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Date: June 21, 2013

To: Members, Board Committee on Stakeholder Relations

From: Mary Lavery Flynn, Interim Senior Director, Administration of Justice
Theresa Mesa, Program Coordinator, Office of Legal Services

Re: Veterans: Overview of Training and Resources

Introduction

This agenda item provides an update on recent developments with regard to expanding services for veterans. In late 2010 a Board initiative called for programs to encourage California attorneys to represent veterans. The Office of Legal Services has developed educational programs and done outreach to that end.

Veterans Training Offered in Conjunction with AOC and PLI

On Friday, May 24 the Office of Legal Services, sponsored a free MCLE program entitled *Approaching Veterans' Issues: A Legal Overview*, through the Practising Law Institute (PLI). This program was one of a series of programs on veterans and the law organized by the Office of Legal Services with PLI, and one of dozens of training events on a range of subjects we have done with PLI, all designed to encourage California attorneys to do pro bono work.

Approaching Veterans' Issues was unique because of the involvement of staff from the Administrative Office of the Courts and members of the judiciary in planning the program. We assembled a training manual for the program, available in print for attendees (produced for free by PLI), and in PDF form at www.pli.edu. The three hour CLE program is archived and available for free. More than 300 advocates and judges from around the country registered for the live presentation; it is likely that many more will view the program over the next year. The final hour, *Veterans in Your Courtroom: An Overview*, was not publicized on the PLI website, because it was intended for judges only.

The May 24 program was developed to give attorneys and judges an overview of issues that might be helpful with clients who have served in the military, whether or not they are representing them on issues that appear to be related to their service. Topics included:

- military culture and how that might affect courtroom demeanor,
- how post traumatic stress disorder and military sexual trauma might matter in court,
- changes for veterans to the Penal Code effective January 2013,
- the implications of child custody decisions and restraining orders, and
- how to upgrade military discharges.

In 2009 the Board of Governors passed a resolution thanking and honoring PLI for their contributions to pro bono education. Although PLI can charge significant fees for their regular MCLE programming, they charge nothing for the pro bono programs that they present with the State Bar and they absorb all costs and provide attendees with a breakfast. The State Bar has been fortunate to partner with PLI to produce pro bono programming since 2004. State Bar OLS sponsorship for the May 24 program included funding travel costs for the three judges who traveled from Orange County, and staff time for most of the logistical work required for the program.

The May training was the fifth training on veterans legal issues that the State Bar has co-sponsored, following the 2011 Board decision to encourage California attorneys to assist veterans. The number of California attorneys accredited to practice before the Department of Veterans Affairs has increased by 120 percent since the May 2011 accreditation training (by contrast, the increase in other large states has been less than 50 percent).

Website

The Office of Legal Services will upload a webpage on veterans this summer. While the webpage is intended primarily for California attorneys to encourage them to assist veterans, it will also have a few links for veterans to help them find accredited attorneys and other resources. This page will make it easier for attorneys to navigate the resources that the State Bar has created and identified in pursuit of justice for our veterans. Some of the links that will be included are below:

State Bar Media on Veterans

[Wanted: Lawyers to Offer Veterans a Helping Hand](#)

[Free Training to Help Vets](#)

[Orange County Veterans Court Dispenses a Different Kind of Justice](#)

Attorney Resources

Training for Department of Veterans Affairs Accreditation

[VA Attorney Accreditation](#) *This program fulfills the CLE requirement for accreditation for practice before the Department of Veterans Affairs.*

[2013 Attorney Accreditation UPDATE](#) *Register now for this November 2013 training.*

Other MCLE Training on Veterans Issues

[Women Veterans Issues and Don't Ask Don't Tell](#)

[Penal Code 1170.9](#) *Update on changes that benefit veterans, effective January 2013*

[Veterans Issues: Family Law, Consumer Rights, Job Protection and Diversionary Courts](#)

Veterans Resources

<http://www.calvet.ca.gov/> *California Department of Veterans Affairs Serves California's veterans and their families*

<http://lawhelpca.org/issues/new-veterans-and-military> *Helping California veterans find legal aid & self-help resources*

http://www.va.gov/vso/VSO-Directory_2012-2013.pdf *Veterans Services Organizations located near you that can offer assistance.*

[Attorneys Accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs](#) *search here for accredited attorneys in your area*

[Veterans Services Organizations](#) *scroll down on this site and search for California VSOs*

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