



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE APPROVING AGENCIES, INC. *FOR VETERANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING*

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Dear Colleagues and Partners,

As a nation, our daily routines and lives have dramatically changed over the past several weeks as we face the COVID-19 pandemic. With new requirements for social distancing and shelter in place mandates, the VA Education Benefit programs have faced new challenges and unanswered questions regarding distance education, school closures, work-study programs, and more. As the National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA) President, I want to take a moment to reassure you that our organization continues to monitor and provide guidance to our State Approving Agencies (SAA) and work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs during these uncharted times.

Many of our SAA's are working remotely and I can assure you that they are working countless hours to address your questions and communicate with our executive board areas of concern. In addition, our legislative committee worked hard with Congress and our Veteran Services Organizations (VSOs) to support the passing of Senate Bill 3503, a bill to help continue resident training housing allowance payments for colleges and training facilities that had to move to distance or independent study modalities. Furthermore, NASAA will continue to advocate for additional bills in the upcoming weeks, such as House Bill 6322, which addresses such challenges as work-study programs and school closure. As an organization, we understand that even with our efforts, some items may not have an easy resolution. However, NASAA will continue to support our schools, training facilities, partners, and veterans with diligence and dedication.

During times of crisis, we must work together and stand strong, not only to help our veterans and their families, but to support each other. As we face difficult times, we must seek leadership from deep within, even when there may be no easy solutions. Communication remains essential to provide hope and resolutions to ease the minds of those most impacted.

In support of our VA partners, our communication continues to echo the guidance provided through emails, the benefits website, and social media platforms. This information includes the following:

- Webinars with updates regarding COVID-19. Previous webinars were on March 26th and March 27th, 2020. There will be four sessions. If you are unable to register or attend, the information will be available on the benefits site for your review.
- Senate Bill 3503 was passed by Congress and signed by the President.



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- Both VA and NASAA will continue to work and respond regarding additional questions and concerns that schools may have.
- For School Certifying Officials, please continue to communicate with your State Approving Agencies for any approval specifics.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your dedication to our veterans and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. NASAA continues to be dedicated in continuing our efforts to support not only each other, but all of our schools, training facilities, and partners. Please follow guidelines issued in your local areas and continue to take care of yourselves, stay healthy, and safe. Each of you remain in my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Annie Walker
NASAA President