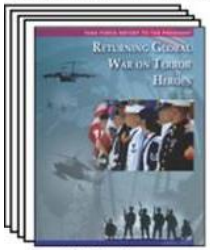
Update to Defense Health Board Disability Evaluation System (DES)

Dr. Joe Kelley (DoD)

Mr. Bill Wilson (VA)

April 23, 2008

Returning Global War on Terror Heroes



Nicholson

DoD/VA Interagency Care Transition

DoD Inspector General

DoD Task Force on Mental Health

Arthur, MacDermid, Kiley

Independent Review Group

West/Marsh

President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors

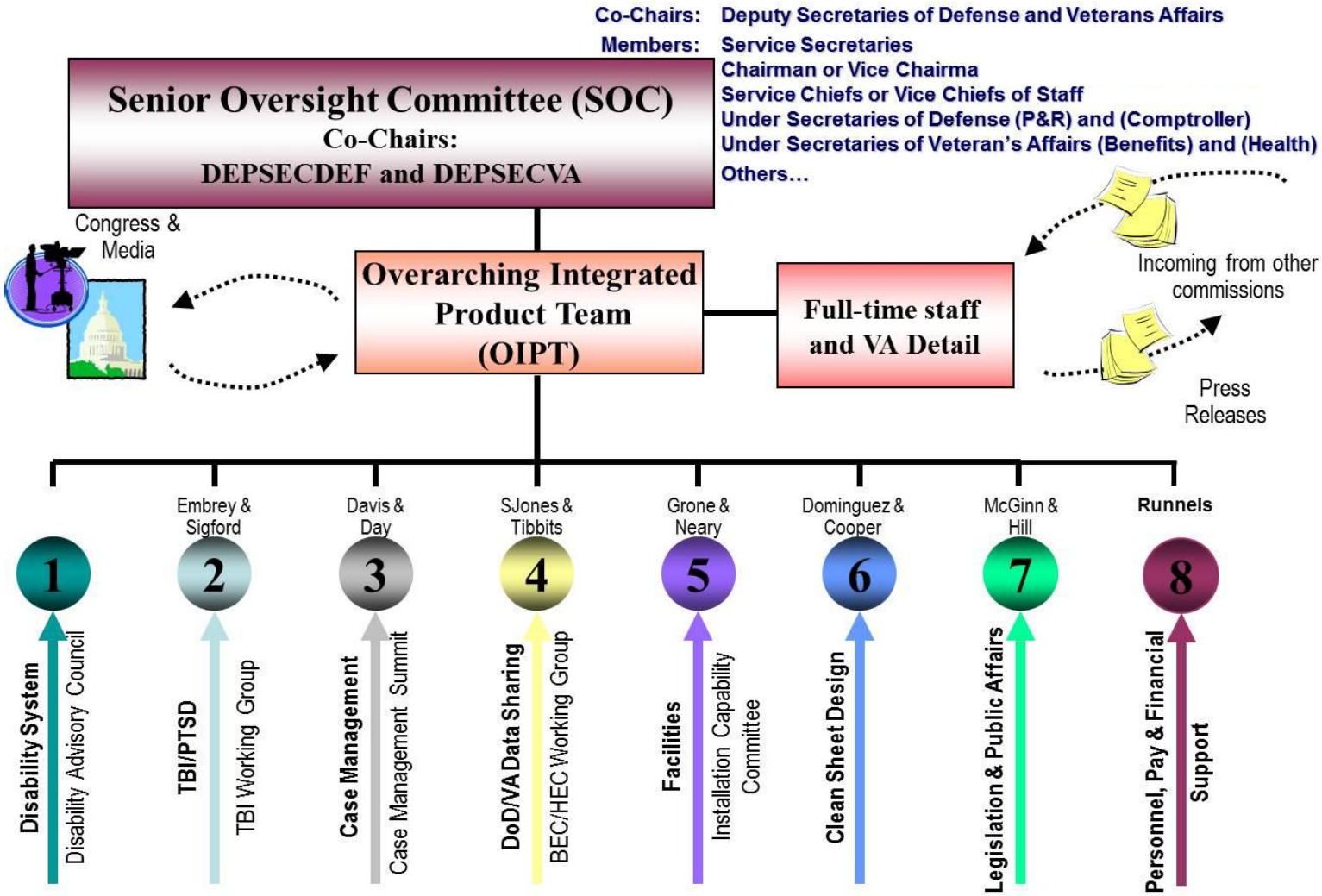
Dole/Shalala

Veterans Disability Benefits Commission

Scott Commission

Many Efforts Informed Us…and others

We Organized Ourselves…



Line of Action (LOA) #1 Disability Evaluation System

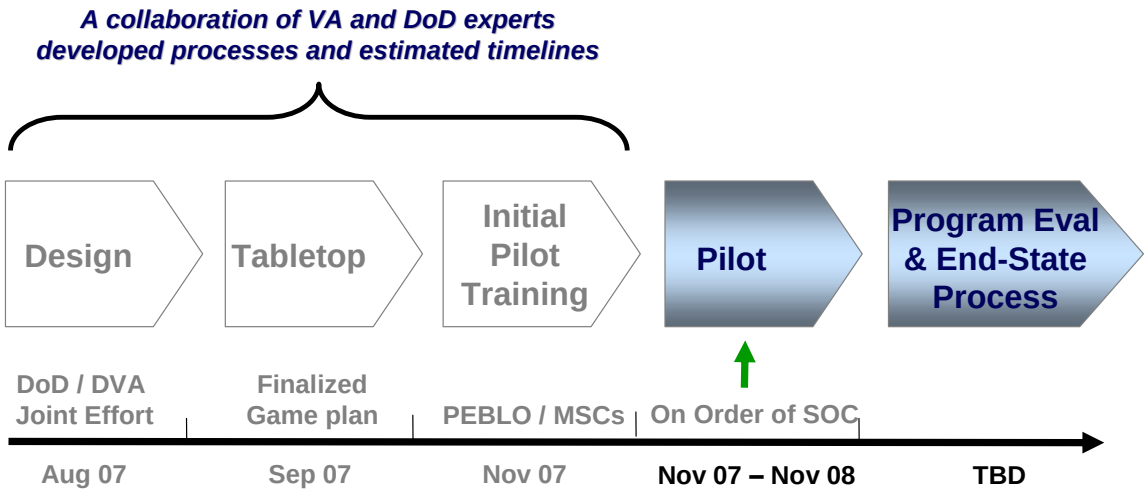
- **Background**
  - LOA1 consists of Senior Leaders from DoD, Military Services, VA, & Legal; Oversight by Disability Advisory Council (DAC)
  - Faced multiple recommendations with redesign
- **DES Reform**
  - Aug 07, DoD/VA subject matter experts tested 4 scenarios
    - Tabletop exercise used members' records who recently completed DES & received VA ratings
    - Looked at a joint fit for duty & rating board, a single exam at different stages, & VA ratings; stayed inside current legislative requirements
    - Final scenario developed; Piloting in National Capital Region
      - Includes all new medical evaluation board referrals from 26 Nov 07
        - Initiated at Walter Reed, Bethesda National Naval, Malcolm Grow
        - Regardless of whether injury was incurred in war
        - Did not include reserve component non-duty related conditions or temporary duty retirement list (TDRL) re-evaluations

DES Pilot Overview

- **VISION:**

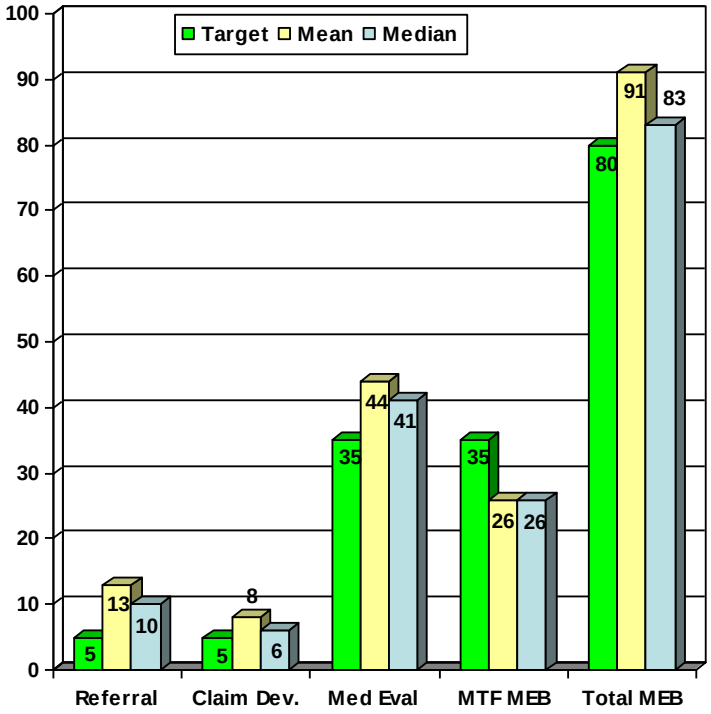
  A seamless, transparent DES; administered jointly by DoD & VA

- **FEATURES / GOALS *(Task Force, Audit & Study Recommendations)***
  - **Less complex, Less adversarial**
  - **Faster, more consistent evaluations & compensation**
  - **Single disability/med evaluation & single-source disability rating**
  - **Seamless transition to Veteran status, better continuum of care with advocacy & expectation management**
  - **Updated VASRD**
- **Timeline:**



Data Analysis

DES Pilot as of April 6, 2008



- Source - DoD Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLOs) & VA Military Service Coordinators (MSCs)
- DES Stats
  - DoD - as of April 6, 2008
    - 327 Service members in Pilot
      - ~17 enter program/week
      - 21 currently in PEB Phase
      - 2 currently in Transition Phase
      - 1 separating in May 08.
  - VA - as of April 14, 2008
    - 295 referrals from PEBLOs to MSCs
    - 14 ratings completed, returned to PEBs
    - 2 ratings being prepared
    - 3 found fit, returned to duty
    - 1 member set to receive first VA payment Jul 08, earliest allowed by law
- Insufficient data to analyze PEB, Appeals, Transition, Post Transition

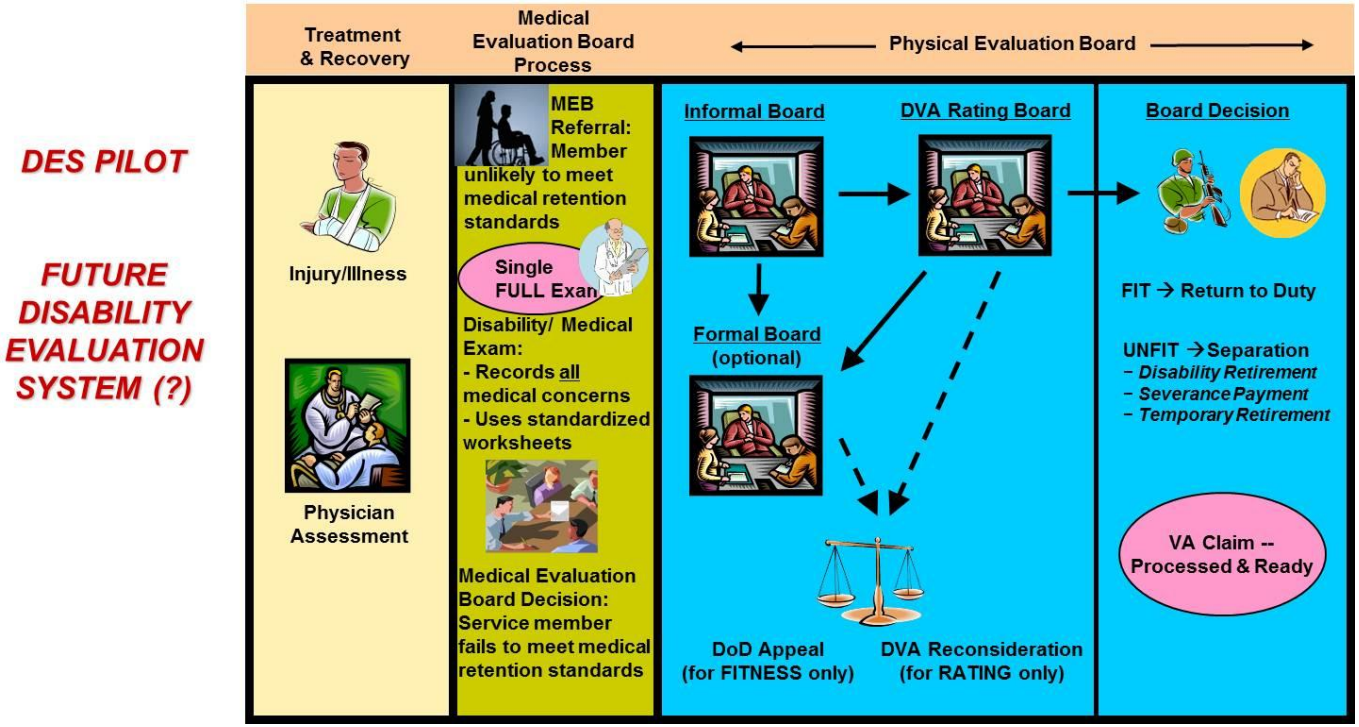
WAY AHEAD

- VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities training to Service Physical Evaluation Boards & Health Affairs reps by VA educators
- Evaluating outcomes of pilot to determine any redesign
- Developing joint expansion criteria for incremental expansion of pilot

Summary

- **KEY AREAS OF REFORM**
  - Incorporates a single, standardized medical/disability evaluation
  - Provides for a single-source disability rating
  - Applies new case management practices
  - Tests new automated systems to manage DES data
  - Changes DES from entirely sequential process to concurrent process
  - Decreases post separation processing time for VA award processing

Changing the current disability system…



QUESTIONS?