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N.C. Academy of Trial Lawyers Hosts Veterans Benefits Advocacy Seminar

RALEIGH: The North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers, an organization of attorneys and paralegals dedicated to protecting people's rights, will host an advocacy seminar Wednesday to train lawyers who want to represent disabled veterans in fighting for benefits from the Veterans Administration.

“Veterans face an increasingly contentious environment for obtaining services they need and deserve from the government,” said Academy Chief Executive Officer Dick Taylor. “We had an outpouring of interest in helping them after the fiasco at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and we wanted to make sure our members had the training to do the job right.”

While the repeal of a 144-year old federal law allows attorneys to represent veterans at the appeals level for a fee, Taylor said many Academy members had expressed interest in representing returning veterans injured in Iraq or Afghanistan on a pro bono basis. North Carolina has the nation's ninth-largest population of veterans in the nation, so the need here is critical.

The seminar will be conducted by the National Legal Services Program (NVLSP), a Washington, D.C., based independent nonprofit veterans service organization dedicated to ensuring that the U.S. government honors its commitment to veterans by providing them the federal benefits they have earned through service to the nation.

NVLSP seeks to accomplish its mission by providing veterans' organizations, service officers and attorneys training and educational publications to enable them to help veterans and their dependents obtain all of the benefits they deserve and by representing veterans and their dependents who are seeking benefits before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and in court.

The seminar, co-sponsored by the Academy and by LexisNexis, is being offered at a discounted price of \$30. Attorneys who participate will get six hours of continuing legal education credit and also will receive discounts on benefits manuals and other materials needed to serve veterans. For more information or to register, contact Teresa Douglas Smith at 919.835.2813.