

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana
May 9-10, 2018**

Resolution No. 16: Beneficiary Travel Philippines

Origin: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Submitted By: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Manila Outpatient Clinic is the only facility in the VA health-care system that the VA operates outside the United States; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with service-connected disabilities are treated at the clinic and would be otherwise eligible for beneficiary travel pay if treated at a stateside VA facility; and

WHEREAS, These same veterans are not afforded the benefit of service-connected beneficiary travel pay at the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, the VA amended its beneficiary travel regulations to only include payment of beneficiary travel within the United States; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2017, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) discontinued providing veterans any travel expenses in the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, Veterans with a service-connected disability living in the Philippines can choose to receive outpatient care at the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic, which provides primary and specialty care, medications, and refills ordered by a VA physician and also performs laboratory and other ancillary tests; and

WHEREAS, Veterans requiring a service, procedure, test or specialist that is not available at the clinic, have the option to enroll in the Foreign Medical Program to receive care related to service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Title 38 USC 1724 limits the VA secretary from providing benefits outside the United States unless the benefits are for service-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, Exceptions for providing benefits are allowed pursuant to regulations prescribed by the VA; and

WHEREAS Eligible veterans visiting the Philippines will only be reimbursed for their travel if they are traveling within the Manila VAOPC catchment area; and

WHEREAS, There is a provision under 38 USC 111 for the VHA to make payments for travel expenses incurred in the United States to help veterans and other persons obtain care or services from VHA; and

WHEREAS, At this time, the VA has no plans to amend their regulations to grant any exceptions for beneficiary travel benefits for veterans living in the Philippines; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2018, That The American Legion urge Congress to amend the Beneficiary Travel statutory authority, title 38 United States Code 111 (b) (1) of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to allow for the payment of beneficiary travel to any veteran eligible for enrollment and services in the Manilla catchment area for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care at VA's Manila Outpatient Clinic.