

OMB Permission for e-Benefits Portal

The President's Commission on the Care of the Wounded Warrior recommended that: "DoD and VA should make information about benefits and services available online, via a password-protected site, in which service members and veterans can securely enter personal information."

The VA Office of Information Technology, Enterprise Development, currently leads the developmental component of this action with oversight and direction provided by the VA/DoD Benefits Executive Council. The DoD Office of Personnel and Readiness (P&R), Information Management (OSD P&R (IM)) is providing DoD functional support to VA's enterprise development.

The purpose of the eBenefits portal within the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide a means for service members and veterans to easily find the relevant information they need when they need as they transition from one role to another while serving and after leaving military service. This is an intra-agency collaboration effort that will be interoperable with other technologies and initiatives as well as an inter-agency initiative that will integrate the processes and information provided by VHA, VBA and DoD. Currently, service members/veterans must navigate numerous systems and sites to find the information they are seeking with minimum self-service capabilities. The eBenefits portal will provide these tools, services, resources and information to make these transitions as easy as possible.

The eBenefits portal team is under the direction of the two Benefits Executive Committee IS/IT co-chairs, Mr. Robert Reynolds with VA, and Mr. Michael Lincecum of DoD. The initial release of the eBenefits portal is scheduled for June 30, 2009. In order to provide self service capabilities by the end of 2009, the first release on June 30 must include collection of veterans' email addresses. Therefore, I respectfully request an emergency approval of OMB permission for the collection of information via this portal.

I felt we need to provide a little more explanation up front. There might be more to add or adjust in the first paragraph but feel this is the basis we must include.