

Preliminary findings from the VA on flight programs

- In fiscal year 2013, VA spent approximately \$42 million on tuition and fees for approximately 1,713 trainees in aviation-related degree programs at public institutes of higher learning (IHLs). In fiscal year 2014, the cost nearly doubled, as VA spent approximately \$80 million on tuition and fees for approximately 1,884 trainees.
- In fiscal year 2014, approximately 1,000 students received well over \$100,000 in education benefits for flight-related programs at public IHLs. The highest amount paid for a single student enrolled in a flight-related program totaled approximately \$534,000 in fiscal year 2014. In fiscal year 2013, the highest amount paid was approximately \$266,000.
- VA conducted compliance surveys at all public IHLs with contracted flight programs from April 6, 2015 through May 8, 2015. Based on the findings of the recent compliance survey, VA found the following, with some schools falling into more than one category:
 - Sixty-one schools had no adverse findings.
 - Forty schools were certifying flight hours to VA for payments in excess of the number of hours required for successful completion of the course, and/or the schools had no clear designation in their course catalog for the number of flight hours required. This led to schools charging VA significantly high tuition and fee costs.
 - Ten schools were in violation of the 85-15 requirements, which led to suspension of those flight programs by VA. The programs will remain suspended until the school comes into compliance with the 85-15 requirements. Students who were already enrolled when a school was found to be in violation of the 85-15 Rule may finish their program; however, new students are not allowed to enroll.
 - Eight schools were identified to have been providing inaccurate certification regarding the actual begin and/or end dates of the flight training being taken as part of the degree program.
 - Three schools were contracting with a flight facility that was not VA-approved, and VA withdrew them from the program.
- Notwithstanding these corrective actions, and the enforcement of the 85-15 Rule, there remains no effective limit on high charges for these flight programs. VA believes that legislative action must be taken in order to cap the cost of contracted flight programs to reign in the high benefit costs associated with those programs.