

Executive Officer's Statement

January 17, 2008

VCGCB Sets Goals High for 2008

As we move forward into the new year, the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is looking ahead and planning for continued progress in key areas. We've come a long way, but realize there is much hard work left to do. To help us seize the opportunities that await us in the year ahead, we've set some ambitious goals. I'd like to briefly outline some of these targets for success in several key programs:

Victim Compensation Program Initiatives

- **Expand Our Diverse, Multimedia Outreach Campaign**

The Board is planning to reach out and touch more Californians with information about how the Victim Compensation Program (VCP) can help victims recover from the financial, physical and emotional trauma of violent crime. Our new video, "Helping Victims Every Day," is a key component of our multimedia outreach campaign. We have posted it on our website and uploaded it to Google Video where it's available on the Internet worldwide. We're going to distribute the video to stakeholders, including advocates, service providers and legislators. Our outreach campaign will include posters, billboards, bus shelter displays and brochures. We'll be on the ground with appearances at numerous stakeholder conferences and targeted outreach to victim service provider groups, and making special efforts at reaching underserved and non-English-speaking communities. We're excited about our redesigned website that offers improved services and easier access to important information about our many programs, and will continue its development.

- **Provide Even More Resources to Victim Advocates**

The Board is dedicated to strengthening its partnership with victim advocates throughout the state. We got the ball rolling last year by establishing the County Liaison and Support Section (CLASS) and new victim advocate liaison position. More recently, we launched a new page on our website with resources for advocates and established a toll-free phone line for advocates to use to contact our CLASS staff directly. In the coming months we'll provide advocates statewide with access to our new automated claims processing system for basic summary information on Victim Compensation Program claims.

- **Strengthen Our Local Victim Restitution Partnerships**

Crime victims have a constitutional right to restitution payments from the offenders who have caused them harm. The VCGCB will continue to be a restitution resource to the state through broader partnerships with local probation and criminal prosecution professionals and organizations.

- **Complete the Conversion to the New CaRES Claims Processing System**

We're on track to complete the challenging conversion from our old vintage 1988 mainframe claims process system to the new web-based CaRES system. This will allow enhanced customer service and quicker payment of VCP claims. The Board's technical staff is developing and releasing enhancements to CaRES, including automated tools for receiving, reviewing, approving and paying provider bills.

- **Build on Our Efforts to Expand Access to Convenient Local Appeals Hearings**

We will take further steps to enhance the convenience and accessibility of victim appeals hearings. Our Appeals Process Section will expand scheduling of hearings in locations throughout the state.

(Continued on next page)

Boardwide Initiatives**• Continue our Commitment to First-Class Customer Service**

The VCP is in the midst of fundamental changes in how it approaches the business of processing claims. Our claimants, service providers and other customers will now depend on responsive, informed customer service representatives as their point of contact with the program. We will continue our efforts to enhance the technology and processes for providing improved customer service, so our customers have flexibility in how to get the information and services they need, promptly and responsively.

• Move Toward a Greener California

With CaRES, we're on the road to a paperless claims processing system that will minimize impacts on the environment. We will explore new strategies for conserving energy and maximizing recycling throughout our operations.

• Continue Our Award-Winning Support for Small Business

The VCGCB plans to keep small-business contracting a priority in 2008. We received a State Agency Recognition Award from the DGS Small Business Council for exceeding its Small Business contracting in the prior fiscal year, and we hope to do so again this fiscal year. We are proud to report that VCGCB far exceeded state goals, with nearly 69 percent of contracts awarded to certified small businesses and close to 6 percent awarded to Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises.

• Review and Update Regulations

We will undertake a comprehensive review of the regulations that guide our programs to ensure they are up-to-date and consistent with statute.

Awareness Campaign**The VCGCB participated in the following events and meetings:**

- San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office open house celebrating the District Attorney/Victim Witness Assistance office consolidation and the 30th anniversary of the program.
- Mental Health Association of San Diego's 10th Annual Behavioral Health Conference & Resource Fair in San Diego.
- Preventing Abuse Conference in Universal City sponsored by the Cedars Cultural and Educational Foundation.
- Meeting of the California Crime Victim Assistance Association Victim Compensation Committee.