

Date: JUL 26 2012
From: Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005)
Subj: Section 508 Compliance Enforcement for VA Internet and Intranet Websites
To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, and Facility Directors

1. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, open new opportunities for people with disabilities, and encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under this law, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to access available to others.

2. A recent audit of VA's Intranet and Intranet framework, Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) code, and site content determined that most of the content and information on our Internet and Intranet websites are not Section 508 compliant. We must do better for our Veterans, the public, and our employees, and to meet the requirements of the law.

3. Remediation efforts will begin by requiring the top 12 most accessed sites to comply with Section 508 accessibility standards by October 1, 2012. The following sites have been determined to be the Department's most frequently used sites by the Section 508 Program Office:

- www.va.gov
- www.vba.va.gov
- www.gibill.va.gov
- www.va.gov/opa
- www.va.gov/directory
- www.va.gov/forms
- www.vacareers.va.gov
- www.va.gov/health
- www.insurance.va.gov
- www.va.gov/jobs
- www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits-portal/ebenefits.portal
- www.myhealth.va.gov

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4. Webmasters and content providers can achieve remediation by either using software tools maintained by the Section 508 Program Office or by remediating the issues manually. These tools dramatically increase the accessibility of the HTML framework to disabled VA employees and Veterans.

5. In addition to the sites listed above, any other existing VA Internet or Intranet websites being upgraded, and any new deployments of Internet or Intranet websites, will be expected to meet VA's accessibility mandate. The VA Section 508 Program Office will continue to audit VA's HTML infrastructure for site and content conformance and report its findings to the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology on a monthly basis.

6. The VA Section 508 Program Office is prepared to provide assistance in identifying Section 508 violations, meeting compliance standards through its training office, providing access to Section 508 software tools, and providing technical support. For more information contact Patrick Sheehan Director VA Section 508 Program Office at 202-461-5207 or pat.sheehan@va.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger W. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Roger W. Baker