

Veterans Benefits for Elder Veterans

A. Medical Care and Prescriptions

1. Medical care is free for those veterans who are:
 - a. Service-connected for an injury or illness that was incurred on active duty,
 - b. Ex-POW's,
 - c. Awarded a Purple Heart,
 - d. Receiving a non-service-connected pension,
 - e. Low income and assets (that combined are less than \$80,000/yr)
 - 1). Single veteran \$25,162 annual income (including SSA/interest)
 - 2). Married veteran \$30,197 family income (including SSA/interest)
2. All other veterans must pay \$15.00 per primary care visit; \$ 50.00 per specialty care visit.
3. Prescriptions are free for the treatment of a service-connected disability, and those veterans who are 50% to 100% service-connected. All others will pay \$8.00 for each 30 days of medications (90 day prescription is \$24.00). Prescription glasses and hearing aids are free for those veterans who are being treated by a VA doctor (in Florida).

B. Nursing Home (NH) / Assisted Living Facility (ALF) Care

1. Veterans who require NH care (not ALF) due to a service-connected disability or are 70% to 100% service-connected may receive such care from the VA. Each VA hospital (Tampa/St. Petersburg) has a 120 bed nursing home. The VA hospitals also has one or more "contract" nursing homes in each county of it's catchment area. Pinellas County has 17 contract nursing homes in the Bay Pines VA Hospital catchment area.

2. An alternative to VA nursing home care is to receive Non-Service Connected pension benefits with Special Monthly Pension at the Aid & Attendance rate. This would allow for some financial assistance while you pay for the facility

Step 1: Must be a war-time era veteran, so disabled, he must medically need the assistance of a NH / ALF (feeding, bathing, administering medications) ,

and is not on Medicaid.

Step 2: Monthly income after paying for NH/ALF is less than \$1743.00. (Vet w/Spouse)

Step 3: Cash assets must be less than \$80,000 other than house/car.

Benefit: VA will pay the DIFFERENCE in income and VA ceiling limit of \$1743/mo.

Example: Veteran/spouse combined income is \$3500.00/mo.

1. NH/ALF cost is \$3500.00/mo. VA sends spouse \$1743.00
2. NH/ALF cost is \$3000.00/mo. VA sends spouse \$1243.00
3. NH/ALF cost is \$2500.00/mo. VA sends spouse \$ 743.00

3. While in the NH, a veteran can get his prescriptions free from VA hospital via mail.
4. If a spouse also has medical bills, it may be possible to get reimbursed of them. If the VA benefit is less than \$1597.00 maximum (VA cannot reimburse vet/spouse for any more then \$1597.00).
5. If the veteran (single) is on Medicaid, his benefit is limited to \$90 per month.

C. Burial Benefits

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1. The VA has one or more national cemeteries in every state. The Florida National Cemetery is located 15 miles north of Brooksville just off Interstate-75. The Bay Pines National Cemetery is located on the grounds of the Bay Pines VA Hospital in St. Petersburg. Burial space, liner, and headstone are provided free of charge. Cremated remains are also interred. The VA does not provide a casket, embalming services, or transportation. You must contract for those services from a funeral home or cremation service. The spouse can be buried with the veteran. If the spouse pre-deceases the veteran, the spouse may be buried at the cemetery first.

2. If a veteran was receiving money from the VA upon death, or dies at a VA hospital/contract nursing home, funeral and/or burial expenses can be reimbursed up to \$2000.00 depending on VA benefits received prior to death. (If the veteran was receiving SSA benefits, that agency also provides a \$255.00 payment - but to the spouse only.)

3. A U.S. flag is issued to the family and is normally obtained from the funeral home.

4. A Presidential Memorial Certificate may be requested for the spouse or family.

5. Burial at Sea: Burial services are performed by the US Navy on active ships, submarines, or aircraft. Family members are not normally allowed to accompany the veteran (or spouse). However, a video tape or still pictures of the burial ceremony and the shells from the 21 gun salute will be given to the family.

D. Widows Benefits (must be married for one year)

1. A veteran who dies due to his service-connected (SC) disability; or who dies but was rated 100% SC for 10 years of any cause of death, or was an Ex-POW and held the 100% SC rating for at least 1 year before he dies, entitles the surviving spouse to \$1033.00 (DIC benefits) per month tax, medical benefits (CHAMPVA) and continuing education. The spouse's benefits will cease if she remarries under 55. CHAMPVA and DIC maybe reinstated after 55 for CHAMPVA and 57 for DIC if age is attained prior to remarriage, please check with your Service Officer.

2. Widows of wartime veterans whose monthly income falls below \$591.00, and have little or no cash assets (less then \$80,000), can receive a monthly benefit from the VA that will bring their total income level up to \$591.00/mo. For example: a widow who receives \$400.00/mo from SSA can receive \$191.00/mo from the VA for a total of \$591.00. If such a widow also has medical expenses or is so disabled that she needs assistance, she may be able to receive additional monthly income. (Housebound or Aid & Attendance benefit) (cannot be remarried)

E. Requests for Discharge Papers or Medals

1. If the veteran has never had any prior contact with the VA, he will need to provide his discharge papers to apply for any of the above benefits. Contact any county, state, or federal veterans office to request the discharge papers (or DD-214 for service after 1960) well before you anticipate a need for any VA benefits (expect delays when requesting the discharge paper, up to six months).

2. Medals can also be requested. Providing a copy of your discharge papers will afford a quicker response.