

# VETERANS HEALTHCARE BENEFITS



Avalon Home Care

*Proudly Supports San Diego Area Veterans*



# Table of Contents

- I. **Veteran Healthcare Benefits:** ..... 2
- II. **Basic Eligibility:** ..... 2
- III. **Minimum Duty Requirements:** ..... 2
- IV. **Enrollment:** ..... 2
- V. **Priority Groups:** ..... 3
- VI. **Becoming a Non VA Provider (VCP)** ..... 5
  - a) **Overview** ..... 5
  - b) **Applying to Become a VCP** ..... 5
  - c) **Claims Processing** ..... 7
    - i. **Helpful Web Resources** ..... 7
    - ii. **Medicare Claim Processing Guide** ..... 7
    - iii. **Additional TriWest Information** ..... 8
    - iv. **Additional Health Net Information** ..... 8

For additional information on VA health care, visit: [www.va.gov/health](http://www.va.gov/health) as well as VHA’s 2015 Health Care Benefits Overview, a guide designed to provide Veterans and their families with the information they need to understand VA’s health care system.

## **I. Veteran Healthcare Benefits:**

---

Various services are available, including hospital, outpatient medical, dental, pharmacy and prosthetic services, specialized health care for women veterans, alcohol and drug dependency treatment and medical evaluation for disorders associated with military service in the Gulf War, or exposure to Agent Orange, radiation and other environmental hazards.

- **Health Care** - (877) 222-8387:  
[www.va.gov/health/](http://www.va.gov/health/)  
[www.va.gov/healthbenefits](http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits)  
[www.vets.gov/healthcare/apply/](http://www.vets.gov/healthcare/apply/)

## **II. Basic Eligibility:**

---

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable may qualify for VA health care benefits including qualifying Reserve and National Guard members.

## **III. Minimum Duty Requirements:**

---

Veterans who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or who entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans discharged for hardship, early out, or a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

## **IV. Enrollment:**

---

For most Veterans, entry into the VA health care system begins by applying for enrollment. Veterans can now apply and submit their application (VA Form 1010EZ), online at [www.va.gov/vaforms/form\\_detail.asp?formno=10ez](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/form_detail.asp?formno=10ez). If assistance is needed for the online enrollment form, an online chat representative is available to answer questions Monday – Friday, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. EST. Veterans can also enroll by calling 1-877-222-8387, Monday through

Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, or at any VA health care facility or VA regional office. Once enrolled, Veterans can receive health care at VA health care facilities anywhere in the country.

The following four categories of Veterans are not required to enroll, but are urged to do so to permit better planning of health resources:

1. Veterans with a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more.
2. Veterans seeking care for a disability the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but which VA has not yet rated, within 12 months of discharge.
3. Veterans seeking care for a service-connected disability only.
4. Veterans seeking registry examinations (Ionizing Radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War/Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) depleted uranium, airborne hazards and Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry).

## **V. Priority Groups:**

---

During enrollment, each Veteran is assigned to a priority group. VA uses priority groups to balance demand for VA health care enrollment with resources. Changes in available resources may reduce the number of priority groups VA can enroll. If this occurs, VA will publicize the changes and notify affected enrollees. A description of priority groups follows:

**Group 1:** Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50 per-cent or more and/or Veterans determined by VA to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions.

**Group 2:** Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30 or 40 percent.

**Group 3:** Veterans who are former prisoners of war (POWs).

Veterans awarded the Purple Heart medal. Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor.

Veterans whose discharge was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

Veterans with VA service-connected disabilities rated 10 percent or 20 percent.

Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., § 1151, “benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation.”

**Group 4:** Veterans receiving increased compensation or pension based on their need for regular aid and attendance or by reason of being permanently housebound. Veterans determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled.

**Group 5:** Nonservice-connected Veterans and noncompensable service-connected Veterans rated 0 percent, whose annual income and/or net worth are not greater than VA financial thresholds. Veterans receiving VA Pension benefits. Veterans eligible for Medicaid benefits.

**Group 6:** Compensable 0 percent service-connected Veterans. Veterans exposed to ionizing radiation during atmospheric testing or during the occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Project 112/SHAD participants. Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations from Aug. 2, 1990, through Nov. 11, 1998. Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after Nov. 11, 1998, as follows: Veterans discharged from active duty on or after Jan. 28, 2003, for five years post discharge; Veterans who served on active duty at Camp Lejeune, N.C., for no fewer than 30 days beginning Aug. 1, 1953, and ending Dec. 31, 1987.

**Group 7:** Veterans with incomes below the geographic means test income thresholds and who agree to pay the applicable copayment.

**Group 8:** Veterans with gross household incomes above VA national income threshold and the geographically-adjusted income threshold for their resident location and who agree to pay copayments. Veterans eligible for enrollment: Noncompensable 0-percent service-connected:

**Sub-priority a:** Enrolled as of Jan. 16, 2003, and who have remained enrolled since that date and/or placed in this sub-priority due to changed eligibility status.

**Sub-priority b:** Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009, whose income exceeds the current VA national income thresholds or VA national geographic income thresholds by 10 percent or less Veterans eligible for enrollment: nonservice-connected and

**Sub-priority c:** Enrolled as of Jan. 16, 2003, and who remained enrolled since that date and/ or placed in this subpriority due to changed eligibility status.

**Sub-priority d:** Enrolled on or after June 15, 2009 whose income exceeds the current VA national income thresholds or VA national geographic income thresholds by 10 percent or **less**.

Veterans NOT eligible for enrollment: **Veterans not meeting the criteria** above:

**Sub-priority e:** Noncompensable 0-percent service-connected.

**Sub-priority f:** Nonservice-connected.

VA's income thresholds change annually and current levels can be located at: <http://nationalincomelimits.vaftl.us/>

## **VI. Becoming a Non VA Provider (VCP)**

---

### **a) Overview**

As directed by the Choice Act, VA will administer the “Veterans Choice Fund” to implement the Veterans Choice Program (“the Program”). The Program will operate for 3 years or until the Fund is exhausted. President Trump signed an extension to the program in 2017. The Program will provide Veterans who were enrolled as of August 1, 2014 or eligible to enroll as a recently discharged combat Veteran with a Veterans Choice Card, and allow those Veterans who are unable to schedule an appointment within 30 days of their preferred date or the clinically appropriate date, or on the basis of their place of residence to elect to receive care from eligible non-VA health care entities or providers. This is separate from VA's existing program providing Veterans care outside of the VA system.

### **b) Applying to Become a VCP**

Eligible non-VA entities or providers must enter into agreements with VA to furnish care, must maintain the same or similar credentials and licenses as VA providers, and must

submit to VA a copy of any medical records related to care and services provided under the Program for inclusion in the Veteran's VA electronic medical record.

It's important that all who care for Veterans have a basic understanding of military culture. With the Veterans Choice Program (VCP), the signature initiative of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, eligible Veterans have increased access to health care from community-based medical care providers. Many community providers are not trained or experienced in treating this unique Veteran patient community, according to a [2014 RAND report<sup>1</sup>](#). In early 2015, the American Medical Association issued guidelines for assessing a patient's military experience and duty assignments. In the interest of the highest quality, most compassionate health care for our Nation's Veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is providing a number of accredited training resources at no cost to *all* Veteran care providers. **Click the "[Military Cultural Awareness](#)" and "[VHA TRAIN](#)" links to sign up for training courses:**

- [Military Cultural Awareness<sup>2</sup>](#)

*Note:* Click "OK" to move past any pop-up notice

- **Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals**

**Module 1:** Self-Assessment/Intro to Military Ethos

**Module 2:** Military Organization and Roles

**Module 3:** Stressors and Resources

**Module 4:** Treatment, Resources, and Tools

**Note:** The four modules listed above are available via [VHA TRAIN](#), (<https://vha.train.org>), a new service to share valuable Veteran-focused continuing medical education at no cost to community health care and public health providers. Dozens of additional Veteran-care training courses will be added to VHA TRAIN throughout 2015.

To learn more about opportunities to care for our Nation's Veterans, please visit the [Veterans Choice Program](#), ([www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/](http://www.va.gov/opa/choiceact/)), and the [Community Care](#), ([www.va.gov/communitycare/](http://www.va.gov/communitycare/)), websites. If you are interested in becoming a Patient-Centered Community Care and/or Choice Program provider, please contact one or both of the Third Party Administrators below:

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.rand.org/news/press/2014/11/12/index1.html](http://www.rand.org/news/press/2014/11/12/index1.html)

<sup>2</sup> [http://learning.mycareeratva.va.gov/courses/military-cultural-awareness-courses/m/wrap\\_menupage.htm](http://learning.mycareeratva.va.gov/courses/military-cultural-awareness-courses/m/wrap_menupage.htm)

[Health Net](https://www.hnfs.com/) (https://www.hnfs.com/)

Provider Customer Service: [HNFSProviderRelations@Healthnet.com](mailto:HNFSProviderRelations@Healthnet.com), 1 (800) 979-9620

[TriWest](https://joinournetwork.triwest.com/) (https://joinournetwork.triwest.com/)

Provider Services Contracting: [TriWestDirectContracting@triwest.com](mailto:TriWestDirectContracting@triwest.com) 1 (866) 284-3742

## **c) Claims Processing**

VA will establish and implement a system to process and pay claims for care delivered to Veterans by non-VA providers under the Program and other non-VA care authorities.

### **i. Helpful Web Resources**

- **Form CMS 1500 processing manual**

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c26.pdf>

- **Form CMS 1450 processing manual**

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c25.pdf>

- **Medicare Claims Processing Manual**

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c12.pdf>

- **Utilize Medicare's Claims Processing Manual CMS 100-04 at:**

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Internet-Only-Manuals-IOMs-Items/CMS018912.html?DLPage=1&DLSort=0&DLSortDir=ascending>

Veterans Affairs manages several health care programs that reimburse private health care providers for caring for our Veterans and their eligible family members. Unfortunately, these health care programs have a different statutory and regulatory authority, which creates diverse payment methodologies. The majority of VA health care programs utilize Medicare's payment methodologies or something very similar.

Therefore, providers and facilities that utilize Medicare's billing and coding guidelines will greatly minimize claim delays or rejections as a result of the Program Integrity Tools Improper Payment Review.

### **ii. Medicare Claim Processing Guide**

The following Medicare link is an excellent source of billing and coding guidance for all providers and facilities:

<http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/clm104c01.pdf>

### **iii. Additional TriWest Information**

The TriWest Provider Portal is your one-stop shop for information on filing claims and navigating the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs outlined in this training

[www.triwest.com/provider](http://www.triwest.com/provider)

### **iv. Additional Health Net Information**

Health Net Federal Services' process for receiving and paying providers is designed to ensure the medical claims received by VA are complete and accurate.

A clean claim is a claim that complies with billing guidelines and requirements, has no defects or improprieties, and does not require special processing that would prevent timely payment. Clean claims will be processed within 30 days.

Claims must be submitted directly to HNFS within 120 days of the date of service or upon the conclusion of a series of authorized visits. Electronic data interchange claim submissions through Change Healthcare are accepted and encouraged.

To register, visit <http://www.changehealthcare.com/legacy/resources/enrollment-services/medical-hospital-enrollment>.

Health Net Federal Services offers tips to reduce common claim submittal errors (paper and electronic) and common denial code explanations.

Visit [www.hnfs.com/go/VA](http://www.hnfs.com/go/VA) > Claims > Claims Tips.