

CHAMPVA FACT SHEET 01-29 CHAMPVA for Life, MEDICARE, Supplemental Insurance Policies and Other Related Issues

What is CHAMPVA for Life?

CHAMPVA for Life, or CFL benefits are exactly the same as the basic CHAMPVA program. CFL extends CHAMPVA benefits to those over age 65.

Who is eligible for CFL?

To be eligible for CFL benefits over age 65, you cannot be eligible for TRICARE/CHAMPUS and you must be in one of these categories:

- 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
- the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service connected disability, or who was at the time of death rated permanently and totally disabled, or
- 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).

You must also meet the following conditions:

- if you turned 65 before June 5, 2001, and only have MEDICARE Part A, you will be eligible for CHAMPVA without having to have MEDICARE Part B coverage.
- if you turned 65 before June 5, 2001 and have MEDICARE Parts A and B, you must keep both Parts to be eligible.
- if you turn age 65 on or after June 5, 2001, you must be enrolled in MEDICARE Parts A and B to be eligible.

Does CFL apply to Helpless Children?

Yes. If your son or daughter is determined to be a Helpless Child by a VA Regional Office, he or she can be covered under CFL if they also meet all other eligibility criteria.

What is the relationship between CFL and MEDICARE?

Both are Federal benefits programs. CFL is always the last payer after the claims are paid by MEDICARE and any other health insurance.

When is CFL effective?

Benefits begin for services received on or after October 1, 2001, for all eligible beneficiaries except for individuals who are not eligible for MEDICARE Part A who continue to be eligible for CHAMPVA (See "What happens if I am not eligible for MEDICARE?").

Do I have to apply for CFL if I am already covered by CHAMPVA?

Yes, but the application process is much easier. Ninety days before your 65th birthday, CHAMPVA will contact you by mail with instructions. You will be asked to complete an application and an Other Health Insurance Certification. You will need to provide a copy of your MEDICARE card.

How do I apply if I am not already covered by CHAMPVA?

Request an application from the Health Administration Center (information at the end of the Fact Sheet).

What happens if I am not eligible for MEDICARE?

If you are a CHAMPVA beneficiary, or otherwise meet CHAMPVA criteria, and are not eligible for MEDICARE, you need to submit a "non-entitlement" letter from the Social Security Administration and CHAMPVA will provide coverage.

Do I have to carry MEDICARE Part B?

- If you are eligible for MEDICARE and your 65th birthday is on or after June 5, 2001, you must have Part B to be eligible for CFL.
- If you are eligible for MEDICARE and your 65th birthday was before June 5, 2001, and you had Parts A and B on that date you must keep Part B. If you only had Part A, you do not need Part B to be eligible for CFL.

What if I did not select MEDICARE Part B before and want to do so now?

There are provisions under MEDICARE rules for this. Contact your local Social Security Administration office for guidance.

When will I receive my CHAMPVA Card and Handbook?

These items will be sent to you about 45 days after we receive a complete application and determine that you are eligible.

Will CFL and MEDICARE cover all my health care needs?

Combined, these two programs will cover most of your medical needs. However, there are some benefits that are not provided under either program. For example, cosmetic services or eyeglasses are either not covered or covered in extremely limited situations. You should review the benefit coverage's of both programs carefully.

What is the outpatient prescription medication benefit that will be available under CFL?

CFL does provide an outpatient prescription benefit, something not provided under MEDICARE. CFL has three ways for you to obtain your prescription medication.

- *If you have other insurance that has an outpatient prescription benefit, select any pharmacy and pay for your medication. When you submit a claim to the CFL, you have to include an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from your other insurance company, so send your claim to the other insurance plan first. Some pharmacies may submit your claim, but, in these circumstances, most will not. Under most circumstances, you will have no out of pocket expense because CHAMPVA will typically pay the portion of the bill your other insurance company did not (your co-pay). Be sure we have information on your other health insurance on file.*
- *If you do not have any other insurance that has an outpatient prescription benefit there are two other options:*
 - **You should use our Meds by Mail program. Under this program, prescription medication is mailed to your home and you pay nothing -- the medication is FREE!** Meds by Mail is designed for your maintenance medication needs. You can obtain a registration form from our web site at www.va.gov/hac by selecting FORMS from the left panel. Or, you can contact us (information at the end of the Fact Sheet) and request a copy. **This program is a great benefit and we highly encourage you to use it!**
 - You can use a pharmacy that is part of the Medical Matrix network. There are over 45,000 pharmacies nationwide in this network. Some of these include major drug chains and supermarkets. If you use a Medical Matrix network, you pay only your 25% cost share after the annual deductible is met. The pharmacy submits your claims directly to CFL. To find a Medical Matrix network pharmacy, go to the Medical Matrix web site at www.medicalmatrix.com or call them at 800-880-1377 after you get your CHAMPVA card.

Can I use a VA medical center to obtain my care under CFL?

No. CHAMPVA beneficiaries with MEDICARE cannot use a VA medical center because MEDICARE does not pay for services provided by a VA Medical Center. If you are currently being seen at a VA medical center, you need to find a different provider before MEDICARE and CFL will cover you.

How much do I have to pay?

If the service is covered by MEDICARE and CHAMPVA, you will almost always have no out-of-pocket expense.

If the service is covered by MEDICARE and not by CHAMPVA, you will pay your MEDICARE co-pay.

If the service is not covered by MEDICARE, but is covered by CHAMPVA, you will pay your CHAMPVA co-pay (typically 25%).

What happens if I live overseas?

Since MEDICARE does not pay for services overseas, CHAMPVA will pay for services after any insurance you may have. If you don't have any insurance, then CHAMPVA becomes the primary payor.

Will CFL cover the MEDICARE annual deductibles?

CHAMPVA does not have an annual deductible for **inpatient care**, so we will cover the MEDICARE deductible that is paid by the beneficiary. Currently, there is a \$792 MEDICARE deductible for inpatient stays of 1 - 60 days. CHAMPVA would pay you \$792.

The MEDICARE deductible for outpatient services is \$100. CHAMPVA will pay you \$37.50 of the \$100.

Will CFL pay for MEDICARE Part B premiums?

No, CFL will not make these payments. You are responsible for these monthly premiums.

Do I need a supplemental insurance plan if I have CHAMPVA and MEDICARE?

Most people who are covered by both CFL and MEDICARE, do not need a supplemental policy (commonly called MEDIGAP policies). This is because when all payment calculations are made by CFL and MEDICARE, you will normally have no out of pocket expenses if the services are covered by both programs. If you have a supplement in place, do not cancel it before you receive your CHAMPVA card.

Should I drop my MEDICARE HMO coverage?

This is a difficult question and really depends on your need for health care and the coverage provided by your HMO. You will still be required to pay MEDICARE Part B premiums to be eligible for CFL, so you will not save this expense. You may find that your prescription co-pay is less than the CFL 25% co-pay, so it may be to your advantage to stay with your HMO. You also may prefer to have access to your primary care manager under your HMO - he or she may not be open to new, non-HMO patients and you may have to change doctors. We can not make a recommendation, but we urge you to carefully consider this decision.

How do I obtain additional information?

- CFL information is provided on a recorded, toll free line 24 hours a day. The number is 888-289-2411. You will not be able to talk to a benefits advisor, but the information that is available to a benefits advisor is the same information that is on this recorded line.
- Check our web site at www.va.gov/hac
- Write us at: The Health Administration Center, P.O. Box 469028, Denver, CO 80246-9028
- Email us at hac.inq@med.va.gov
- Call 1-800-733-8387, Monday - Friday from 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM and 2:30 - 5:00 PM Eastern Time.