



## **S. 3023, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008**

**Legislation:** S. 3023, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008

**Status:** Enacted, October 10, 2008 ([Public Law No: 110-389](#))

**Sponsor:** Sen. Akaka, Daniel K. [HI] - introduced 5/15/2008

**Abstract:** The bill amended title 38, United States Code, to improve and enhance compensation and pension, housing, labor and education, and insurance benefits for veterans, and for other purposes. The legislation directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prescribe regulations specifying the contents and delivery/availability online of a currently-required notice to claimants of a complete or substantially complete application, including regarding: (1) different contents depending the status of the claim; (2) additional or alternative contents depending on the benefit or services sought; (3) for each type of claim for benefits, the general information and evidence required; and (4) the timing of the notice issuance. Section 227 (see below) focuses on the "primary" use of IT as it relates to support of claims processing, including viewing benefits applications and status online, and information exchange between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) that facilitates claims processing.

**Health IT:** Section 227 of the legislation directs the Secretary to implement "such changes as may be required to the electronic health record (EHR) system of the VA (VistA) and the DoD (AHLTA) to ensure that Veterans Benefits Administration claims examiners can access the available electronic medical information" of both and to ensure bi-directional access to both medical and service records between the two departments. The legislation directs the Secretary of the VA to conduct a review and develop a comprehensive plan within one year and to deliver a report on the status of the above activities no later than April 1, 2010.

For further information on S. 3023 or HIMSS Congressional Affairs activities, please contact Wayne Humphries, Manager, Public Policy Initiatives ([whumphries@himss.org](mailto:whumphries@himss.org)).