

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN

RESOLUTION: 08-8-C

SUBMITTED BY: Upper Peninsula Association of American Legion Posts

SUBJECT: VHA/VBA Conflicts in Policy Adversely Affecting Upper Peninsula of Michigan Veterans

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The American Legion, in concert with other Veterans Service Organizations in Michigan, have long recognized a serious bureaucratic conflict in policy between the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) to the great detriment of veterans based in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan seeking medical and/or claim benefits, specifically as follows; and

WHEREAS, All Michigan veterans seeking relief in filing claims for benefits must do so by VBA mandate, to the Regional Office in Detroit, Michigan, regardless of which service area or VISN the veteran resides in; and

WHEREAS, The Detroit Regional Office has a long-standing infamous reputation for claims backlogs, remands and erroneous decisions with unlawful and unreasonable wait times for veteran claimants to receive justice while brother and sister veterans residing in Wisconsin receive far greater favorable service and timely decisions coming out of the Milwaukee Regional Office; and

WHEREAS, The entire Lower Peninsula of Michigan is in the VHA mandated VISN 11 and the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan is in the VHA mandated VISN 12 with the "hub" of services provided in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on the same campus as the Wisconsin Regional Office; and

WHEREAS, The distance in driven miles to the Detroit Regional Office for an Upper Peninsula veteran generally is far greater than a required trip to the Milwaukee Regional Office or Zablocki Medical Center, especially in light of the fact that the Iron Mountain VA Medical Center provides round trip bus

FINALLY RESOLVED,

By The American Legion, Department of Michigan, in annual Department Convention assembled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 19-22, 2008, That The American Legion National Organization, in conjunction with The Department of Michigan, appeal directly to the Secretary of the Veterans Administration to effect the required changes to accommodate this resolution and ultimately provide a better, fairer, and more expeditious service to Michigan's veterans as the stated Veterans Administration mission requires.