

## V.A. Funding: UPDATE!

The “Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020” added several requirements, including Section 1015, that negatively affect those schools who receive Veterans Administration (V.A.)/G.I. Bill funding that currently do not participate in Title IV. Prior to this law, numerous institutions that had been “eligible to participate” in Title IV had the opportunity for their students to use V.A. benefits.

“Isakson/Roe” ended that for schools who chose not to “participate” in Title IV. Section 1015 of this law required an institution receiving V.A. funding to either:

1. Be approved for and participate in at least one program under Title IV, or
2. Receive a waiver from this requirement

Number 2 sounded good, but turned out to be something of a “smokescreen” in practice. For 2022, the Department of Veterans Affairs granted a one-year “waiver” for schools that chose not to participate in Title IV. This ended on January 1, 2023.

This left most schools with a decision: 1) enter into an agreement to participate in Title IV or, 2) no longer receive G.I. Bill funding for their students who are veterans. Sadly, many schools have had to make the difficult choice to not have this great benefit available for their veteran students. It certainly did not appear to be fair nor equitable treatment.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 the V.A. bureaucracy held firm – schools not participating in Title IV could not offer these V.A. benefits. However, in late 2024, the “Senator Elizabeth Dole 21<sup>st</sup> Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act” was approved by Congress and became law – effective January 2, 2025. The new law opened the door for the V.A. to provide a “true waiver” for institutions who choose not to participate in Title IV.

Now, schools are applying for the “new” waiver – and receiving it! One school got an email from the V.A. that stated:

*The VA has reviewed your request for a waiver of the Title IV participation requirement found in Chapter 36 of Title 38 U.S.C. § 3672(b)(2)(A) and 3675(b)(4), these same sections authorize the Secretary to waive the requirements.*

*We have noted that your facility has elected not to participate in Title IV, therefore your waiver is granted effective January 2, 2025. Your waiver has no expiration date. We will notify the State Approving Agency.*

If you would like to apply for the “new” waiver, send an email detailing that your institution is requesting a Section 1015 waiver from the requirement to participate in Title IV as a condition of approval from the Veterans Administration to meet the eligibility requirements for educational programs such as the G.I. Bill. You should clearly state, “This request for a

waiver is based on Section 205, Paragraph (4)(B)(i) of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21<sup>st</sup> Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act signed into law on January 2, 2025. Our institution is eligible for Title IV, but elects not to participate.

Our sincere Thanks to those schools that worked tirelessly to make this happen!