



ur Benefits

Beware Claims Predators'

warns veterans to watch out for high-pressure tactics.

Expanded VA services and benefits for more than 1 million veterans and their survivors in recent years have meant billions in service-earned compensation ... and more attention from "claims predators."

These individuals or companies aggressively target veterans via mail, phone, and online platforms, using high-pressure tactics to persuade beneficiaries to pay for claims services. They are unaccredited, and their assistance generally provides "little to no actual benefit," according to the VA.

AVOIDING PREDATORS

It is illegal for anyone to charge a fee to help prepare an initial VA claim, and only accredited attorneys and claims agents can charge a veteran to assist in specific parts of the claims process, such as filing supplemental claims or processing appeals.

Veterans seeking help with their claims can search the VA's online database of accredited representatives at www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp. MOAA recommends reach-

ing out to your local County Veterans Service Organization program — most states, especially those with large veteran populations, have assistance at the local level not only with VA claims but also with any state benefits. Search for "[Your State] department of veteran services" online to find out more.

REPORTING FRAUD

Veterans or other beneficiaries who believe they've been victimized by claims predators or any benefit-related scam can call (833) 38V-SAFE (833-388-7233) to report the incident. They can also file a report at VSAFE.gov, which offers scam-protection resources for military and veteran benefits and other common types of fraud.

MOAA also is a partner in the Cybercrime Support Network's Military and Veteran Program, which aims to protect servicemembers, veterans, and military families from falling victim to fraud. Go to <https://fightcybercrime.org/programs/milvet> for more resources.

— By Kevin Lilley, MOAA's senior digital content manager

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A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Ophthalmology found an association between semaglutide and an eye condition called nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy, which can cause loss of vision.

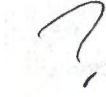
The FDA recommends semaglutide for weight loss if the person has a body mass index (BMI), a measure of body fat based on height and weight, of 27 or greater and at least one weight-related condition such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. A person without additional weight-related diseases should have a BMI of 30 or greater.

TRICARE currently covers Wegovy for weight management and Ozempic for diabetes treatment. (To check if a drug is covered by TRICARE, go to www.tricare.mil/coveredservices/pharmacy/drugs.)

Although every patient will need to personally weigh the risk versus reward of semaglutide medications, there is no denying these medications are a powerful new tool to battle obesity.

When considering a new medication such as semaglutide, it's crucial to consult your primary care provider. This step ensures that you receive personalized advice and support, enhancing your confidence in your health decisions. ■■■

— By Lt. Col. Nick Barringer, USA (Ret), chief academic officer and dean of graduate studies at Lionel University



VA SOURCES
VA offers educational courses and seminars on how to avoid claims. Read three-part series "Don't Be Scammed" as by clicking the QR code above.