proposed automatic loan until they have evidence from VA that there is no debt, or if a debt exists, or the veteran has agreed on an acceptable repayment plan, or payments under a plan already in effect are current. The form restricts information requested to only that need for the debt check and eliminates unlimited versions of lender-designed forms. It provides information advising the lender whether or not the veteran is exempt from paying the funding fee, which must be collected on all VA home loans unless the veteran is receiving service-connected disability compensation. This benefits the lender by streamlining the procedure to verify the veteran's receipt of compensation. VA Form 26-8937 is designed to assist lenders and VA in the completion of debt checks in a uniform manner.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 6,250 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per

Respondent: 5 minutes.

Frequency of Response: One-time.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 75,000.

Dated: October 23, 2003.

By direction of the Secretary.

Jacqueline Parks,

IT Specialist, Records Management Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission will hold a meeting on November 19-21, 2003, at the Hotel Washington, Pennsylvania Avenue at 15th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20004. The session on November 19 will begin at 10 a.m., and the sessions on November 20 and 21 will begin at 8:30 a.m. The sessions on November 19 and 20 will end at 5 p.m. The session on November 21 will end at 3:30 p.m. These sessions are open to the public.

The purpose of the Commission is to conduct an external assessment of VA's capital asset needs and to assure that stakeholder and beneficiary concerns

are fully addressed. The Commission is reviewing recommendations in the Draft National CARES Plan. The Commission will also consider recommendations submitted by veterans service organizations, individual veterans, Congress, medical and nursing school affiliates, VA employees, local governments, community groups and others. Following its assessment, the Commission will make specific recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the realignment and allocation of VA capital assets to meet the demand for, and to enhance, veterans' healthcare services over the next 20 years.

At the November 19-21 meeting, the Commission will be briefed on the CARES process and the results of implementing that process in VA's Veterans Integrated Service network (VISN) 12. The Commission will review the information received from nationwide site visits, public hearings, and various requests for data as well as information discussed in its regular public meetings. The Commission will engage in deliberations regarding the Draft National CARES Plan and its impact in the various markets.

No time will be allocated at these meetings for receiving oral presentations from the public. However, interested persons may either attend or file statements with the Commission. Written statements may be filed either before the meeting or within 10 days after the meeting and addressed to: Department of Veterans Affairs, CARES Commission (OOCARES), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Any member of the public wishing additional information should contact Mr. Richard E. Larson, Executive Director, CARES Commission, at (202) 501-2000.

Dated: October 29, 2003.

By Direction of the Secretary.

E. Phillip Riggan,

Committee Management Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities Programs; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities Programs will be held December 9-10, 2003, at VA

Headquarters, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Room 830, Washington, DC. Meeting sessions will convene at 8:30 a.m. on both days and will adjourn at 4:30 p.m. on December 9 and at 12 Noon on December 10. The meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on VA's prosthetics programs designed to provide state-of-the-art prosthetics and the associated rehabilitation research, development, and evaluation of such technology. The Committee also provides advice to the Secretary on special disability programs which are defined as any program administered by the Secretary to serve veterans with spinal cord injury, blindness or vision impairment, loss of or loss of use of extremities, deafness or hearing

impairment, or other serious incapacities in terms of daily life functions.

On the morning of December 9, the Committee will be briefed by the Chief Consultants, Rehabilitation Strategic Healthcare Group and Prosthetics and Sensory Aids. In the afternoon, the Committee will be briefed by the directors of VA's special disabilities programs (physical medicine and rehabilitation, audiology and speech pathology) and the national directors of VA's ophthalmology and optometry programs. On the morning of December 10, the Committee will be briefed by the Director of the Veterans Health Administration's Business Office, and will subsequently discuss the annual Capacity Report as well as transition issues and benefits.

No time will be allocated for receiving oral presentations from the public. However, members of the public may direct questions or submit written statements for review by the Committee in advance of the meeting to Ms. Cynthia Wade, Veterans Health Administration, Patient Care Services, Rehabilitation Strategic Healthcare Group (117), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact Ms. Wade at (202) 273-8485.

E. Philip Riggan,

Committee Management Officer.

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