



Report: Survey of Veterans' Experience with DoD and VA Prosthetic Services

December 1, 2021

Background

Between July and November 2021, The Independence Fund conducted a survey of prosthetic using veterans to gauge their experience and satisfaction with the prosthetic care services provided by each of the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The survey focused on how long initial prosthetic delivery and prosthetic repair took to complete, how satisfied the veterans were with the level and responsiveness of that service, and what recommendations they would make with the services provided.

Summary Results

Overall, the survey indicated the responding **Veterans were far happier with the service they received from DoD than from VA, that DoD was much faster in providing those services than VA, and that DoD was more responsive** to the unique and individual prosthetic needs of each responding Veteran.

Responding Veteran Demographics

In general, the responding Veterans generally suffered their disability requiring the use of a prosthetic after 9/11, suffered leg amputations, but were still very active compared to before their amputation. More than half of the responding Veterans (52.8%) suffered their disability between 2009 and 2012. Almost one-third of the responding veterans (32%) suffered multiple amputations, and almost two-thirds (64%) had at least one leg amputation. On a scale of 10, with 10 being near as mobile as before the amputation, 52.83% of responding veterans rated their mobility as an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10, With an average 10-point scale of 7.15 out of 10.

Limb for which the veterans use a prosthetic (multiple limbs may apply):

- Left or Right Arm: 7.54%
- Right Leg: 67.93%
- Left Leg: 58.49%
- Other: 5.66%

30.19% of responding Veterans use both DoD and VA for their prosthetic services, 43.4% use only DoD, and 26.42% use only the VA. Almost three-fourths (73.59%) of all responding Veterans use DoD prosthetic services exclusively or in conjunction With VA. While more than

half of responding Veterans (56.61%) use VA prosthetics services exclusively or in conjunction with DoD.

While there are three DoD prosthetic service facilities, responding Veterans identified 23 VA prosthetic service centers they use. Despite that large disparity in the number of prosthetic service facilities, **responding Veterans are almost 30% more likely to use DoD prosthetic services than VA prosthetic services.**

Specific Survey Results

Veteran Satisfaction

- **In general, responding Veterans were far more satisfied with the prosthetic services they received from DoD than from VA, were far more likely to give DoD prosthetic services the highest satisfaction ratings, and far more likely to give VA the lowest satisfaction ratings.**
- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest, responding **Veterans rated DoD on average an 8.76/10, and the VA on average a 6.7/10.** On average, DoD prosthetics care was rated 30.7% higher than VA prosthetics care.
- 82.5% of responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care as an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10, while 37.5% of responding Veterans rated VA prosthetics care as an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10. **Responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care at the top ratings 2.2 times more frequently than surveyed Veterans rated VA prosthetics care at the top ratings.**
- 50% of responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care as a 10 out of 10, while 7.5% of responding Veterans rated VA prosthetics care as a 10 out of 10. **Responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care at the very highest rating 6.7 times more frequently than responding Veterans rated VA prosthetics care at the very highest rating.**
- 7.5% of responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care as a 1, 2, or 3 out of 10, while 17.5% of responding Veterans rated VA as a 1, 2, or 3 out of 10. **Responding Veterans rated VA prosthetics services at the low rating 2.3 times more frequently than responding Veterans rated DoD prosthetics care at the low ratings.**
- *Specific Comments on the What parts of the VA Prosthetics Process Responding Veterans Find the Most Frustrating:*
 - o “Sitting in front of a panel of doctors to be told what you do and don't need without my input. They do not value my opinion or experiences as an amputee. It is frustrating being told by able walking doctors that I can not get the proper equipment to allow me to participate in my interests.”

- “The entire process induced extreme anxiety about what my care would look like for the rest of my life.”
 - “Scheduling an appointment when I’m in need of work on my prosthetic. And once I do make contact I have to wait at least 45 days to see anyone. Then 99% of the time I leave with a socket that’s nowhere near a good fit. They are overwhelmed and understaffed and do not have reliable doctors.”
 - “Not getting the desired/needed type of prosthetics [sic]”
 - “All of it. Waiting 90 days or longer for appt. Not having up to date equipment civilian companies have for making foot prosthetics. Not doing in person fittings and just mailing them out. Civilian companies can do 2-3 week turn around, VA 8-12 week wait for foot prosthetics. Would be nice to be treated like a human being when seen and by a doctor who cares and actually likes their job.”
 - “no matter which vendor I tried my residual limbs would always open up due to incorrect fit, but it would take so long for an adjustment to be made that I gave up and started going back to Walter Reed NMMC.”
 - “waiting on paperwork approval, being told that injuries need to be checked to see "if combat injuries are still there"
 - “All of them, way too long, way too complicated, and not much empathy from any VA employee throughout the process that takes each time at least a couple of YEARS!”
 - “I would want to be heard. I feel like they do not hear my concerns and they force me to accept the prosthetics they want me to have rather than what my specific needs may be.”
- *Specific Comments on the Relative Satisfaction of DoD Prosthetics Compared to VA Prosthetic Services:*
- “I use DoD after my experience with the VA. DoD has done an exceptional job at keeping me active, happy and employable.”
 - “Honestly, I would rather drive 10 hours to Walter Reed than deal with the VA. They do not take the value of my daily living into consideration when pushing me through their system.”
 - “Not requiring the purchasing process to be completed before getting the repair or replacement.”
 - “I will remain with the DoD. The procurement process would probably be the one thing that needs changed. Not every amputee is the same. For instance, I can only wear a certain liner and the VA told me that the liner was discontinued; however I can reach out to my DoD prosthetist and he can attain the liners I need. I use a certain type of knee for everyday and the VA can’t even get that correct.”
 - “I have never used VA for my prosthetics.....and reading thru this survey I hope I never ever have to.”

Timeliness of Service

- **In general, responding Veterans indicated they received both new/replacement prosthetics and prosthetic repairs far more quickly from DoD than from VA.**

- New or Replacement Prosthetics:
 - On average, DoD prosthetics care delivered new or replacement prosthetics to responding Veterans in 28.8 days, while VA prosthetics care took 87 days. **Among responding Veterans, VA took 58.2 days longer on average to deliver a new or replacement prosthetic than did DoD, three times longer.**

 - 91.67% of responding Veterans indicated DoD prosthetics care delivered new or replacement prosthetics in less than one month. 26.67% of responding Veterans indicated VA prosthetics care delivered new or replacement prosthetics in less than one month. **DoD was 3.5 times more likely to deliver new or replacement prosthetics in less than one month than was VA.**

 - 2.78% of responding veterans indicated DoD prosthetics care took more than six months to deliver new or replacement prosthetics. 13.33% of responding veterans indicated VA prosthetics care took more than six months to deliver new or replacement prosthetics. **VA was 3.4 times more likely to take more than six months to deliver new or replacement prosthetics than was DoD.**

- Repair of Prosthetics:
 - On average, DoD prosthetics care repaired prosthetics for responding Veterans in 29.8 days, while VA prosthetics care took 66.4 days. **Among responding Veterans, VA took 36.6 days longer on average to repair prosthetics than did DoD, 2.3 times longer.**

 - 91.67% of responding Veterans indicated DoD prosthetics care repaired prosthetics in less than one month. 51.72% of responding Veterans indicated VA prosthetics care repaired prosthetics in less than one month. **DoD was 1.8 times more likely to repair prosthetics in less than one month than was VA.**

 - 2.78% of responding veterans indicated DoD prosthetics care took more than four months to repair prosthetics. 24.14% of responding veterans indicated VA prosthetics care took more than four months to repair prosthetics. **VA was 7.7 times more likely to take more than four months to repair prosthetics than was DoD.**

- *Specific Comments on the What parts of the VA Prosthetics Services Take the Most Time:*
 - o *Appointments:*
 - “My work is done at a private prosthetic clinic here in Atlanta and that work is always done quickly and efficiently. The most time-consuming part of the process is simply scheduling the initial meeting with the VA's amputee clinic at which I meet with them, explain what work I need, and then they approve it/write a prescription for the work/component.”
 - “Getting an appointment, as well as receiving the equipment.”
 - “Getting an appointment and then waiting for prosthetic after casting.”
 - “Waiting for appointments”
 - “Getting an appointment through the VA system”
 - “Trying to get an appointment for amputee clinic, waiting for that appointment to get "approval" for a replacement part and then having to schedule with a civilian provider to actually get the part ordered.”
 - o *Sockets:*
 - “Getting a test socket that actually fit.”
 - “The socket duplication that took over 3-5 months and it was done wrong the copy of the socket provided.”
 - “Socket fabrication”
 - “socket fittings”
 - “getting the socket to fit correctly.”
 - “Having the check and final socket completed to use. Took about a week or two for each.”
 - “Fitting the socket”
 - o *Procurement and Approvals:*
 - “Purchasing”
 - “Approval from the VA for repairs”
 - “Procurement”
 - “Getting approved”
 - “waiting on paperwork approval”
 - “Approvals from bureaucrats (i.e. NOT medical personnel)”

Future Availability of VA Prosthetic Services

- Since the recent VA regulation change for prosthetic services, **60% of responding Veterans indicated they were told their prosthetic services would decline at the VA.**
- 17.5% of responding Veterans were told it would take longer to repair or replace their damaged prosthetics, 10% were told they would no longer be able to receive a prosthetic from the VA, 7.5% were told they would no longer receive backup prosthetics from the VA, and 2.5% were told they would no longer receive prosthetic equipment because they had reached “maximum medical improvement.”

- *Specific Comments on the Availability of Prosthetic Services from the VA:*
 - o “My most recent interaction with the VA - I was needing a new socket. I went 7 different times and never made it past a test socket. I was told I reached my limit and the provider stopped returning my phone calls.”
 - o “I was told it would take 4-6 months to get replacements because there are too many orders in the purchasing departments for the number of staff available.”
 - o “I decided to stick with the DoD after I was rudely told I had to have the VA permission to utilize a DoD facility that has helped me with my entire amputation/prosthetic process. VA cannot get the equipment that I use was another reason I maintained a DoD prosthetic.”

Conclusion

Among the responding Veterans, there appears to be a deep dissatisfaction and visceral frustration with the prosthetic services they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and relative satisfaction with the prosthetic services they receive from the Department of Defense, despite the fewer number of prosthetic service facilities available and the longer travel times to access those DoD services. Some of the Veterans’ comments mirror the anecdotal reports The Independence Fund receives that Veterans would rather travel far distances, even across the country, to access DoD prosthetic services than to use closer VA prosthetic services.

Many responding Veterans expressed frustration with able-bodied VA medical personnel telling amputees how the amputee’s conditions should feel, their specific needs, etc. Several Veterans indicated they feel like VA clinicians do not listen to them, despite their being the amputees who live their specific lives. What appears to be unique for the Veterans participating in this survey, and possibly for post-9/11 prosthetic using Veterans overall, is:

- Their amputations came from combat or traumatic wounds, were not surgically initiated, and are very specific and difficult to fit compared to surgical amputations arising from chronic medical conditions such as diabetes. This necessitates a more complex regime of prosthetic services that will, by definition, need to be personalized to that specific veteran, and which will likely require the dedicated prosthetic services from a specific individual prosthetist.
- Being younger, these post-9/11 prosthetic using Veterans are in relatively better shape than older veterans, more desirous of vigorous physical activity, and but for their amputation, more able to participate in more robust physical activities. These conditions also call for hey more individualized prosthetic service regime, as well as a prosthetic service standard that considers quality of life as well as the medical necessity for specific medical rehabilitation needs.



The slowness of the VA's prosthetic system drew near-universal condemnation and frustration from the responding Veterans: time waiting for appointments, time waiting for repairs to be completed, time waiting for fittings, etc. These frustrations were enunciated in nearly every comment.

Numerous responses indicated the desire to eliminate the requirement to travel to a VA facility for an in-person appointment just to request something like a new socket. Similarly, several responses noted the Veteran's frustration with needing to verify the injuries and disabilities sustained still exist, for example, that an amputated leg has not grown back, before referrals to prosthetics can be made. Responding Veterans argued for the patient to be able to skip the Primary Care Physician referral process altogether for more minor matters and be able to go straight to the prosthetist. A word cloud analysis of the responding Veterans' comments and recommendations shows "time", "socket", "order", and "liners" to be the most used words.

Revised VA Regulations

Despite the near-universal opposition to the VA's 2017 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to substantially restrict future access to prosthetic services and equipment through the VA, the VA published its Final Rule on December 28, 2020, less than a month before the Biden Administration would be sworn in, and in some of the least active times in Washington, DC – between Christmas and New Year's Day.

A significant element of that new regulation was to eliminate the allowance for prosthetic services to improve the quality of life, even if it does not necessarily further rehabilitate the Veteran. This strikes to the issue of "maximum medical improvement" and since we are dealing with amputations, there will always be a point where the Veteran will not be able to medically improve more, but where the amputated limb will still be amputated, with no prospect for it magically growing back. For the VA effectively to argue it will cease to provide prosthetic services for Veterans solely to "support the comfort and convenience of the veteran" after the significant sacrifice the Veteran has made in defense of country seems cruel and callous.

Further, the new regulation explicitly states, "VA will generally provide only one [prosthetic] item" to Veterans. But given the significant delays responding Veterans experience with VA replacement prosthetics and repairs, to deny Veterans spare prosthetics seems to condemn those veterans to immobility which could be easily resolved with the provision of a spare. In fact, the VA regulations specifically prohibit providing backups to Veterans, only spares when a prosthetic needs to be replaced or repaired. But again, the responding Veterans comment extensively about how long it takes VA to provide those spares, arguing instead for providing spares.

Recommendations

- 1. Do not require Veterans to be retrained on equipment repaired or replaced.**
 - Issue: Veterans whose equipment, like shower chairs or manual wheelchairs, who have that equipment replaced or repaired are required to travel back to issuing VA medical facility to be retrained on that exact same equipment, regardless of how long they've used it, or how short a period it was since the last issue of that equipment. For many Veterans and Caregivers, this can be an all-day travel requirement.
 - Recommendation: Do not require Veterans to be retrained on replacement or repair equipment if it is the same equipment. Further, allow catastrophically disabled Veterans to be retrained in-home, where required.

- 2. Provide immediate loaner prosthetics to all Veterans needing replacement or repair.**
 - Issue: Veterans who need replacement or repaired wheelchairs must wait for the VA to go through a specific, oftentimes competitive, acquisition process, for that replacement or repair. The VA Inspector General reports Veterans wait, on average, 100 days for the new or repaired wheelchair. In the interim, Veterans are either bedbound or forced to hop.
 - Recommendation: Provide immediate loaner or backup wheelchairs within 24 hours of the Veteran requesting the repair or replacement.

- 3. Establish special standards of care for the catastrophically disabled.**
 - Issue: Current standards of care are developed by malady, and in isolation for that specific malady, and for the average VA health care enrollee. This leads to standards of care and timeliness of care standards inadequate for the catastrophically disabled with their complex polytrauma cases. Further, timeliness of care delays that may be a minor inconvenience for the average VA health care enrollee can cascade into a life-threatening emergency for the catastrophically disabled.
 - Recommendation: Establish special standards of care for the catastrophically disabled that consider the complexity of their cases and their need for much faster health care. In the interim, allow clinicians to prescribe courses of care that are outside the norm of existing standards of care.

- 4. Establish special formularies for the catastrophically disabled.**
 - Issue: Current formularies are developed by malady, and in isolation for that specific malady, and for the average VA health care enrollee. This leads to formularies inadequate for the catastrophically disabled with their complex polytrauma cases. These Veterans often need equipment and pharmaceuticals that are not on the formulary, and in far greater quantities than the formulary allows.
 - Recommendation: Establish special prosthetic and medical equipment formularies for the catastrophically disabled that allow for prescribing items and pharmaceuticals off



formulary and in greater quantities and periodicity. In the interim, allow clinicians to prescribe items and quantities that are outside the current formularies.

5. Establish special VA community care access rules for the catastrophically disabled.

- Issue: Given the inadequacy of current VA standards of care and formularies for the catastrophically disabled, these Veterans are still denied expedited or expanded access to non-VA care, having to follow the access rules established for far less disabled average VA health care enrollees. This can exacerbate the conditions of the catastrophically disabled while waiting for VA care under the normal standards of care.
- Recommendation: Allow clinicians to immediately refer catastrophically disabled veterans to non-VA care without further review. Return to the old regulatory allowance for prosthetic using Veterans to immediately choose a community care prosthetist and not be required to go through a Direct Care VA referral process every time.

6. Restore the ability of individual prosthetic using Veterans to use the prosthetist of their choice, whether that be within the VA's Direct Care system or a Community Care prosthetist. The rationale for this recommendation is discussed in detail above.

Appendix

Specific Survey Questions and Answers

Survey Demographics:

94.34% of the survey respondents sustained the prosthetic requiring injury between 2003 and 2018. 52.8% of the survey respondents sustained the initial injury between 2009 and 2012.

32% of the respondents have multiple amputations, and 64% have at least one leg amputation. 7.54% of the survey respondents had an arm amputation.

Limb for which the veterans use a prosthetic (multiple limbs may apply):

- Left or Right Arm: 7.54%
- Right Leg: 67.93%
- Left Leg: 58.49%
- Other: 5.66%

Q: "On a scale of 1 to 10 -- with 1 being close to immobile most of the time and 10 being nearly as mobile as before your amputation(s), and when you are not using a mobility device (such as a wheelchair) -- how active and mobile are you with your prosthetic(s)?"

- Average: 7.15
- 0 – 3: 11.32%
- 4 – 7: 35.85%
- 8 – 10: 52.83%

Q: "Which do you CURRENTLY use for prosthetic(s) service?"

- DoD only: 43.40%
- VA only: 26.42%
- Both DoD and VA: 30.19%

DoD is regularly used by 73.6% of the respondents. VA is regularly used by 56.61% of the respondents. 30% more respondents use DoD than VA.

Q: “At which VA Medical Center do you receive the bulk of your overall, general medical care [as in, not just for prosthetic(s)]? (If you don’t know its name, just the city & state will be fine.) (If you do not use VA at all, even for routine medical care, please write "I do not use VA for any of my medical care.")”

Do not use the VA:	13
Atlanta:	4
Salisbury, NC:	3
Augusta, GA:	2
Pittsburgh:	2
Charleston:	2
Washington, DC:	5
Durham, NC:	2
Richmond:	2
West Palm Beach:	2
Montgomery, AL:	1
Rochester, NY:	1
Phoenix:	1
Omaha:	1
Northport, NY:	1
Milwaukee, WI:	1
North Hampton, MA	1
Jessie Brown, Chicago:	1
Hines, Chicago:	1
Salt Lake City:	1
Dallas:	1

Q: “If you currently use DoD for repair or replacement of your prosthetic(s) – with 1 being totally & completely dissatisfied and 10 being fully satisfied & would not change a thing – how would you rate the average ease of the overall process?”

- Average:	8.76
- 0 – 3:	7.50%
- 4 – 7:	10.00%
- 8 – 10:	82.50%
o 8:	10.00%
o 9:	22.50%
o 10:	50.00%

Q: “If you currently use VA for repair or replacement of your prosthetic(s) — with 1 being totally & completely dissatisfied and 10 being fully satisfied & would not change a thing — how would you rate the average ease of the overall process?”

- Average: 6.70
- 0 – 3: 17.50%
- 4 – 7: 17.50%
- 8 – 10: 37.50%
 - o 8: 10.00%
 - o 9: 20.00%
 - o 10: 7.50%

Q: “If you primarily use DoD for your prosthetic(s), approximately how much time (best estimate is fine) does it generally take to receive a new or replacement prosthetic(s)?”

- <1 month: 91.67%
- 2 months: 3.77%
- 3 months: 0.00%
- 4-6 months: 0.00%
- >6 months: 2.78%
- Average: 28.8 days

Q: “If you primarily use VA for your prosthetic(s), approximately how much time (best estimate is fine) does it generally take to receive a new or replacement prosthetic(s)?”

- <1 month: 26.67% 29% the rate of DoD’s <1 month return rate
- 2 months: 23.33% Six times higher than DoD
- 3 months: 20.00%
- 4-6 months: 16.67%
- >6 months: 13.33% 4.8 times higher
- Average: 87.0 days 58.2 days longer; three times longer

Q: “If you primarily use DoD for your prosthetic(s) repairs, approximately how much time (best estimate is fine) does it generally take to receive back after repair(s)?”

- <1 month: 91.67%
- 2 months: 2.78%
- 3 months: 2.78%
- 4-6 months: 0.00%
- >6 months: 2.78%
- Average: 29.8 days

Q: “If you primarily use VA for your prosthetic(s) repairs, approximately how much time (best estimate is fine) does it generally take to receive back after repair(s)?”

- <1 month:	51.72%	66% the rate of DoD’s <1 month return rate
- 2 months:	17.24%	Six times higher than DoD
- 3 months:	6.90%	2.5 times higher than DoD
- 4-6 months:	17.24%	
- >6 months:	6.90%	2.5 times higher than DoD
- Average:	66.4 days	36.6 days longer; 2.3 times longer

Q: “The VA recently changed the Regulation for providing and repairing prosthetics, as well as changing what prosthetic equipment would still be available. Have any of the following situations happened to you? (Please mark all that apply)”

- Never experienced any of these:	40.00%
- no longer be able to receive a prosthetic from VA:	10.00%
- no longer receive equipment because reached "maximum medical improvement":	2.50%
- Take longer to repair/replace:	17.50%
- No more back-up prosthetics:	7.50%

Specific comments:

- “My most recent interaction with the VA- I was needing a new socket. I went 7 different times and never made it past a test socket. I was told I reached my limit and the provider stopped returning my phone calls.”
- “I was told it would take 4-6 months to get replacements because there are too many orders in the purchasing departments for the number of staff available.”
- “I decided to stick with the DoD after I was rudely told I had to have the VA permission to utilize a DoD facility that has helped me with my entire amputation/prosthetic process. VA cannot get the equipment that I use was another reason I maintained a DoD prosthetic.”

Specific comments on, “What parts of the [VA] process actually took the most time?”

- Appointments:
 - o “My work is done at a private prosthetic clinic here in Atlanta and that work is always done quickly and efficiently. The most time-consuming part of the process is simply scheduling the initial meeting with the VA's amputee clinic at which I meet with them, explain what work I need, and then they approve it/write a prescription for the work/component.”
 - o “Getting an appointment, as well as receiving the equipment.”

- “Getting an appointment and then waiting for prosthetic after casting.”
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 - “Having the check and final socket completed to use. Took about a week or two for each.”
 - “Fitting the socket”
- Procurement and Approvals:
 - “Purchasing”
 - “Approval from the VA for repairs”
 - “Procurement”
 - “Getting approved”
 - “waiting on paperwork approval”
 - “Approvals from bureaucrats (i.e. NOT medical personnel)”

Q: “...what part(s) of the VA prosthetics process did/do you find the most frustrating?”

- “The entire process induced extreme anxiety about what my care would look like for the rest of my life.”
- “Scheduling an appointment when I’m in need of work on my prosthetic. And once I do make contact I have to wait at least 45 days to see anyone. Then 99% of the time I leave with a socket that’s no where near a good fit. They are overwhelmed and under staffed and do not have reliable doctors.”
- “Not getting the desired/needed type of prosthetics”
- “All of it. Waiting 90 days or longer for appt. Not having up to date equipment civilian companies have for making foot prosthetics. Not doing in person fittings and just mailing them out. Civilian companies can do 2-3 week turn around, VA 8-12 week wait for foot prosthetics. Would be nice to be treated like a human being when seen and by a doctor who cares and actually likes their job.”
- “no matter which vendor I tried my residual limbs would always open up due to incorrect fit, but it would take so long for an adjustment to be made that I gave up and started going back to Walter Reed NMMC.”

- "Sitting in front of a panel of doctors to be told what you do and don't need without my input. They do not value my opinion or experiences as an amputee. It is frustrating being told by able walking doctors that I can not get the proper equipment to allow me to participate in my interests."
- "waiting on paperwork approval, being told that injuries need to be checked to see "if combat injuries are still there"
- "All of them, way too long, way too complicated, and not much empathy from any VA employee throughout the process that takes each time at least a couple of YEARS!"

Q: "What part of the [VA] process would you change and why?"

- "I use DoD after my experience with the VA. DoD has done an exceptional job at keeping me active, happy and employable."
- "Honestly, I would rather drive 10 hours to Walter Reed than deal with the VA. They do not take the value of my daily living into consideration when pushing me through their system."
- "Not requiring the purchasing process to be completed before getting the repair or replacement."
- "I will remain with the DoD. The procurement process would probably be the one thing that needs changed. Not every amputee is the same. For instance, I can only wear a certain liner and the VA told me that the liner was discontinued; however I can reach out to my DoD prosthetist and he can attain the liners I need. I use a certain type of knee for everyday and the VA can't even get that correct."
- "Let the veteran choose and order what he needs/wants (we know our body better than the VA staff), then have a simple process to have the VA pay for what we ordered. I can order almost everything I need prosthetically speaking online and get it within a week, while with the VA, it takes over 2-3 years and a lot of frustration and anger each time."
- "The only thing that I would like to see changed is to eliminate the requirement for me to come in for an appointment with the amputee clinic when I need to request a new socket or component. I understand that they want to keep up to date on their patients, but I find it kind of a hassle. Overall it's not a big deal though."
- "Clothing allowance. I've been denied an allowance for crutches several times because the VA doesn't have a record of issuing them to me. I received them from Walter Reed and annotate that every year."
- "I have never used VA for my prosthetics.....and reading thru this survey I hope I never ever have to."
- "I would want to be heard. I feel like they do not hear my concerns and they force me to accept the prosthetics they want me to have rather than what my specific needs may be."