

aptitudes, interests, and abilities. Without the information, VA could not determine further entitlement to education benefits.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The **Federal Register** Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published on October 27, 1997 at page 55671.

**Affected Public:** Individuals or households.

**Estimated Annual Burden:** 10,000 hours.

**Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:** 30 minutes.

**Frequency of Response:** On occasion.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 20,000.

Send comments and recommendations concerning any aspect of the information collection to VA's OMB Desk Officer, Allison Eydt, OMB Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 (202) 395-4650. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0358" in any correspondence.

Dated: January 26, 1998.

By direction of the Secretary.

**Donald L. Neilson,**

*Director, Information Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-8888 Filed 4-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0188]

### Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

**AGENCY:** Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C., 3501 et seq.), this notice announces that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Department of Veterans Affairs, has submitted the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument.

**DATES:** Comments must be submitted on or before May 6, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR A COPY OF THE SUBMISSION CONTACT:** Ron Taylor,

Information Management Service (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-8015 or FAX (202) 273-5981. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0188."

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

**Title:** Prescription, Authorization, Application, Procurement, Repair and Loan of Prosthetic Items.

#### Form Numbers:

- a. VA Form 10-2421, Prosthetic Authorization for Items or Service.
- b. VA Form 10-2520, Prosthetic Service Card Invoice.
- c. VA Form 10-2914, Prescription and Authorization for Eyeglasses.
- d. Form Letter 10-90, Request to Submit Estimate.
- e. Form Letter 10-426, Loan Follow-up Letter.
- f. VA Form 10-1394, Loan Follow-up Letter.

**OMB Control Number:** 2900-0188.

**Type of Review:** Extension of a currently approved collection.

#### Abstract:

a. VA Form 10-2421 is used for the direct procurement of new prosthetic appliances and/or services and standardizes the direct procurement authorization process. The form eliminates the need for separate purchase orders, expedites patient treatment and improves the delivery of prosthetic services. Without this form the delivery time for prosthetic appliances and services would be drastically increased.

b. VA Form 10-2520 is used by the commercial vendors, after completing repairs authorized for veterans, to request payment by VA. The use of the form standardizes repair/treatment invoices for prosthetic services rendered and standardizes the verification of these invoices. The veteran certifies that the repairs were necessary and satisfactory. This form is furnished to vendors upon request.

c. VA Form 10-2914 is used as a combination prescription, authorization and invoice. It allows veterans to purchase their eyeglasses directly. If the form is not used, the provisions of providing eyeglasses to eligible veterans may be delayed.

d. Form Letter 10-90 is issued to a contractor of the veteran's choice in order to solicit a price quote for a prosthetic device.

e. Form Letter 10-426 is used for the issuance of prosthetic devices that are loaned to eligible veterans. If the information is not collected or maintained, VA would have no information regarding equipment loaned to veterans; i.e., status, recovery, replacement and disposition.

f. VA Form 10-1394 is used to determine eligibility/entitlement and

reimbursement of individual claims for automotive adaptive equipment.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The *Federal Register* Notice with a 60-day comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published on December 31, 1997 at page 68359.

**Affected Public:** Business or other for-profit—Individuals or households.

**Estimated Total Annual Burden:** 36,496 hours.

- a. VA Form 10-2421—16,667 hours.
- b. VA Form 10-2520—3,334 hours.
- c. VA Form 10-2914—11,667 hours.
- d. Form Letter 10-90—1,875 hours.
- e. Form Letter 10-426—242 hours.
- f. VA Form 10-1394—2,711 hours.

**Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:**

- a. VA Form 10-2421—4 minutes.
- b. VA Form 10-2520—5 minutes.
- c. VA Form 10-2914—4 minutes.
- d. Form Letter 10-90—5 minutes.
- e. Form Letter 10-426—1 minute.
- f. VA Form 10-1394—15 minutes.

**Frequency of Response:** On occasion.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 512,844.

- a. VA Form 10-2421—250,000.
- b. VA Form 10-2520—40,000.
- c. VA Form 10-2914—175,000.
- d. Form Letter 10-90—22,500.
- e. Form Letter 10-426—14,500.
- f. VA Form 10-1394—10,844.

Send comments and recommendations concerning any aspect of the information collection to VA's OMB Desk Officer, Allison Eydt, OMB Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 (202) 395-4650. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0188" in any correspondence.

By direction of the Secretary.

Dated: March 10, 1998.

**Barbara H. Epps,**

*Management Analyst, Information Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-8889 Filed 4-3-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Privacy Act of 1974; Altered System of Records

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice of Altered System of Records.

**SUMMARY:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a(e)(4)) requires that all agencies publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of the existence and character of their systems of records. Notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is altering a system of records entitled "Accounts Receivable Records—VA" (88VA244). This system was previously numbered "88VA20A6".

**DATES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments, suggestions or objections regarding the proposed changes to the system of records. All relevant materials received before May 6, 1998, will be considered. If no public comment is received during the 30-day review period allowed for public comment, or unless otherwise published in the **Federal Register** by VA, the altered system of records is effective May 6, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments concerning the altered system of records may be mailed to the Director, Office of Regulations Management (02D), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. All written comments received will be available for public inspection at the above address in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1158, between the hours 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Daniel D. Osendorf, Director, Debt Management Center (389/00), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota 55111, (612) 725-1844. The Internet e-mail address for Debt Management Center is: vadmc@mm.com.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notification of this system of records was originally published under system number 88VA20A6 on November 3, 1994, at 59 FR 55155. To broaden the application of the system of records to a department-wide basis and to reflect consolidation of collection responsibilities for additional types of debts under the administration of VA's Debt Management Center (DMC) in Ft. Snelling, Minnesota, an altered system of records was published November 26, 1996 at 61 FR 60148. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA), section 31001 of Pub. L. 104-134, was enacted April 26, 1996 and provides for a Government-wide system of debt collection managed by the Department of the Treasury.

This system of records has been revised to reflect VA's participation in the Government-wide debt collection program. The revisions include new and

modified routine uses to accommodate new means of collection authorized by DCIA, additional Government programs from which debts are created and for which DMC will perform collection services, cross servicing of indebtedness accounts by the Department of the Treasury or other agencies designated by that department and the referral of indebtedness accounts to Government disbursing officials for offset of almost any Government payment. DMC has applied for status as a cross-servicing debt collection center. The new means of collection authorized by DCIA include sale of delinquent debt to the private sector, administrative wage garnishment and dissemination of debtor information. Certain other revisions to the system of records reflect more current terminology and new citations to referenced material.

The debt collection program adheres to VA security and reporting requirements under title 38, Code of Federal Regulations and other Federal regulations, as well as the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a), and the appropriate provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, title 26, United States Code.

Approved: March 26, 1998.

**Togo D. West, Jr.,**  
*Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs.*  
**88VA244**

**SYSTEM NAME.**

Accounts Receivable Records-VA.

**SYSTEM LOCATION:**

Automated indebtedness records for first-party medical billing, pay administration, compensation, pension, educational assistance, survivors' and dependents' educational assistance and most home loan debts are maintained at the VA's Financial Services Center and Automation/Systems Development Center (AA/SDC) in Austin, Texas. Automated records of debts referred to the Department of Veterans Affairs for Government-wide cross-servicing authorized under 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(4) are maintained at VA's AA/SDC in Austin, Texas. Extracts of benefit and home loan debt automated records are maintained in the Benefits Delivery Network for accounting and adjudication purposes. The Benefits Delivery Network is administered by the Benefit Delivery Center (BDC). Hines, Illinois. first-party medical billing information is extracted from records maintained at VA medical facilities and in automated media as more fully described in the Privacy Act system of records, 24VA136, "Patient Medical Records-VA" as published at 40 FR

38095 (Aug. 26, 1975), and amended as follows: 40 FR 52125 (Nov. 7, 1975); 41 FR 2881 (Jan. 20, 1976); 41 FR 11631 (Mar. 19, 1976); 42 FR 30557 (Jun. 15, 1977); 44 FR 31058 (May 30, 1979); 45 FR 77220 (Nov. 21, 1980); 46 FR 2766 (Jan. 12, 1981); 47 FR 28522 (Jun. 30, 1982); 47 FR 51841 (Nov. 17, 1982); 50 FR 11610 (Mar. 22, 1985); 51 FR 25968 (Jul. 17, 1986); 51 FR 44406 (Dec. 9, 1986); 52 FR 381 (Jan. 5, 1987); 53 FR 49818 (Dec. 9, 1988); 55 FR 5112 (Feb. 13, 1990); 55 FR 37604 (Sept. 12, 1990); 55 FR 42534 (Oct. 19, 1990); 56 FR 1054 (Jan. 10, 1991); 57 FR 28003 (Jun. 23, 1992); 57 FR 4519 (Oct. 1, 1992); 58 FR 29853 (May 24, 1993); 58 FR 40852 (Jul. 30, 1993); and, 58 FR 57674 (Oct. 26, 1993). Automated and paper indebtedness records for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) are maintained at the Health Administration Center (HAC) in Denver, Colorado and are more fully described in the Privacy Act system of records, 54VA136, "Veteran's Spouse or Dependent Civilian Health and Medical Care Records-VA", as published at 40 FR 38095 (Aug. 26, 1975) and amended at 53 FR 23845 (Jun. 24, 1998), 53 FR 25238 (Jul. 5, 1988) and 56 FR 26186 (Jun. 6, 1992). Pay administration indebtedness records are extracted from other automated and paper records maintained at all VA facilities and the Austin Finance Center and are more fully described in the Privacy Act system of records, 27VA047, "Personnel and Accounting Pay System—VA", as published at 40 FR 38095 (Aug. 26, 1975), and amended as follows: 48 FR 16372 (April 15, 1983); 50 FR 23100 (May 30, 1985); 51 FR 6858 (Feb. 26, 1986); 51 FR 25968 (Jul. 17, 1986); 55 FR 42534 (Oct. 19, 1990); 56 FR 23952 (May 24, 1991); 58 FR 39088 (Jul. 21, 1993); 58 FR 40852 (Jul. 30, 1993); and, 60 FR 35448 (Jul. 7, 1995); 62 FR 41483 (Aug. 1, 1997); and, 62 FR 68362 (Dec. 31, 1997). Certain paper records, microfilm and microfiche are maintained at the VA Debt Management Center (DMC), Ft. Snelling, Minnesota. Education loan, miscellaneous home loan and spina bifida monthly allowance automated, paper, microfilm and microfiche records are maintained at DMC. Automated and paper indebtedness records related to the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program are also maintained at DMC. Paper records related to benefit and home loan accounts receivable may be maintained in individual file folders located at the VA regional office having jurisdiction over the domicile of the claimant or the geographic area in

which a property securing a VA guaranteed, insured or direct loan is located. Similarly, paper and automated records related to first-party medical billing and CHAMPVA are also maintained in individual patient medical records at VA health care facilities and HAC. Generally and with the exception of claims against third-party insurers and certain first-party medical debts, automated records and papers maintained at regional offices, health care facilities and HAC are not used directly in the debt collection process unless they are forwarded by conventional mail, electronic mail or facsimile to DMC. Records provided to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for inclusion in the Credit Alert Interactive Voice Response System (CAIVRS) are located at the HUD Data Processing Center in Lanham, Maryland. Records referred to the Department of the Treasury for inclusion in the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) are located at the Financial Management Service Debt Collection Operations System in Hyattsville, Maryland.

#### **CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THE SYSTEM:**

Persons indebted to the United States Government as a result of their participation in benefit programs (including health care programs) administered by VA under title 38, United States Code, chapters 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36 and 37, including persons indebted to the United States Government by virtue of their ownership, contractual obligation or rental of property owned by the Government or encumbered by a VA-guaranteed, insured, direct or vendee loan. Persons indebted to the United States Government as a result of their participation in a benefit program administered by VA under 10 U.S.C. ch. 1606. Persons who received benefits or services under 38 U.S.C. or 10 U.S.C. ch. 1606, but who did not meet the requirements for receipt of such benefits or services. Persons indebted to the United States, a State or local government whose debts are referred to the Department of Veterans Affairs for Government-wide cross-servicing under 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(4) or any valid interagency agreement. Persons indebted to the United States as the result of erroneous payment of pay or allowances or as the result of erroneous payment of travel, transportation or relocation expenses and allowances (previously and hereinafter referred to as "pay administration") under the provisions of title 5, United States Code, part III, subpart D.

#### **CATEGORIES OF RECORDS IN THE SYSTEM:**

Information varies depending on the source of the debt. Identifying information including VA claim number, Social Security number, Tax Identification Number (TIN), name and address and, when appropriate, loan reference number, obtained from, among other sources, indebtedness records of Federal agencies other than VA and the following Privacy Act systems of records: "Debt Collection Operations System—Treasury/Financial Management Service" (Treasury/FMS .014); "Compensation, Pension, Education and Rehabilitation Records-VA" (58VA21/22); "Loan Guaranty Home, Condominium and Manufactured Home Loan Applicant Records, Specially Adapted Housing Applicant Records, and Vendee Loan Applicant Records-VA" (55VA26); "Patent Medical Records-VA" (24VA136); and, "Veteran's Spouse or Dependent Civilian Health and Medical Care Records-VA" (54V136). Initial indebtedness amount, dates of treatment, amounts claimed for reimbursement type of benefit from which the debt arose, identifying number of the VA regional office with jurisdiction over the underlying benefit claim or property subject to default or foreclosure, station number of the VA health care facility rendering services, name of co-obligor and property address of the defaulted home loan from 58VA21/22, 55VA26, 24VA136 and 54VA136. History of debt collection activity on the person, organization or entity including correspondence, telephone calls, referrals to other Federal, State or local agencies, VA regional counsel, private collection and credit reporting agencies. Payments received, refunds made, interest amount, current balance of debt and indication of status of current VA benefit payments. Federal employment status obtained by computer matching with Government agencies and the United States Postal Service. No personal medical information concerning the nature of disease, injury or disability is transmitted to or maintained in this system of records.

#### **AUTHORITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE SYSTEM:**

Government records are maintained and managed under the authority set forth in 31 U.S.C. 3101 and 31 U.S.C. 3102. The purpose of the system is consistent with the financial management provisions of title 31, United States Code, chapter 37, the pay administration provisions of title 5, United States Code, chapter 55, and special provisions relating to VA

benefits in title 38, United States Code, chapter 53.

#### **PURPOSE(S):**

The purpose of this system is to maintain records of individuals, organizations and other entities: (1) Indebted to the United States as a result of their participation in benefit and health care programs administered by VA; (2) indebted as a result of erroneous pay administration; (3) indebted under any other program administered by any agency of the United States Government and whose indebtedness record has been referred to VA for Government-wide cross-servicing under 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(4); and (4) indebted under any Federal, State or local government program and whose debt was referred to VA for collection under any valid interagency agreement. Information in this system of records is used for the administrative management and collection of debts owed the United States and any State or local government and for which records are maintained in accordance with the preceding sentence.

#### **ROUTINE USES OF RECORDS MAINTAINED IN THE SYSTEM, INCLUDING CATEGORIES OF USERS AND THE PURPOSE OF SUCH USES:**

For purposes of the following routine uses:

(a) The term, "veteran", includes present, former or retired members of the United States Armed Forces, the reserve forces or national guard;

(b) The term, "debtor", means any person falling within the categories of individuals covered by this system, as set forth above. A "debtor" may be a veteran, as defined above, a veteran's dependent entitled to VA benefits (including health care) in his or her own right or a person who is neither a veteran nor a veteran's dependent for benefit purposes; and,

(c) The terms, "benefit", "benefit program" and "VA program" include any gratuitous benefit, home loan (including miscellaneous home loan) or health care (including CHAMPVA) program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

1. The record of an individual who is covered by this system may be disclosed to a member of Congress or staff person acting for the member when the member or staff person requests the record on behalf of and at the written request of that individual.

2. Any information in this system may be disclosed to a Federal agency, upon its official request, to the extent that it is relevant and necessary to that agency's decision regarding: the hiring, retention or transfer of an employee; the issuance of a security clearance; the

letting of a contract or the issuance or continuance of a license, grant or other benefit given by that agency. However, in accordance with an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Postal Service, disclosures to the U.S. Postal Service for decisions concerning the employment of veterans will only be made with the veteran's prior written consent.

3. Any information in this system may be disclosed, by computer matching or otherwise, in connection with any proceeding for the collection of an amount owed the United States when, in the judgment of the Secretary, or official generally delegated such authority under standard agency delegation of authority rules (38 CFR 2.6), such disclosure is deemed necessary and proper in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 5701(b)(6) for debts resulting from participation in VA benefit programs or pay administration, with 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(5) for other debts referred to VA in its capacity as a Government-wide cross-servicing facility or with a valid interagency agreement for collection services independent of the cross-servicing provisions of section 3711(g)(4) and (g)(5).

4. The name and address of a person indebted to the United States and other information as is reasonably necessary to identify such person may be disclosed to a consumer reporting agency for the purpose of locating that person or to obtain a consumer report in order to assess the ability of that person to repay an indebtedness, provided the disclosure is consistent with 38 U.S.C. 5701(g)(2) for purposes of debts owed veterans and their dependents as a result of participation in VA benefit programs and 31 U.S.C. 3711(h)(1) for purposes of all other debts to the United States.

5. The name and address of a person indebted to the United States, other information as is reasonably necessary to identify such person, including personal information obtained from other Federal agencies through computer matching programs, and any information concerning the person's indebtedness to the United States may be disclosed to a consumer reporting agency for purposes of making such information available for inclusion in consumer reports regarding that person, provided that the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5701(g)(4) have been met for purposes of indebtedness incurred as the result of participation in VA benefit programs and 31 U.S.C. 3711(f)(1) for purposes of all other types of indebtedness.

6. Any information in this system, including available identifying information regarding a person, such as the person's name, address, Social Security number, VA insurance number, VA claim number, VA loan number, date of birth, employment information or identification number assigned by any Government component, may be disclosed, except to consumer reporting agencies, to a third party in order to obtain current name, address and credit report in connection with any proceeding for the collection of an amount owed the United States. Such disclosure may be made in the course of computer matching having the purpose of obtaining the information indicated above. Third parties may include other Federal agencies, State probate courts, State drivers' license bureaus, State automobile title and license bureaus and private commercial concerns in the business of providing the information sought.

7. Identifying information, including the debtor's name, Social Security number and VA claim number, along with the amount of indebtedness, may be disclosed to any Federal agency, including the U.S. Postal Service, in the course of conducting computer matching to identify and locate delinquent debtors employed by or receiving retirement benefits from those agencies. Such debtors may be subject to offset of their pay or retirement benefits under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 5514.

8. Any information in this system, including the nature and amount of a financial obligation as well as the history of debt collection activity against a debtor, may be disclosed to the Federal agency administering salary or retirement benefits to the debtor to assist that agency in initiating offset of salary or retirement benefits to collect delinquent debts owed the United States.

9. The name(s) and address(es) of a debtor(s) may be disclosed to another Federal agency or to a contractor of that agency, at the written request of the head of that agency or designee of the head of that agency for the purpose of conducting Government research or oversight necessary to accomplish a statutory purpose of that agency.

10. Information in this system specifically related to debts resulting from participation in VA programs or pay administration, including the amount of debt, may be disclosed at the request of the subject debtor to accredited service organizations, VA-approved claims agents and attorneys acting under a declaration of representation so that these individuals can aid persons indebted to VA in the

preparation, presentation and prosecution of debt-related matters under the laws administered by VA. The name and address of a debtor will not, however, be disclosed to these individuals under this routine use if the debtor has not requested the assistance of an accredited service organization, claims agent or an attorney.

11. Information in this system specifically related to debts incurred as a result of participation in VA benefit programs such as the amount of indebtedness and collection history may be disclosed in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate or administrative authority in matters of guardianship, inquests and commitments, to private attorneys representing debtors rated incompetent in conjunction with issuance of Certificates of Incompetence and to probation and parole officers in connection with court-required duties.

12. Information in this system related to debts incurred as a result of participation in VA benefit programs, including the amount of indebtedness and history of collection activity, may be disclosed to a VA or court-appointed fiduciary or a guardian ad litem in relation to his or her representation of the subject debtor only to the extent necessary to fulfill the duties of the fiduciary or guardian ad litem.

13. Any relevant information in this system may be disclosed to the Department of Justice and United States Attorneys in the defense or prosecution of litigation involving or pertaining to the United States. Any relevant information in this system may also be disclosed to other Federal agencies upon their request in connection with review of administrative tort claims and potential tort claims filed under the Federal Tort Claims Act, 28 U.S.C. 2672, the Military Claims Act, 10 U.S.C. 2733 and other similar claims statutes.

14. Any information concerning a person's indebtedness to the United States, including personal information obtained from other Federal agencies through computer matching programs, may be disclosed to any third party, except consumer reporting agencies, in connection with any proceeding for the collection of any amount owed to the United States. Purposes of these disclosures include, but are not limited to (a) assisting the Government in collection of debts resulting from participation in Government programs of all categories and pay administration, and (b) initiating legal actions for prosecuting individuals who willfully or fraudulently obtain Government benefits, pay or allowances without entitlement. Third parties may include,

but are not limited to, persons, organizations or other entities with contracts for collection services with the Government.

15. The debtor's name, address, Social Security number and the amount (excluding interest) of any indebtedness waived, compromised or written off may be disclosed to the Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, as a report of income under 26 U.S.C. 61(a)(12).

16. The name of a debtor, any other information reasonably necessary to identify such individual and any other information concerning the individual's indebtedness under a VA benefit or pay administration program or an individual's indebtedness referred to VA for Government-wide cross servicing under 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(4), may be disclosed to the Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, for the collection of that indebtedness by offset of Federal income tax refunds pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3720A.

17. Debtors' social security numbers, VA claim numbers, loan account numbers and other information as is reasonably necessary to identify individual indebtedness accounts may be disclosed to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for inclusion in the Credit Alert Interactive Voice Response System (CAIVRS). Information in CAIVRS may be disclosed to all participating agencies and lenders who participate in the agencies' programs to enable them to verify information provided by new loan applicants and evaluate the creditworthiness of applicants. Records are disclosed to participating agencies and private-sector lenders by an ongoing computer matching program.

18. Name, Social Security numbers and any other information reasonably necessary to ensure accurate identification may be disclosed to the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, to obtain the mailing address of taxpayers who are debtors under this system of records. Disclosure is made by computer matching and pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 6103(m)(2).

19. Any information in a record under this system of records may be disclosed to the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) to enable GAO to pursue collection activities authorized to that office or any other activities within their statutory authority.

20. Any information in this system concerning a debt over 180 days delinquent may be disclosed, by computer matching or otherwise, to the Secretary of the Treasury or to any designated Government disbursing official for purposes of conducting

administrative offset of any eligible Federal payments under the authority set forth in 31 U.S.C. 3716. Payments subject to offset include those payments disbursed by the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Defense, the United States Postal Service, any Government corporation or any disbursing official of the United States designated by the Secretary of the Treasury. Subject to certain exemptions, Social Security, Black Lung, Railroad Retirement benefits and tax refunds may be included in those Federal payments eligible for administrative offset.

21. Any information in this system of records concerning a debt over 180 days delinquent may be disclosed, by computer matching or otherwise, to the Secretary of the Treasury for appropriate collection or termination action, including the transfer of the indebtedness for collection or termination, in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3711(g)(4), to a debt collection center designated by the Secretary of the Treasury, to a private collection agency or to the Department of Justice. The Secretary of the Treasury, through the Department of the Treasury, a designated debt collection center, a private collection agency or the Department of Justice, may take any appropriate action on a debt in accordance with the existing laws under which the debt arose.

22. The name and address of a debtor, other information as is reasonably necessary to identify such person, including personal information obtained from other Federal, state or local agencies as well as private sources through computer matching, and other information concerning the person's indebtedness to the United States, may be disclosed to third parties, including Federal, State and local government agencies to determine the debtor's employer. Such information may be used to initiate garnishment of disposable pay in accordance with the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 3720D.

23. The name and address of a debtor, and such other information as may be necessary for identification of that debtor, may be disclosed to a debtor's employer for purposes of initialing garnishment of the disposable pay of that debtor under the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 3720D.

24. The names and addresses of delinquent debtors, along with the amounts of their debts, may be published or otherwise publicly disseminated subject to the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 3720E.

25. Any information in this system may be disclosed to a third-party purchaser of debt more than 90 days

delinquent and for which the sale of such debt was conducted pursuant to the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 3711(i).

#### **DISCLOSURE TO CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES:**

Disclosures pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(12) may be made from this record system to consumer reporting agencies as defined in the Fair Credit Reporting Act 15 U.S.C. 1681a(f) or the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966 31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(3). The disclosure is limited to information necessary to establish the identity of the individual, including name, address, and taxpayer identification number (Social Security number), the amount, status and history of the claim; and the agency or program under which the claim arose for the sole purpose of allowing the consumer reporting agency to prepare a commercial credit report. 38 U.S.C. 5701(g) governs the release of names and addresses of any person who is a present or former member of the Armed Forces, or who is a dependent of such a person, to consumer reporting agencies under certain circumstances. Routine uses, above, provide for disclosure under those circumstances.

#### **POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR STORING, RETRIEVING, ACCESSING, RETAINING AND DISPOSING OF RECORDS IN THE SYSTEM:**

##### **STORAGE:**

Records are maintained on magnetic tape and disk, microfilm, microfiche, optical disk and paper documents. DMC does not routinely maintain paper records of individual debtors in file folders with the exception of correspondence, and replies thereto, from Congress, the White House, members of the Cabinet and other similar sources. Paper records related to accounts receivable may be maintained in individual file folders located at VA regional offices, health care facilities, HAC and other agencies referring debts to VA in its capacity as a Government-wide cross-servicing debt collection center. Generally and with the exception of claims against third-party insurers and certain first-party medical debts, such papers maintained outside of DMC are not used directly in the debt collection process unless they are first forwarded to DMC. Information stored on magnetic media for most VA benefit debts, including first-party medical, may be accessed through a data telecommunications terminal system designated as CAROLS (Centralized Accounts Receivable On-Line System). Most CAROLS terminals are located in DMC; however, VA regional offices generally each have one terminal for inquiry purposes. Records of debts

referred to VA in its capacity as a Government-wide cross servicing debt collection center will be accessible only to employees of DMC. Information stored on magnetic media and related to the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance, education loan, miscellaneous home loan or HAC debt collection programs may be accessed through personal computers. Records provided to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for inclusion in the Credit Alert Interactive Voice Response System (CAIVRS) are maintained on magnetic media at the HUD Data Processing Center in Lanham, Maryland. Records provided to the Department of the Treasury for administrative offset or referral to a designated debt collection center, private collection agency or the Department of Justice are maintained on magnetic media at the Financial Management Service Debt Collection Operations System in Hyattsville, Maryland. For VA benefit debts other than miscellaneous home loan, first-party medical and CHAMPVA, identifying information, the amount of the debt are benefit source of the debt may be stored on magnetic media in records that serve as the database for the VA Benefits Delivery Network (BDN). The BDN is operated for the adjudication of VA claims and the entry of certain fiscal transactions. The identifying information, the amount of the debt and benefit source of the debt are transmitted to the Centralized Accounts Receivable System (CARS) or a personal computer local area network system before collection activity commences. When a debtor is awarded gratuitous benefits under VA programs, the BDN may operate to offset all or part of retroactive funds awarded, if any, to reduce the balance of the indebtedness. The Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA), through its various modules, is used to create and store first-party medical charges and debts associated with the provision of health care benefits. The identifying information about the person, the amount of the debt and program source of the debt may be transmitted to CARS as part of the collection process. When a person receives care under the auspices of VA, a VA medical facility may collect all or part of a charge or debt.

#### RETRIEVABILITY:

Paper documents, microfilm and microfiche related to VA claims and debts are indexed by VA file number or date of receipt. Automated records of VA claims and debts are indexed by VA claim number, Social Security account

number, name and loan account number in appropriate circumstances. Paper documents, microfilm, microfiche and automated records of pay administration debts and debts referred to VA for cross servicing are indexed by Social Security account number or Taxpayer Identification Number. Records in CAIVRS may only be retrieved by Social Security number.

#### SAFEGUARDS:

1. *Physical Security:* (a) Access to working spaces and document storage areas in DMC is restricted by cipher locks and to VA employees on a need-to-know basis. Generally, document storage areas in VA offices other than DMC are restricted to VA employees on a need-to-know basis. VA offices are generally protected from outside access by the Federal Protective Service or other security personnel. Strict control measures are enforced to ensure that access to and disclosure from documents, microfilm and microfiche are limited to a need-to-know basis. (b) Access to CAROLS data telecommunications terminals is by authorization controlled by the site security officer. The security officer is assigned responsibility for privacy-security measures, especially for review of violation logs, information logs and control of password distribution. (c) Access to data processing centers is generally restricted to center employees, custodial personnel, Federal Protective Service and other security personnel. Access to computer rooms is restricted to authorized operational personnel through electronic locking devices. All other personnel gaining access to computer rooms are escorted.

2. *CAROLS and Personal Computer Local Area Network (LAN) Security:* (a) Usage of CAROLS and LAN terminal equipment is protected by password access. Electronic keyboard locks are activated on security errors. (b) At the data processing centers, identification of magnetic media containing data is rigidly enforced using labeling techniques. Automated storage media which are not in use are stored in tape libraries which are secured in locked rooms. Access to programs is controlled at three levels: programming, auditing and operations.

3. *CAIVRS Security:* Access to the HUD data processing center from which CAIVRS is operated is generally restricted to center employees and authorized contact employees. Access to computer rooms is restricted to authorized operational personnel through locking devices. All other persons gaining access to computer rooms are escorted.

Records in CAIVRS use Social Security numbers as identifiers. Access to information files is restricted to authorized employees of participating agencies and authorized employees of lenders who participate in the agencies' programs. Access is controlled by agency distribution of passwords. Information in the system may be accessed by use of a touch-tone telephone by authorized agency and lender employees on a need-to-know basis.

4. *Department of the Treasury Security:* Access to the system is on a need-to-know basis, only, as authorized by the system manager. Procedural and physical safeguards are utilized to include accountability, receipt records and specialized communications security. The data system has an internal mechanism to restrict access to authorized officials. The building is patrolled by uniformed security guards.

#### RETENTION AND DISPOSAL:

Microfilm and microfiche are retained in metal cabinets in DMC for 25 years. CARS records are retained until termination of debt collection (payment in full, write off, compromise or waiver). All other automated storage media are retained and disposed of in accordance with disposition authorization approved by the Archivist of the United States. DMC generally forwards all substantive paper documents to VA regional offices, health care facilities and CHAMPVA Center for storage in claims files, patient treatment files, imaging systems or loan files. Those documents are retained and disposed of in accordance with the appropriate system of records. Information provided to HUD for CAIVRS is stored on magnetic tape. The tapes are returned to VA for updating each month. HUD does not keep separate copies of the tapes. Information provided to the Department of the Treasury for the Treasury Offset Program is transferred electronically and stored by Treasury on magnetic media.

#### SYSTEM MANAGER(S) AND ADDRESS:

Director, Debt Management Center (389/00), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, MN 55111.

#### NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:

An individual who wishes to determine whether a record is being maintained in this system under his or her name or other personal identifier, or wants to determine the contents of such

record, should submit a written request to the system manager indicated above.

**RECORD ACCESS PROCEDURES:**

Individuals seeking information regarding access to and contesting of records maintained by VA may write, call or visit the nearest VA regional office. Address locations are listed in VA Appendix 1.

**CONTESTING RECORD PROCEDURES:**

See record access procedures, above.

**RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:**

The records in this system are derived from five other systems of records as set forth in "Categories of records in the system", above, persons indebted to the United States by virtue of their participation in programs administered by VA or other Government agencies,

dependents of those persons, fiduciaries for those persons (VA or court appointed), other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, private collection agencies, consumer reporting agencies, State, local and county courts and clerks, other third parties and other VA records.

[FR Doc. 98-8868 Filed 4-3-98; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-M**