

Welcome to VA 101: Basic Training for Understanding the Department of Veterans Affairs. This slide set provides a very broad overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs and presents a brief description of each of the three branches of the VA.

**DISCLAIMER:** Although the information contained in this slide set presents an overview of the Department of Veterans Affairs, it is not intended to provide interpretation of VA policy or specific details about how individual VA Medical Centers operate services within their jurisdiction.

## VA's Mission

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise *"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan"* by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's Veterans.

Abraham Lincoln made this pledge to America's Civil War veterans during his Second Inaugural Address, in 1864. A placard with Lincoln's quote adorns the entrance to VA Central Office in Washington, DC.

### Vision

To provide veterans the world-class benefits and services they have earned - and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

### Core Values

**Compassion:** We will treat all veterans and their families with the utmost dignity and compassion. We will provide services in a caring manner, with a sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it.

**Commitment:** Veterans have earned our gratitude and respect. Their health care, benefits, and memorial service needs to drive our actions

**Excellence:** We strive to exceed the expectations of veterans and their families. We strive to perform at the highest level of competence and take pride in our accomplishments.

**Professionalism:** Our success depends on maintaining a highly-skilled, diverse, and compassionate workforce. We foster a culture that values equal opportunity, innovation, and accountability.

**Integrity:** We recognize the importance of accurate information. We practice open, truthful, and timely communication with veterans, employees, and external stakeholders. By carefully listening and responding to their concerns, we seek continuous improvement in our programs and services.

**Accountability:** We will perform in a manner at all times that makes us accountable, responsible, and answerable to veterans and their families, our leaders and other employees as well as external stakeholders.

**Stewardship:** We will ensure responsible stewardship of the human, financial, and natural resources as well as data and information entrusted to us. We will improve performance through the use of innovative technologies, evidence-based medical practices, and sound business principles.

Reference: [http://www4.va.gov/about\\_va/mission.asp](http://www4.va.gov/about_va/mission.asp)



There is no standardized legal definition of "military veteran" in the United States. Whether or not one is considered a "veteran" by the federal government depends entirely upon which veteran program or benefit one is applying for.

Eligibility for most VA benefits is based upon discharge from active military service under other than dishonorable conditions. Active service means full-time service, other than active duty for training, as a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, Environmental Science Services Administration or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the Coast and Geodetic Survey. Generally, men and women veterans with similar service may be entitled to the same VA benefits.

Dishonorable and bad conduct discharges issued by general courts-martial may bar VA benefits. Veterans in prison and parolees must contact a VA regional office to determine eligibility. VA benefits will not be provided to any veteran or dependent wanted for an outstanding felony warrant.

States also have their own definitions of a veteran. For example, Missouri defines a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable" while Massachusetts defines its veterans by era of service and whether or not the veteran served during a war or during peacetime.

The US Department of Education defines a veteran differently. Federal regulations governing Title IV financial aid programs define a veteran as one who:

- \* has engaged in active service in the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard), or was a cadet or midshipman at one of the service academies, and
- \* was released under a condition other than dishonorable

Community hospices and other community providers, on the other hand need to base their definition on the individual's perceptions of his or her service to our country. For the purposes of providing care, the fact that there is a history of having served in the US Armed Forces or National Guard is very relevant and not necessarily related to discharge status except if the provider is seeking veteran's benefits for the patient. Otherwise, any military history including a less than honorable discharge that may produce lingering and difficult emotions could surface while under the care of the community provider and would need careful attention and skilled intervention.

## *History of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)*

- Created In 1930 by Executive Order
  - 2nd Largest Department in the Cabinet
    - Serves veterans and their spouses and dependents
    - Potential population (25% or 70 million Americans)
  - Three branches administer benefits
    - Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
    - Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
    - National Cemetery Administration (NCA)
- [www4.va.gov/about\\_va/vahistory.asp](http://www4.va.gov/about_va/vahistory.asp)

The United States has the most comprehensive system of assistance for veterans of any nation in the world. This benefits system traces its roots back to 1636, when the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony were at war with the Pequot Indians. The Pilgrims passed a law which stated that disabled soldiers would be supported by the colony.

The Continental Congress of 1776 encouraged enlistments during the Revolutionary War by providing pensions for soldiers who were disabled. Direct medical and hospital care given to veterans in the early days of the Republic was provided by the individual States and communities. In 1811, the first domiciliary and medical facility for veterans was authorized by the Federal Government. In the 19th century, the Nation's veterans assistance program was expanded to include benefits and pensions not only for veterans, but also their widows and dependents.

After the Civil War, many State veterans homes were established. Since domiciliary care was available at all State veterans homes, incidental medical and hospital treatment was provided for all injuries and diseases, whether or not of service origin. Indigent and disabled veterans of the Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, and Mexican Border period as well as discharged regular members of the Armed Forces were cared for at these homes.

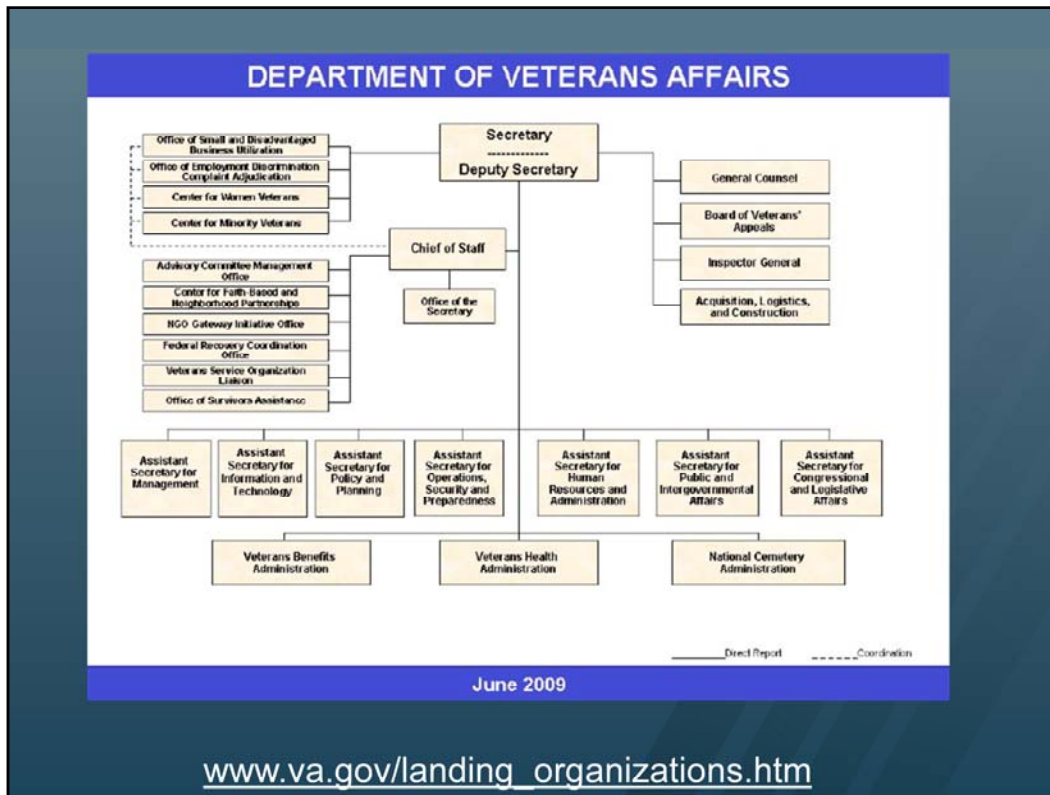
Congress established a new system of veterans benefits when the United States entered World War I in 1917. Included were programs for disability compensation, insurance for servicepersons and veterans, and vocational rehabilitation for the disabled. By the 1920s, the various benefits were administered by three different Federal agencies: the Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers.

The establishment of the Veterans Administration came in 1930 when Congress authorized the President to "consolidate and coordinate Government activities affecting war veterans." The three component agencies became bureaus within the Veterans Administration. Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, who directed the Veterans Bureau for seven years, was named as the first Administrator of Veterans Affairs, a job he held until 1945.

The VA health care system has grown from 54 hospitals in 1930, to include 171 medical centers; more than 350 outpatient, community, and outreach clinics; 126 nursing home care units; and 35 domiciliaries. VA health care facilities provide a broad spectrum of medical, surgical, and rehabilitative care. The responsibilities and benefits programs of the Veterans Administration grew enormously during the following six decades. World War II resulted in not only a vast increase in the veteran population, but also in large number of new benefits enacted by the Congress for veterans of the war. The World War II GI Bill, signed into law on June 22, 1944, is said to have had more impact on the American way of life than any law since the Homestead Act more than a century ago. Further educational assistance acts were passed for the benefit of veterans of the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam Era, Persian Gulf War, and the All-Volunteer Force.

In 1973, the Veterans Administration assumed another major responsibility when the National Cemetery System (except for Arlington National Cemetery) was transferred to the Veterans Administration from the Department of the Army. The Agency was charged with the operation of the National Cemetery System, including the marking of graves of all persons in national and State cemeteries (and the graves of veterans in private cemeteries, upon request) as well and administering the State Cemetery Grants Program.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established as a Cabinet-level position on March 15, 1989. President Bush hailed the creation of the new Department saying, "There is only one place for the veterans of America, in the Cabinet Room, at the table with the President of the United States of America."



This is an organizational chart for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which depicts the location of the various offices, programs and administrative functions. We will be focusing this presentation on the three branches of VA - Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Administration. The information provided in this presentation merely offers a broad overview of these very complex branches of VA and the benefits each provides. Additional general information may be found at each of their websites (see resources slide at the end of this presentation). More specific information as well as local interpretation should be obtained from VA facilities, State Departments of Veterans Affairs, County Veterans Service Officers (every state has VSOs and there are usually officers in each county), and Veterans Service Organizations such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Vets, etc.

## *Veterans Benefits Administration*

[www.vba.va.gov](http://www.vba.va.gov)

- Compensation and Pension
- Education [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov)
- Home Loans
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program including Vocational and Educational Counseling
- Life Insurance

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### VBA Benefit Programs

- Compensations and Pension Programs provide direct payments to veterans, dependents, and survivors as a result of the veterans' service-connected disability or because of financial need.
- Education Programs provide veterans, service persons, reservists, and certain veterans' dependents with educational resources to supplement opportunities missed because of military service and to assist in the readjustment to civilian life.
- The Loan Guaranty Program provides housing credit assistance to veterans and service members to enable them to buy homes.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program helps veterans with service connected disabilities prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs.
- The Insurance Programs were created to provide life insurance at a "standard" premium rate to members of the armed forces who are exposed to the extra hazards of military service. Veterans are eligible to maintain their VA life insurance following discharge.

## *National Cemetery Administration*

- Burial and Memorial Benefits
- State Grants Program
- Provides headstones and markers to private cemeteries
- Maintains cemeteries as National Shrines
- Presidential Memorial Certificates
- Memorial Services

[www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

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**The VA's National Cemetery Administration** maintains 131 national cemeteries in 39 states (and Puerto Rico) as well as 33 soldier's lots and monument sites. Today, more than 24 million veterans and Reservists and National Guard members with 20 years qualifying service (who are entitled to retired pay or would be entitled, if at least 60 years of age), have earned the honor of burial in a national cemetery. Veterans with discharges other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children may be eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. Those who die on active duty may also be buried in a national cemetery.  
[www.cem.va.gov/cems\\_nmc.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/cems_nmc.asp)

### **Mission**

The National Cemetery Administration honors Veterans with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service to our nation.

### **Vision**

The National Cemetery Administration will serve all Veterans and their families with the utmost dignity, respect, and compassion.

Every national cemetery will be a place that inspires visitors to understand and appreciate the service and sacrifice of our Nation's Veterans.

### **Purpose**

To provide burial space for Veterans and their eligible family members.

To maintain national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or memorialized there.

## *Veterans Health Administration*

- Health Care
  - Acute, Outpatient
  - Long Term Care (Community Living Centers)
  - Home and Community-Based Care
  - Domicillaries
  - Readjustment Counseling Centers
- Graduate medical and associated health trainee education

[www1.va.gov/health/aboutVHA.asp](http://www1.va.gov/health/aboutVHA.asp)

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VHA is the Nation's largest integrated health care system. With a medical care appropriation of more than \$47 billion, VHA employs more than 239,000 staff at over 1,400 sites, including hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries, and Readjustment Counseling Centers. In addition, VHA is the Nation's largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical research. [www1.va.gov/health/aboutVHA.asp](http://www1.va.gov/health/aboutVHA.asp)

### **VHA Mission**

The mission of the Veterans Health Administration is to serve the needs of America's veterans by providing primary care, specialized care, and related medical and social support services. To accomplish this mission, VHA needs to be a comprehensive, integrated healthcare system that provides excellence in health care value, excellence in service as defined by its customers, and excellence in education and research, and needs to be an organization characterized by exceptional accountability and by being an employer of choice.

### **VHA Vision**

Healthcare Value begins with VA. The new Veterans Healthcare System supports innovation, empowerment, productivity, accountability and continuous improvement. Working together, we provide a continuum of high quality health care in a convenient, responsive, caring manner — and at a reasonable cost.

### **VHA Offices and Programs**

A number of offices and programs support VHA.

[VHA Offices](#)

[Administrative & Financial Programs](#)



## *National Cemetery Administration*

- Mission: To honor veterans with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service to our nation
- Purpose
  - Provide burial space for veterans and their eligible family members.
  - Maintain national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or

The National Cemetery Administration provides for the interment of eligible service members, veterans, reservists, National Guard members, and certain family members in National Cemeteries. More than 3.2 million veterans, spouses, and dependents are buried in the system's more than 7,200 acres of developed land.

NCA furnishes headstones and markers for unmarked graves of veterans throughout the United States and the world. In national cemeteries, a headstone or marker is provided, including cost of placement.

NCA administers the State Cemetery Grants Program, providing financial assistance to states for establishing, expanding and improving state veterans' cemeteries.

NCA provides Presidential Memorial Certificates to veterans' loved ones to honor the service of honorably discharged deceased service members or veterans.

## *Burial Benefits*

- Who can be buried in a VA cemetery
  - Veterans
  - Any members of the Armed Forces of the USA who die on Active Duty
- Eligibility criteria
  - Before 1980
    - Honorably discharged
    - 24 months of active duty
  - After 1980
    - Honorably discharged
    - 24 months of active duty

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## *Burial Benefits in a National Cemetery*

- Gravesite in any of the 131 national cemeteries with available space
- Opening and closing of grave
- Perpetual Care
- Government headstone or marker
- Burial flag
- Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances
- Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents

[www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bbene.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bbene.asp)

### Burial in a National Cemetery

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our 131 national cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family.

## *Burial Benefits in a Private Cemetery*

- Government headstone or marker
- Burial flag
- Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances
- No benefits available to spouses and dependents

[www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bbene.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/bbene.asp)

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### Burial in a Private Cemetery

Burial benefits available for veterans buried in a private cemetery include a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. There are not any benefits available to spouses and dependents buried in a private cemetery.

## *Burial Allowances*

- Partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs
- Burial Allowances based on eligibility
  - Up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses
  - Up to \$300 plot-interment allowance
  - If the veteran died because of a service-related disability, the burial allowance increases to up to \$2,000
- Eligibility criteria can be found at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

### **What Are VA Burial Allowances?\***

VA burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

#### **Who Is Eligible?**

***You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:***

you paid for a veteran's burial or funeral, **AND**

you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased veteran's employer, **AND**

the veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

***In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:***

the veteran died because of a service-related disability, **OR**

the veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death, **OR**

the veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay, **OR**

the veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility, **OR**

the veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care, **OR**

the veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death, **OR**

the veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA-approved state nursing home.

#### **How Much Does VA Pay?**

***Service-Related Death.*** VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. VA will pay up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. If the veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some or all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

***Non-service-Related Death.*** VA will pay up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300 plot-interment allowance for deaths on or after December 1, 2001. The plot-interment allowance is \$150 for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some or all of the costs for transporting the veteran's remains may be reimbursed.

#### **How Can You Apply?**

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-530, *Application for Burial Benefits*. You should attach a copy of the veteran's military discharge document (DD 214 or equivalent), death certificate, funeral and burial bills. They should show that you have paid them in full. You may download the form at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

#### **Related Benefits**

VA National Cemetery Burials / Headstones and Markers / Presidential Memorial Certificates / Burial Flags

**For More Information, Call Toll-Free 1-800-827-1000**

**or Visit Our Web Site at <http://www.va.gov>**

\*This entire content is copied from the Burial Benefits Fact Sheet, which can be downloaded at [www.cem.va.gov/bbene/benvba.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/bbene/benvba.asp)

*Veterans Health Administration*  
*[www.va.gov/health](http://www.va.gov/health)*

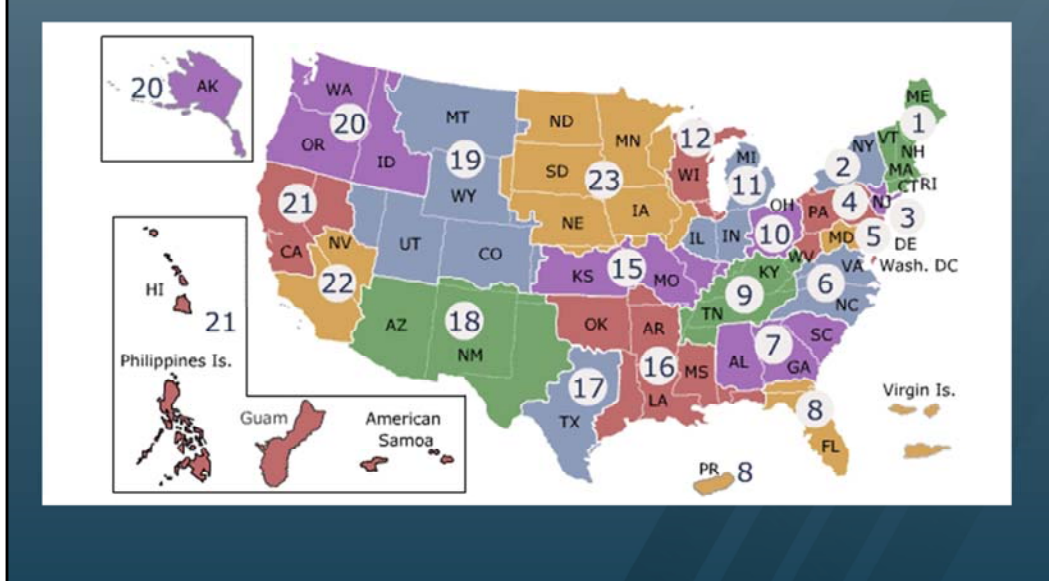
- Medical Benefits Package
- Basic eligibility
- Co-pay
- Venues of care
  - Acute
  - Nursing Home
  - Outpatient clinics
  - Vet Centers

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REVIEW STATS ON VHA WEBSITE

The VHA provides medical care to eligible as authorized by Title 38 U.S. Code. It operates the Nation's largest integrated health care system providing care to nearly 6 million unique patients and over 54 million outpatient visits per year. For in-depth information about the Veterans Health Administration, go to [www.va.gov/health](http://www.va.gov/health).

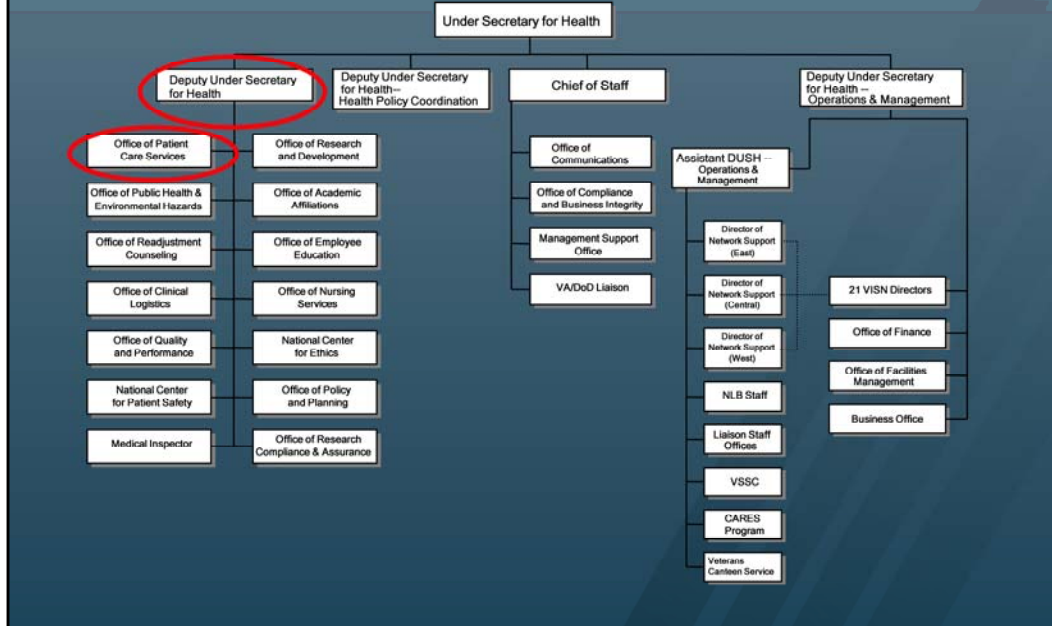
## *Veterans Health Administration 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks*



The Veterans Health Administration is largest integrated healthcare system in the country. There are 21 networks called Veterans Integrated Service Networks or VISNs, which most often cross over state lines. VHA Central Office in Washington, DC, sets broad-based system-wide policies, while power to implement policies and make decisions rests with VISN and facility leadership.

To locate a VA facility go to [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and click on “Locations” then “Hospitals and Clinics”.

*Department of Veterans Affairs*  
**OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH**  
**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION**



This is an organizational chart of the Veterans Health Administration. The VA Hospice and Palliative Care Program is located in the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, which is part of the Office of Patient Care Services.



## *Health Benefits*

- Health Benefits
  - Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act (1996) established Medical Benefits Package
- Eligibility
  - Must be honorably discharged from active service in Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, Environmental Services Administration, or National Atmospheric Administration

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Eligibility for most veterans' health care benefits is based solely on active military service in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard (or Merchant Marines during WW II), and discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

Reservists and National Guard members who were called to active duty by a Federal Executive Order may qualify for VA health care benefits. Returning service members, including Reservists and National Guard members who served on active duty in a theater of combat operations have special eligibility for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for two years following discharge from active duty.

Health Care eligibility is not just for those who served in combat.

Veteran's health care is not just for service-connected injuries or medical conditions.

Veteran's health care facilities are not just for men only. VA offers full-service health care to women veterans

Eligibility for health care through VA is a two-step process:

VA must determine veteran eligibility status by reviewing a veteran's

Character of Discharge from active military service and

Length of active military service

VA must determine whether the veteran qualifies for one of the eight enrollment priority groups.

## *Health Benefits*

- Enrollment, Eligibility and Costs
    - Most must enroll for benefits
    - Enrolled veterans assigned to priority group 1 - 8
      - New regulations regarding low income and those with special health needs
      - Effective June 15, 2009
    - Geographic Means Test utilized to assess cost-share
- [healtheligibility/eligibility/PG8Relaxation.asp](http://healtheligibility/eligibility/PG8Relaxation.asp)

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Community hospice providers can help veterans who may be eligible to enroll in VHA by contacting the palliative care social worker or Benefit's Officer at the local VA Medical Center.

Additional information can be found on VA's website at [www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/application/](http://www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/application/): Veterans can apply for VA health care, Nursing Home, Domiciliary or Dental Benefits by completing VA Form 10-10EZ, Application for Health Benefits. Be sure the veteran signs and dates the application. Veterans can obtain this form by:

- \* Accessing VA's web site, [www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/application/](http://www4.va.gov/healtheligibility/application/), or
- \* Visiting, calling or writing any VA health care facility or Veterans Benefits Office. or
- \* Calling VA's Health Benefits Service Center, toll free at 877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Eastern

To reduce processing time, veterans may submit the following paperwork

- \* a copy of discharge papers (DD-214 or "WD" form) if the veteran is not currently receiving benefits from VA,
- \* military service records indicating that the veteran received a Purple Heart Medal, or
- \* evidence that the veteran received hostile fire or imminent danger pay or a combat medal after this date if you indicated that you were in combat after November 11, 1998

## Medical Benefits Package (Standard Benefits)

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/coveredservices/StandardBenefits.asp>

- Preventative Care Services
  - Immunizations
  - Physical Examinations
  - Health Care Assessments
  - Screening Tests
  - Health Education
- Ambulatory (Outpatient) Diagnostic and Treatment Services
  - Emergency outpatient care in VA facilities
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Chiropractic Care
  - Mental Health
  - Bereavement Counseling for families of veterans in hospice and select mental health programs
  - Substance Abuse
- Inpatient Diagnostic and Treatment
  - Emergency Inpatient Care in VA facilities
  - Medical
  - Surgical
  - Mental Health
  - Substance Abuse
- Medications and Supplies \*
  - Prescriptions medications
  - Over the counter medications
  - Medical and Surgical supplies

\*Generally medications must be prescribed by a VA provider and be available under the VA's national formulary system

[www.pbm.va.gov/default.aspx](http://www.pbm.va.gov/default.aspx) <sup>19</sup>

VA provides a Medical Benefits Package, a standard enhanced health benefits plan available to all enrolled veterans. This plan emphasizes preventive and primary care, and offers a full range of outpatient and inpatient services within VA health care system. VA's medical benefits package provides these listed health care services to all enrolled veterans.

VA maintains an annual enrollment system to manage the provision of quality hospital and outpatient medical care and treatment to all enrolled veterans. A priority system ensures that veterans with service-connected disabilities and those below the low-income threshold are able to be enrolled in VA's health care system.

VA enrollment allows health care benefits to become portable throughout the entire VA system. Enrolled veterans who are traveling or who spend time away from their primary treatment facility may obtain care at any VA health care facility across the country without the worry of having to reapply.

## *Health Benefits General Exclusions*

<http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility/coveredservices/GeneralExclusions.asp>

- Abortion and Abortion counseling
- Cosmetic Surgery
- Drugs and biologicals not approved by the FDA
- Gender Alteration
- Health Club or Spa Membership
- In vitro fertilization
- Special private duty nursing
- Services not ordered and provided by licensed, accredited professional staff
- Care for a veteran who is a patient or inmate in an institution of another government agency if that agency has a duty to give the care or services.

## *CHAMPVA and TRICARE*

- CHAMPVA
  - Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs
  - VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries
- TRICARE
  - Program of the Department of Defense
  - Regionally managed
  - Active duty and retired members of the uniformed services

[www4.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva.asp](http://www4.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva.asp)  
[www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/jsp/Medical/IsItCovered.do?kw=Hospice+Care](http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/jsp/Medical/IsItCovered.do?kw=Hospice+Care)

The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) is a comprehensive health care program in which the VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries. The program is administered by Health Administration Center located in Denver, Colorado.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, beneficiaries cannot be eligible for TRICARE/CHAMPUS and must be in one of these categories:

1. the spouse or child of a veteran who has been rated permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability by a VA regional office, or
2. the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service connected disability, or
3. the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who was at the time death rated permanently and totally disabled from a service connected disability, or
4. the surviving spouse or child of a military member who died in the line of duty, not due to misconduct (in most of these cases, these family members are eligible for TRICARE, not CHAMPVA).

An eligible CHAMPVA sponsor may be entitled to receive medical care through the VA health care system based on his or her own veteran status. Additionally, as the result of a recent policy change, if the eligible CHAMPVA sponsor is the spouse of another eligible CHAMPVA sponsor, both may now be eligible for CHAMPVA benefits. In each instance where the eligible spouse requires medical attention, he or she may choose the VA health care system or coverage under CHAMPVA for his/her health care needs. If you have been previously denied CHAMPVA benefits and you believe you would now be qualified, please submit an application following the guidelines as listed on the "How to apply" section.

Due to the similarity between CHAMPVA and the Department of Defense (DoD) TRICARE program (sometimes referred to by its old name, CHAMPUS) the two are often mistaken for each other. CHAMPVA is a Department of Veterans Affairs program whereas TRICARE is a regionally managed health care program for active duty and retired members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. In some cases a veterans may look to be eligible for both/either program on paper. However, if you are a military retiree, or the spouse of a veteran who was killed in action, you are and will always be a TRICARE beneficiary, you can't choose between the two.

For more information about CHAMPVA go to

<http://www4.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva/champva.asp>

For more information about TRICARE go to [www.tricare.mil/](http://www.tricare.mil/). For information about Tricare hospice go to [www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/jsp/Medical/IsItCovered.do?kw=Hospice+Care](http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/jsp/Medical/IsItCovered.do?kw=Hospice+Care)

## Resources

Department of Veterans Affairs Find a VA Facility	<a href="http://www.va.gov">www.va.gov</a>
Veterans Health Administration	<a href="http://www.va.gov/health">www.va.gov/health</a>
VA Health Care Eligibility	<a href="http://www.va.gov/healtheligibility">www.va.gov/healtheligibility</a>
Veterans Benefits Administration	<a href="http://www.vba.va.gov">www.vba.va.gov</a>
VA Cemetery Administration	<a href="http://www.cem.va.gov">www.cem.va.gov</a>
CHAMPVA	<a href="http://www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva">www.va.gov/hac/forbeneficiaries/champva</a>
VHA Forms and Publications	<a href="http://www.va.gov/vhapublications">www.va.gov/vhapublications</a>
Veteran Data	<a href="http://www.va.gov/vetdata">www.va.gov/vetdata</a>
National Center for PTSD	<a href="http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp">www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp</a>
VA Hospice and Palliative Care	<a href="http://www.va.gov/GeriatricsSHG/page.cfm?pg=65">www.va.gov/GeriatricsSHG/page.cfm?pg=65</a>

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