

# VA Benefits and Community Resources for Aging Veterans and Caregivers

## Minneapolis VA Health Care System



This guide is designed for Veterans and caregivers. It provides information on benefits and community resources. This includes information, phone numbers, and websites to empower you to optimize your health and experience.

The US Department of Veterans Affairs does not have any affiliation with any of the community resources or legal services that are listed in this guide. It is up to the Veteran and/or caregiver to further research which resources/services would best suit their needs.

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## Table of Contents

Veterans Benefits .....	3
Attorneys and Legal Clinic .....	6
VA Fiduciary Program .....	7
Guardianship and Conservatorship .....	8
Advance Care Planning .....	9
Skilled Home Health Care, Homemaker and Home Health Aide Services.....	12
Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) .....	13
Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) .....	13
Minneapolis Veterans Homes Adult Day Center.....	13
Contract Nursing Home Program.....	14
Respite Care .....	15
General Caregiver Support Services .....	17
Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers .....	18
Palliative & Hospice Care.....	19
Burial and Death Benefits Information .....	20
Mental Health .....	21
Compassionate Contact Corps.....	22
Assisted Living Facilities.....	22
Medical Foster Home (MFH).....	23
Minnesota State Veterans Homes.....	23
Wisconsin State Veterans Homes.....	24
Transportation .....	25
Medical ID Bracelets, Pendants, and Alert System.....	27,28
Technology for Seniors .....	28
Meals and Grocery Delivery & Medicare.....	29
Social Security Programs & Minnesota Health Care Programs .....	30
Support Groups.....	31
Social Work Contact Information .....	32

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## Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

**Disability Compensation/Service Connection:** A tax-free monetary benefit paid to Veterans with disabilities that are the result of a disease or injury from active military services. **Your County Veterans' Services Officer can assist you in filing a claim.**

**Veterans Pension:** VA helps Veterans and their families cope with financial challenges. VA provides extra income through the Veterans Pension benefit. Veterans Pension is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime Veterans.

- **Eligibility:** Must have at least 90 days of active-duty service, with at least one day during a wartime period to qualify for a VA pension. In addition to the minimum service requirements, the Veteran must be: age 65 or older **OR** totally and permanently disabled **OR** a patient in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care **OR** receiving Social Security Disability **OR** receiving Supplemental Security Income.
- Must submit application to determine eligibility (Form 21P-527EZ).
- Mail completed application to the Pension Management Center that services your state:

St. Paul VA Regional office  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Claims Intake Center  
Attention: St. Paul Pension Center  
PO BOX 5365  
Janesville, WI 53547  
Fax: (844) 655-1604

**Resources:**

- Your County Veterans' Services Officer can assist you in completing an application.
- Elder Resource Benefits Consulting: ([elderbenefitsconsulting.com](http://elderbenefitsconsulting.com)), (508) 485-0039, (833) 822-9273
- National Veterans Foundation: ([nvf.org](http://nvf.org)), (888) 777-4443

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**Aid and Attendance:** Benefits for Veterans who need another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, and undressing. It also includes individuals who are blind, or a Veteran in an assisted living or nursing home because of mental or physical incapacity.

- **Eligibility:** Any wartime Veterans with 90 days of active duty, 1 day beginning or ending during a period of war. The Veteran requires assistance of another person to perform daily tasks, such as eating, dressing, and undressing.
- Must submit an application to determine eligibility (Form 21-527EZ and Form 21-2680).

**Home Improvements and Structural Alteration (HISA):** this grant provides medically necessary improvements to Veteran's primary home.

HISA is for the following purposes:

- Allowing entrance to or exit from their homes
- Use of essential lavatory and sanitary facilities
- Allowing accessibility to kitchen or bathroom sinks or counters
- Improving entrance paths or driveways in immediate area of the home to facilitate access to the home through construction of permanent ramping
- Improving plumbing or electrical systems made necessary due to installation of home medical equipment

HISA will not pay for:

- Walkways to exterior buildings
- Widening of driveways
- Exterior decking

HISA Grant Amounts: Lifetime HISA benefit up to \$6,800 may be provided for:

- Veterans who have a service-connected condition
- Veterans who have a non-service-connected condition rated 50% or more service connected

Life benefits up to \$2,000 may be provided for Veterans who have a non-service-connected condition.

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## **HISA Application Process:**

1. A prescription written or approved by a VA physician which includes:
  - The beneficiary's name, address, and telephone number
  - Identify the improvement or structural alteration
  - The diagnosis and medical justification for the improvement or structural alteration
2. A completed and signed VA Form 10-0103 Veterans Application for Assistance.
3. FOR RENTERS: a signed and notarized statement from the owner authorizing the improvement or structural alteration.
4. A written itemized estimate of costs for labor, materials, permits and inspections for the home improvement and structural alteration.
5. A color photograph of the unimproved area.

## **Resources:**

- Your County Veterans' Services Officer can assist you in completing an application.
- Elder Resource Benefits Consulting: ([elderbenefitsconsulting.com](http://elderbenefitsconsulting.com)), (508) 485-0039, (833) 822-9273
- National Veterans Foundation: ([nvf.org](http://nvf.org)), (888) 777-4443

**Financial Hardship Programs:** VA has programs that help Veterans who struggle to pay VA copayments. This can be from a loss of job, a sudden decrease in income, or increases in out-of-pocket family health care expenses.

**Repayment Plan:** You have the right to start a monthly repayment plan if you cannot pay your debt in full. This can happen at any time during your enrollment in VA health care. To do so, submit a completed Agreement to Pay Indebtedness (VA Form 1100).

**Waiver of Existing Debt:** You have the right to request a waiver of part or all of your debt accrued at the VA. If the waiver is granted you will not be required to pay the amount waived. To do so, submit an explanation and a completed Financial Status Report (VA Form 5655).

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**Hardship Determination:** If your total household income has decreased, you may be eligible for a hardship determination. This may allow you to not pay copayments for the remaining calendar year. To request a hardship determination, send a letter explaining the financial hardship your copayment charges will cause you. You will also need to complete VA Form 10-10HS, Request for Hardship Determination.

**Submit Completed VA forms and documents to apply for one of the VA's Financial Hardship Programs:**

In Person or by Mail to your local Veteran Affairs Medical Center's Business Office or Health Administration Service Office.

**Attorneys and Legal Clinic**

**1. Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV):**

(651) 200-4570

- Free drop-in legal clinic for Veterans on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month from 9am-2pm at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center in the Flag Atrium Balcony Room 2S 114.
- Assists with housing, employment, benefits, expungement, wills, debt collection, family law, etc.

**2. Legal Aid Service of Northeastern MN:**

(218) 623-8100, (800) 933-1112

- Non-profit law firm, assisting Northeastern Minnesota's low-income citizens and older adults with civil legal needs.

**3. Elder Law and Estate Planning Attorneys:**

- Volunteers of America MN and WI: (612) 676-6300
- Hitchcock Law Firm: (651) 772-3401
- Schmitz, Schmidt, and Anderson: (651) 291-2405
- Terrie Lewis Law Office: (952) 345-8282
- Long, Reher, Hanson and Price: (952) 929-0622
- William M. Hansen Associates: (763) 398-5800
- Maser, Amundson & Boggio, P.A.: (952) 925-4147
- Steinhagen & Crist: (612) 922-2260

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## VA Fiduciary Program

VA's Fiduciary Program was started to protect Veterans and other beneficiaries who are not able to manage their own finances. This could be due to a few things. This includes injury, disease, or other factors impacting a Veteran's ability to manage their own funds safely and independently. VA only determines an individual is unable to manage their financial affairs after they receive medical documentation or through a court ruling.

### **How to start the process:**

- Medical evidence or court appointment is first needed. If a doctor rates a Veteran incompetent, then send the medical evidence to the Janesville Intake Center. (Note: Veteran must have a medical condition that justifies being rated incompetent. If the Veteran continues to make bad choices with their money and does not have a medical condition that causes them to do so, this does not justify needing a fiduciary, just poor decision making.)
- Make sure the Veteran's full name and social security number is on all pages.
- Medical evidence of inability to manage VA monies should be sent to:  
Department of Veteran's Affairs  
Claims Intake Center  
PO Box 4444  
Janesville, WI 53547  
Fax: (844) 531-7818
- Contact information: (888) 407-0144, select option 5 for MN and WI  
Milwaukee Fiduciary Hub  
PO Box 14975  
Milwaukee, WI 53214

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## Guardianship and Conservatorship

**Guardianship:** A legal arrangement where someone appointed by a court (guardian) has legal right and duty to care for another (the ward). This is because of the ward's inability to legally act on his or her own behalf due to mental or physical incapacity. A guardian has the powers and duties over the ward's person. There are seven different powers of guardianship. The court may appoint a guardian to have power over all seven (full guardianship) or determine that the ward maintains one or more powers before guardianship will be granted.

**Conservatorship:** Similar to guardianship. The conservator who has been appointed by the court has powers and duties over the incapacitated person's estate.

### **Resources:**

- Protective Services and Center for Excellence in Supported Decision Making: Volunteers of America – (952) 945-4174, Office: 3333 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Minneapolis, MN 55412  
(voamnwi.org/protective-services)
  
- Guardian and Conservator Services: Lutheran Social Services – (888) 806-6844, (lssmn.org). Office: 2485 Como Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108, (651) 642-5990



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## **Advance Care Planning: Goals of Care, Life-Sustaining Treatments, Advance Directives, and State-Authorized Portable Orders**

**Advance Care Planning** is a process of clarifying your values and health care choices for use at a future time if you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself.

**Capacity:** A person's ability to understand options, think logically about the benefits versus burden and be consistent about decisions.

**Competence:** A legal judgment informed by an assessment of capacity, related to whether an individual has the legal right to make decisions.

\*It is important to note that a person may be able to be involved in decision making when capacity is mildly to moderately impaired. They may be capable of making some basic medical decisions but not able to make harder decisions.

### **What are goals of care?**

Goals of care are what you would like to achieve through your health care.

Here are some examples:

- Easing symptoms to make you feel more comfortable
- Staying or becoming independent
- Curing an illness, or improving quality of life when cure is not possible
- Prolonging your life
- Supporting loved ones or caregivers
- Starting or stopping treatments
- Meeting a specific personal goal – like attending a wedding or taking a trip

More information on Setting Health Care Goals can be found in the VA Brochure: ***Setting Health Care Goals: A Guide for People with Health Problems*** (VA National Center on Ethics)

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## **Life-Sustaining Treatments**

Life-sustaining treatments are treatments that **might** help you live longer when you would be expected to die otherwise. Examples of these treatments are feeding tubes, mechanical ventilation, dialysis, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Some people would want life-sustaining treatments, and others would not. Some people might want one life-sustaining treatment but not others.

Decisions about life-sustaining treatments should be made based on your goals and what you prefer. **Your health care team can give you more information about life-sustaining treatments. Talk with your team of medical providers about how these treatments relate to your health care goals.**

**The VA has a process for documenting Veterans' wishes around Life-Sustaining Treatments in the medical chart. This can be further discussed with your health care provider.**

## **State-Authorized Portable Orders**

**(POLST — Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)  
(MOLST — Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)**

Portable orders about life-sustaining treatment were created by individual states. They were created so that people facing life-threatening illnesses or life-limiting conditions could make sure providers would know and follow their treatment orders in an emergency. These orders are often found on a brightly colored form that you keep on your refrigerator. They can also be on a bracelet or necklace that you wear. They are filled out by your health care provider based on talking with you about your preferences. SAPO – State Authorized Portable Orders – are a new type of POLST/ MOLST that is valid outside of VA. Your health care provider can assist you with completing these forms.

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## **Advance Directives:**

An Advance Directive is a legal form that helps your doctors and loved ones understand your wishes about medical and mental health care. It helps them make decisions about your care if you are not able to make decisions for yourself.

An Advance Directive is the best way to make sure your future medical care reflects your wishes. The VA Advance Directive includes sections that allow you to identify the person who would make decisions for you (also called a Health Care Agent) and to specify your treatment preferences. Those sections are:

**Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care** – the part that says **who** will make decisions for you.

**Living Will** – the part that details your wishes about treatments.

The VA honors all types of legal Advance Directives, including forms from another state, Department of Defense or VA. If you would like assistance with an Advance Directive, you may contact a social worker at the VA.

- VA Advance Directive (VA Form 10-0137)
- Contact VA Social Worker Services for further assistance:  
Minneapolis VA Health Care System  
One Veterans Drive, Suite 2G (100-122)  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
(612) 467-2042

## **What do I do with my Advance Directive after I complete it?**

- Put the original in a safe and easy-to-access place.
- Give copies to your health care provider, Health Care Agent, and a family member.
- Put a note on the copies about where the original is kept

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## **Questions?**

If a Veteran and his/her family member or support persons have questions about Advance Care Planning, they can:

- Request an appointment to talk with their primary care team to discuss and start the process.
- Request a Palliative Care clinic appointment (your primary care doctor can place a request for this) to talk with providers that specialize in Advance Care Planning.
- Review the VA Website “Advance Care Planning” at:  
**[https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/pages/advance\\_care\\_planning\\_to\\_pics.asp](https://www.va.gov/geriatrics/pages/advance_care_planning_to_pics.asp)**

**Power of Attorney:** A legal document that allows a person of your choosing to step in for you at any time to handle any type of financial decisions or event if you cannot.

## **Resources:**

- Honoring Choices Minnesota: [honoringchoices.org/](http://honoringchoices.org/)

\*Social Security does not recognize power of attorney. If someone needs to have their social security funds managed, a social security representative payee would need to be obtained. Please refer under the Social Security Programs section for more information.

## **Skilled Home Health Care, Homemaker and Home Health Aide Services**

Home Health Care services are provided to Veterans if they require assistance with their activities of daily living (ADLs). The care is delivered by a community-based home health agency that contracts with the VA. The program is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management, and help with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, fixing meals or medications).

- A copay for Home Health Care services may be charged based on your VA service-connected disability status.

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## **Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)**

Home Based Primary Care is health care services provided to Veterans in their Home. A VA physician supervises the health care team who provides the services. The program is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management, and help with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, fixing meals or medications).

- A copay for Home Based Primary Care may be charged based on your VA service-connected disability status and financial information.
- Must be within a 35-mile radius of the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System

## **Adult Day Health Care (ADHC)**

Adult Day Health Care is a program Veterans can go to during the day for social activities, peer support, companionship, and recreation. This program is for Veterans who need skilled services, case management, and help with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, fixing meals or medications).

ADHC can provide respite care for a family caregiver.

- VHA Standard Medical Benefits Package allows all enrolled Veterans to attend ADHC twice a week.
- A copay for Adult Day Health Care may be charged based on your VA service-connected disability status and financial information.
- The ADHC is a separate program from the Minneapolis Veterans Home Adult Day Center and is comprised of both veterans and non-veterans from the community. This program is paid for by the Federal Government.

## **Minneapolis Veterans Homes Adult Day Center**

The Adult Day Center provides a safe, comfortable environment to help Veterans achieve the highest attainable level of physical, mental, and social well-being with the independence of living at home. This program

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includes breakfast, lunch, and two snacks. It also provides respite for Veteran's caregivers.

## Minneapolis Veterans Homes Adult Day Center, continued

**Operational Hours:** Monday through Friday 8am-4:30pm

**Qualifications:** The Veterans must have an honorable discharge, serving at least 181 consecutive days of active military. The Veterans must also be a Minnesota Resident.

**Application:** An Admissions Application would need to be completed along with a copy of the Veteran's military discharge papers (DD214).  
\$20.00/day copay. Copay is private pay, paid for by caregiver and veteran.  
They can assist with transportation options.

Veterans may attend both the Minneapolis Veterans Home Adult Day Program and a Community ADHC Program. These are two different programs. The Minneapolis Veterans Home Adult Day Program is paid for by the MN State Government. This program is only comprised of veterans.

### **Location/Contact:**

Contact Ann 612-548-5900  
5101 Minnehaha Ave. S, Bldg. 4,  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
(612) 548-5963

## Community Nursing Home Program

The VA contracts with community nursing homes to care for Veterans who need skilled nursing care. A Veteran can be approved for a VA contract nursing home:

1. Has a service connection (SC) status of 70% SC or higher.
2. 60% SC for one disability and rated unemployable.
3. If less than 70% SC but needs a nursing home due to his/her service-connected disability.
4. Meets the eligibility requirements for Hospice and is enrolled with community hospice agency.

If you do not meet these requirements, you will need to use your own resources to pay for nursing home care. This may include applying for Medical Assistance through the county if you cannot afford to pay. For more information, please contact Jessica Hollie, Community Nursing Home Coordinator at (612) 243-7959.

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## Respite Care

Respite Care gives the Veteran's Caregiver a short-term break from caregiving.

Respite Care is planned in advance. While the VA offers Respite Care, we are dependent on our community partners to provide the service. The availability of each type of respite may vary due to agency/nursing home staffing and other factors.

**The VA provides eligible Veterans 30 days of Respite Care each calendar year.**

### Three types of Respite Care

#### **In Home:**

A home health aide from a VA-contracted home care agency provides care in your home for up to 6 hours on a day of respite.

#### How to Request:

If you have VA-paid home care, contact the home care agency to request respite.

If you do not have an established VA-paid home care agency, call your VA Primary Care Provider at 612-467-1100 to request a referral for in home respite.

#### **Community Adult Day Health Care (ADHC):**

The Veteran attends an extra day of programming at their ADHC program.

#### How to Request:

Contact the program coordinator of your ADHC program to request respite.

#### **Nursing Home:**

The Veteran receives care at a VA-contracted nursing home.

#### How to Request:

1. Call Social Work to discuss respite dates. Providing 3 weeks advanced notice is preferred.
2. Select at least three Minneapolis VA Community Nursing Home Program locations you would prefer. You may call and/or visit nursing homes before making your selection. Medicare provides its nursing home ratings at [www.medicare.gov/nhcompare](http://www.medicare.gov/nhcompare).
3. An appointment with the Veteran's Primary Care Provider may be needed to complete nursing home admission orders.
4. The Social Worker will try to secure nursing home respite for the dates you want in one of the locations you prefer. The nursing home may be unable to provide a



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decision until 1 or 2 days before the requested date.

We know this can be a stressful process. The Social Worker will provide updates as the referral process moves along to keep you informed.

### **Copayment**

A long-term care copayment may apply for Respite Care. You will be informed if the Veteran is required to complete a long-term care copayment application (VA Form 10-10EC). If required, the completed application must be processed before respite care is approved.

You will be advised if you have a copayment and what the amount will be. The maximum in home respite and ADHC respite copayment is \$15 each day. The maximum nursing home respite copayment is \$97 each day.

### **Eligibility**

- In order to be eligible for Respite Care, the Veteran must meet all of the criteria below:
- Have a diagnosed chronic disabling illness or condition **and**
- Live at home and need substantial help with activities of daily living (ADLs) to safely remain in the home **and**
- Have a caregiver who needs a break from day-to-day care **and**
- Be dependent in three or more ADLs (bathing, grooming, mobility, dressing, eating, toileting, continence) **or**
- Have a significant cognitive impairment **and** meet two or more of these conditions:
  - Dependent in two or more IADLs (shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry, managing medication or finances, using the telephone)
  - 75 years old or older
  - Recent discharge from a nursing home
  - High user of medical services
  - Have a diagnosis of clinical depression
- The Veteran must have a VA Primary Care Provider before starting respite. Please call the Primary Care Call Center (612-467-1100) if you need to schedule an appointment to establish VA primary care.

For more information, please contact Molly Malchert, General Caregiver Support Program Respite Caregiver at (612) 246-7911.

### **Other Community Caregiver Support and Respite Programs:**

Lutheran Social Services: (651) 642-5990, [www.lssmn.org/services/older-adults](http://www.lssmn.org/services/older-adults)

Elizabeth Dole Foundation: (202) 249-7170, <https://hiddenheroes.org/respite>

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## General Caregiver Support Services

The Caregiver Support Program's (CSP) PGCSS provides services to caregivers of Veterans of all eras enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare. PGCSS offers many services to family and friends who care for Veterans. This includes peer support mentoring, skills training, coaching, telephone support and online programs.

### Who is a General Caregiver?

- General Caregiver is a person who provides personal care services to a Veteran enrolled in VA healthcare who:
  - Needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living or
  - Needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological care or other impairment or injury.
- General Caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the Veteran.

### What services does PGCSS provide for a caregiver?

- Training and support through in-person, online and telehealth sessions.
- Skills training focused on caregiving for a Veteran's unique needs.
- Individual counseling related to the care of the Veteran.
- Respite care offers medically and age-appropriate short-term services to eligible Veterans. It also allows caregivers to take time for themselves while the Veteran is cared for in a safe and caring environment.

### How do I enroll in PGCSS as a caregiver?

- Reach out to the Facility CSP Team or request a referral from the Veteran's provider. No application is required.
- Complete an intake with the Facility CSP Team. The Veteran will need to agree to receive care from you as their caregiver, as you will be listed in their healthcare record.
- Enroll and begin to utilize the supports and services offered.
- VA will establish a healthcare record specifically for you.
- To establish a healthcare record, a member of the Facility CSP Team will request specific information to open this record, including your full name, gender, address, Social Security Number, and date of birth.
- This healthcare record will be used by the Facility CSP Team and VA clinicians who provide services and support to you.
- PGCSS services are provided free of charge.

## Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) offers enhanced clinical support for caregivers of eligible Veterans who are seriously injured.

**Who will potentially qualify:** Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury (now includes serious illness) in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or after September 11, 2001, **or** on or before May 7, 1975.

### **Veteran Eligibility Requirements:**

The Veteran must have a serious injury, which is a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or more, and meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The individual is either:

- A Veteran; or
- A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.

The individual has a serious injury (serious injury now includes serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service:

- On or after September 11, 2001; **or**
- Effective on the date specified in a future Federal Register document, on or before May 7, 1975; **or**
- Effective two years after the date specified in a future Federal Register document, after May 7, 1975 and before September 11, 2001.

The individual needs in-person personal care services for a minimum of six continuous months based on any one of the following:

- An inability to perform an activity of daily living; **or**
- A need for supervision, protection, or instruction.

It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.

Personal care services that would be provided by the Family Caregiver will not be at the same time and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.

The individual receives care at home or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.

The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.

### **How to contact a Caregiver Support Coordinator:**

- Call the toll-free Caregiver Support Line Expanded Hours 1-855-260-3274 (Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm ET)

- Use the Caregiver Support Coordinator locator tool at [www.caregiver.va.gov/sup-port/New\\_CSC\\_Page.asp](http://www.caregiver.va.gov/sup-port/New_CSC_Page.asp)

### **Family Caregiver Eligibility Requirements**

For you to be eligible to be a Family Caregiver you must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Be either:
  - The eligible Veteran's spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member; **or**
  - Someone who lives with the eligible Veteran full-time or will do so if designated as a Family Caregiver.
- Be initially assessed by VA as being able to complete caregiver education and training.
- Complete caregiver training. Show that one can carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

In addition, there must be no determination by VA of abuse or neglect of the eligible Veteran by the caregiver.

## **Palliative and Hospice Care**

**Palliative Care:** is specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. It focuses on relief of suffering and control of symptoms so that you can carry out day-to-day activities. With the goal of improving quality of life, Palliative Care can be requested at any age or any stage of a serious illness. It can be provided along with curative treatment.

The Minneapolis VA Interdisciplinary Palliative Care Team can see Veteran's both during inpatient stays or in outpatient clinic. If you would like to be seen by a Palliative Care Provider, you may request that your primary care provider place a palliative care consult.

- Copays may be charged for Palliative Care

**Hospice Care:** is for people with an advanced, life-limiting illness. It is typically provided in the home setting by a community hospice organization. It can also be provided in other settings, including nursing homes. The focus of care is to improve quality of life not to prolong life. Hospice care does not provide 24-hour care. However, Veterans who are enrolled in the VA and who are enrolled with a community hospice agency that need nursing home care are eligible for a nursing home that is under the Community Nursing Home Program.

- There are NO COPAYS for Hospice Care whether is it provided by the VA or an organization with a VA contract.

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## Burial and Death Benefits Information

Many Veterans are eligible for burial in a Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery or State Veterans Cemetery. The funeral home or cremation facility will often assist families after a death in navigating the process.

**Eligibility:** to determine eligibility ahead of time, a Veteran may submit “VA form 40-10007 Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a National Cemetery” to the:

VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office PO Box 510543  
St. Louis, MO 63151 Fax: (855) 840-8299

- The VA does not provide the actual cremation or body preparation services, and regardless of the location of the death, families choose a funeral home/cremation facility to work with.
- Sometimes, Veteran’s family members who provide payment for funeral or burial, are eligible for a portion of the cost to be reimbursed. A County Veterans’ Service Officer is able to assist with the application process (after death) for this possible reimbursement from the Veterans Benefits Administration. Information on the exact dollar amounts can be found at: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-special-burial.asp>

### Contact Information: Decedent Affairs

Minneapolis VA Health Care System –  
One Veterans Drive, Suite 1S 115, Minneapolis, MN 55417 (612) 467-2026

### Dependent and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC)

You may be able to get a tax-free monetary benefit called VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA DIC) if you:

- Are the surviving spouse, child, or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty
- The survivor of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness

Eligibility depends on several factors. Potential applicants should get in touch with their County Veterans Service Officer or another Veteran Service Organization for assistance.

### VA Survivors Pension

A VA Survivors Pension offers monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans. These Veterans must meet certain income and net worth limits set by Congress. Eligibility depends on several factors. Also, income limits can change from year to year. It is recommended that potential applicants get in touch with their County Veterans Service Officer or another Veteran Service Organization to see if they qualify.

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## Mental Health

The Minneapolis VA Healthcare System offers a range of services to support and treat Veterans who are having challenges with mental health and addictions. We can help with: stress, anxiety, panic, fears, sadness, depression, grief, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, sleep, pain management, family challenges, alcohol, and drug addictions, coping with trauma, behavior changes, setting and reaching goals, and helping with recovery.

### **Services included:**

- Mental Health Intake: brief assessment and treatments for Veterans new to mental health services. Helps Veterans connect with ongoing mental health care and provides information about treatments.
- Consultation with prescribers: (psychiatrist, advanced practice nurses, pharmacists) about medications that might help you.
- Individual therapy: to help you set goals and solve problems.
- Group classes and therapies: to help you learn and apply skills (Dialectical behavior Therapy, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, SMART Recovery).
- Mental health rehabilitation programming: Veterans Bridge to Recovery, Intensive outpatient Substance Use Disorder program (4 weeks), Intensive outpatient Mental Health program (Psychiatry Partial Hospital – 3-week program), Inpatient hospitalization.

### **How to Access Mental Health Services:**

- Call Mental Health Intake (MHI) at (612) 467-1921, Monday through Friday, from 8am-4:30pm.
- Request an appointment in person at Mental Health Intake: Room 1P 170, between 8am-4pm.
- To speak to someone 24 hours a day, call the Veterans Crisis Line at (800) 273-8255

**In an emergency, call 911**

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### **Community Resource:**

- Lutheran Social Service of MN – Veteran CORE Program: provides free, confidential services statewide for eligible veterans, military members, and their families.

### **Behavioral Health Counseling:**

- Services include: individual and couple’s counseling, family counseling and support, deployment and reintegration support, diagnostic assessment, and Trauma-Focused Behavioral Therapy

## **Compassionate Contact Corps**

### **Telephone/Video-Friendly Visitor Program**

Visit a Veteran over the phone, tablet, or computer

- A “friendly visit” with NO medical or homecare duties
- Matches trained Volunteers with Veterans for one-on-one socialization
- Generally 1-2 times per week for 15-60 minutes
- Schedule is based on need and availability

Program contact:

Jennet Boese

4G109

612-467-2050

[jennet.boese@va.gov](mailto:jennet.boese@va.gov)

## **Assisted Living Facilities**

An assisted living facility is a housing facility for people with disabilities or for adults who cannot or choose not to live independently. Assisted living facilities are not provided or paid for by VA. To learn more about community Assisted Living options, the below resources may be helpful.

### **Resources:**

1. Twin Cities Care – (651) 724-4333, ([twincitiescare.com](http://twincitiescare.com))
2. A Place for Mom – (866) 333-0699, ([aplaceformom.com](http://aplaceformom.com))
3. Care Options Network – ([careoptionsnetwork.org](http://careoptionsnetwork.org))
4. Senior Linkage Line - (800) 333-2433, ([seniorlinkageline.com](http://seniorlinkageline.com))

In Wisconsin, call your county’s local Aging & Disability Resource Center (608) 266-1865, (800) 947-3529, [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc)

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## Medical Foster Home (MFH)

Medical Foster Homes are private homes in which a trained caregiver provides services to a few individuals. Some, but not all, residents are Veterans. MFH can serve as an alternative to a nursing home. MFHs have trained caregivers on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. MFHs are not provided or paid for by VA. To be eligible for a MFH you need to be enrolled in Home Based Primary Care (HBPC – page 10). The MFH is about \$3000-\$4000 each month based on your income and the level of care you need.

## Minnesota State Veterans Homes

State Veterans Homes are facilities that provide have skilled nursing care and special care units for people diagnosed with dementia and Alzheimer's.

- **Admission Criteria:** Honorably discharged Veterans who entered service from Minnesota or are current Residents, who served 181 consecutive days on active duty, unless discharged earlier because of disability incurred in the line of duty.
- **The spouse of an eligible Veteran who is at least 55 years old and meets residency requirements.**
- Able to demonstrate a medical or clinical need for admissions.
- Complete Minnesota Veterans Homes Application Form and submit to the Minnesota Veterans Home where you want to apply. A copy of your Armed Forces Discharge Form (DD214) must accompany this application.
- Residents contribute to the cost of their care according to their means.
- Locations:
  1. Fergus Falls – (218)-736-0400
  2. Luverne – (507) 283-6200
  3. Minneapolis – (612) 548-5700
  4. Silver Bay – (218) 353-8700
  5. Hastings (Domiciliary Care) – (651) 539-2400
  6. Montevideo (opening Summer/Fall 2023)



7. Preston (opening Summer/Fall 2023)
8. Bemidji (opening Summer/Fall 2023)

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**Wisconsin State Veterans Homes**

The requirement to be a Wisconsin resident at the time of application to one of the Wisconsin Veterans Homes has been removed. Out-of-state applicants are also welcomed.

**Admission Criteria:**

1. A person who has served on active duty during peacetime for two or more years or the full period of their initial obligation.

OR

2. A person who served on active duty for at least 90 days, one day of which must have been during wartime period, AND a person who served and was discharged from the armed forces under honorable conditions.

Wisconsin Veterans Homes:

- Chippewa Falls: (715) 720-6775
- King: (715) 256-5021
- Union Grove: (262) 878-6700

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## Transportation

Some Veterans may qualify for VA approved transportation services. If you qualify for the beneficiary travel benefit, your primary care provider will need to submit the necessary consult.

**1. Beneficiary Travel (BT): Eligibility**

- Service-connected (SC) of 30% or more **OR**
- You are traveling for treatment for SC condition, **OR**
- You receive a VA pension, or your income does not exceed the maximum annual VA pension rate, **OR**
- You are traveling for a scheduled compensation or pension

**2. Special Mode Transportation**

- You meet one of the eligibility criteria under Beneficiary Travel.
- Your medical condition requires an ambulance or specially equipped van as determined by a VA clinician and the travel is pre-authorized.

**4. Veterans Transportation Services (VTS) – (612) 467-5799**

- Can provide free transportation services for Veterans who have medical appointments at the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System.
- Can accommodate wheelchair transportation.
- Must be within a 20-mile radius of the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System.

**5. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)**

**Transportation** – (612) 467-2768

- Can provide free transportation services for Veterans who have medical appointments at the Minneapolis VA Healthcare System.
- Cannot accommodate wheelchairs and Veterans need to be able to transfer independently in and out of a van.

**6. Twin Ports Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation:**

- Wisconsin: (715) 398-2406
- Minnesota: (218) 204-0693

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## 7. Arrowhead Transit

- Virginia, MN: (800) 862-0175
- Public transportation for most cities in the eight counties of the Arrowhead. Bus service provided to Duluth or Brainerd once a month. \*Disabled Veterans ride free, just show the driver your VA ID card.

## 8. Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)

- Duluth, MN: (218) 722-7283
- Disabled Veterans displaying a VA ID Card or Service-Connected card will be afforded free public transportation on DTA buses on regular DTA bus routes. Buses in Superior, Proctor and Duluth.

## 9. Veterans County Van

- Driven by dedicated volunteers. There is no charge to ride the Veterans Van. Free-will donations from van riders are appreciated.
- Check with your local county to see if they have a Veterans Van that travels to the Minneapolis VA Healthcare system

## 10. Store to Door – (helpatyourdoor.org), (651) 642-1892

- Can take you to appointments and anywhere else within the seven counties we serve.
- Rides can be accompanied
- Cost: \$20

## 11. Metro Mobility

- Metro Mobility (651) 602-1111, is a shared ride public transportation service for certified riders who are unable to use regular fixed-route buses due to a disability or health condition. Trips are provided for any purpose.
  - Eligibility: to be eligible for Metro Mobility, a person must be “unable” to use the fixed route at least sometimes.
  - A Metro Mobility application must be submitted which includes the Certification Questionnaire Form and the Professional Verification Form.
  - Costs:
    - \$4.50 during Peak Time (Monday-Friday, 6-9am and 3-6:30pm)
    - \$3:50 for Off-Peak Hours and Holidays

In Wisconsin, call your county’s local Aging & Disability Resource Center (608) 266-1865, (800) 947-3529, [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc) or Senior Linkage Line in Minnesota: (800) 333-2433.

## Medical ID Bracelets and Pendants

Medical ID bracelets and pendants are available for qualifying Veterans. Medical IDs are indicated for veterans who have chronic conditions. This includes diabetes, drug or food allergies, heart conditions, dementia or any other medical or health related issue which should be communicated properly in an emergency. Medical IDs typically come in stainless steel but can be ordered in aluminum if allergic to stainless steel.

### **How to obtain a Medical ID?**

1. Approve Veteran for a Medical ID.
  - Any VA clinician or approved healthcare provider may qualify a veteran for a Medical ID based on their medical condition(s).
2. Provider submits an electronic consult.
  - Clinician or provider submits the electronic consult to Prosthetics to be completed by a Purchasing Agent
  - Example Consult: Medical ID Bracelet

“John D. Smith  
ICE: 651-555-5555  
1<sup>st</sup> Ave South  
Minneapolis, MN 55408”

3. Prosthetics places order.

***Typically arrives in 1-2 weeks after prosthetics places order.***

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## Medical Alert System

A medical alert system is a device that can help Veterans stay in their homes. By installing this product, families can guarantee that a Veteran has a way of sending a medical alert to doctors or caregivers in case of an emergency.

### Criteria:

- Veteran cannot access a way to communicate with emergency services due to a fall or other immobilizing incident.
- Veteran lives alone or is left alone for an extended period of time.
- Veteran has impairments that precludes the use of a cell or cordless phone
  - Impaired upper extremity function
  - Impaired vision
  - Impaired cognition
- Access to 911 in their area of residence.
- ❖ Discuss the device with your primary care provider to see if you qualify and if the VA will pay.

### Resources:

Honor Alert: ([honoralert.com](http://honoralert.com)), (888) 581-4440

Freedom Alert: ([logicmark.com](http://logicmark.com)), (800) 519-2419

Guardian Alert: ([logicmark.com](http://logicmark.com)), (800) 519-2419

Guardian Alert Plus: ([logicmark.com](http://logicmark.com)), (800) 519-2419

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## Technology for Seniors

**ViewClix:** provides seniors with a constant visual connection to family and friends. Family members can easily share pictures, enjoy live video calls and post sticky notes. \*Requires Internet

**GrandPad:** Delivers freedom from the loneliness and isolation that can often accompany aging. Allows seniors to stay in touch and stay active. They can browse the Internet, share photos, and send voice or written emails. Also includes popular games, music, news and more.

\*GrandPad uses 4G LTE, with no Wi-Fi needed

\*Powered by Consumer Cellular. A monthly subscription provides the convenience of unlimited data, Internet browsing, mobile access for caregivers and family, and more.

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## Meals and Grocery Delivery

**Meals on Wheels:** a community-based service that delivers fresh, nutritious meals directly to the homes of seniors and individuals with disabilities through the Twin Cities.

- Cost: \$6 per meal. Medicaid waivers and other subsidy programs can also help cover the cost of meals.
- Enroll by calling (612) 623-3363.
- For Veterans outside of the Twin Cities area, check your local county.

### **Grocery Delivery**

- Coborn's Delivers – (coborndelivers.com), (763) 971-4900
- Store to Door – (helpatyourdoor.org), (651) 642-1892

In Wisconsin, call your county's local Aging & Disability Resource Center (608) 266-1865, (800) 947-3529, [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc)

## Medicare

Medicare is our country's health insurance program for people aged 65 or older. Certain people younger than age 65 can qualify for Medicare. This includes those with disabilities and those who have permanent kidney failure.

**Medicare A:** Provides coverage for: inpatient hospital care, inpatient stays in most skilled nursing facilities (covers up to 100 days as long as there is a skilled need), hospice and home health services.

**Medicare B:** Provides coverage for: doctor and clinical lab services, outpatient and preventive care, screenings, surgical fees and supplies, physical and occupational therapy.

**Medicare D:** Provides coverage for: cost of prescription drugs.

**How to apply:** ([ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/](http://ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/)), (800) 772-1213

## Social Security Programs

**Social Security Retirement Benefits:** Social security is part of your retirement plan. The earliest possibly Social Security retirement age is 62.

**Social Security Disability (SSDI):** Social Security pays disability benefits to people who can't work because they have a medical condition that's expected to last at least one year or result in death.

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** A federal income supplement program that is designed to help aged (65 or older), blind, and people with disabilities who have little or no income.

**Resources:** (ssa.gov), (800)-772-1213

**Social Security Representative Payee:** provides benefit payment management for beneficiaries who are incapable of managing their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income payments.

Resources: (800) 772-1213, (ssa.gov/payee/)

## Minnesota Health Care Programs

### **Medical Assistance for Long-Term-Care Services**

- Can assist with paying for nursing home and waiver programs (Elderly Waiver and Community Access for Disability Inclusion Waiver) that can help you stay in your home or other community settings (nursing homes, assisted livings, group homes, medical foster homes, etc.)
- A Medical Assistance for Long-Term-Care Services application, along with proofs will need to be completed and submitted to your local county agency.

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## **State Medical Review Team (SMRT)**

- SMRT performs disability determinations for individuals seeking a disabled basis of eligibility for Medical Assistance. SMRT completes disability determinations for people not certified by the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- **Referral Process:** SMRT referrals must be made even if the person has been referred to SSA, because the SSA disability determination process can be long.
  1. Applicants must submit an initial medical assistance (MA) application to their county indicating that they have a disability.
  2. The county financial unit processes the application, reviews initial eligibility for MA and completes the “Referral for Disability Determination” form before submitting it to SMRT.  
**\*SMRT must first receive a referral from a county financial worker.**
  3. SMRT will request medical evidence/records on behalf of the clients they serve.

**Contact:** SMRT Hotline (651) 431-2493 or (800) 235-7396.

## **Wisconsin Health Care Programs**

Contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Center for assistance with applying for Medicaid. Resource: (608) 266-1865, (800) 947-3529, ([www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc))

## **Support Groups**

### **Support Groups for Caregivers and for People with Memory Loss**

1. Alzheimer’s Association - ([alz.org/mnnd](http://alz.org/mnnd) or [alz.org](http://alz.org))
  - Provides a 24/7 helpline, 800-272-3900
    - Assists with resources, behavior management, communication strategies, education, and caregiver support.
2. Amherst Wilder Foundation - ([wilder.org](http://wilder.org)), (651) 280-2273
3. Family Pathways – ([familypathways.org](http://familypathways.org)), (877) 321-7100
4. Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging – ([metroaging.org](http://metroaging.org)), (651) 641-8612



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5. Ebenezer Memory Care Caregiver Support Groups – (ebenezermemorycare.org)
  6. Senior Linkage Line – (seniorlinkageline.com), (800) 333-2433
  7. Lutheran Social Services: (www.lssmn.org/services/older-adults), (651) 642-5990
  8. Lutheran Social Service of MN – Veteran CORE Program – (www.lssmn.org/services/military-and-veterans/core), (844) 577-2673
  9. Sholom Home: 651-328-2014 or 651-690-8903
  10. Care Options Network: careoptionsnetwork.org (1. Select News Tab 2. Select Current Network News Flyer to review support/educational groups.)

### **Social Work Contact Information**

Social workers are available to meet with you at Community Based Outpatient Clinics or the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

If you would like to speak with a social worker, please call: (612) 467-2042 or (866)-414-5058 ext. 2042.

Extended Care and Rehabilitation, Social Work:

Call (612) 467-1339, for information on long-term care, long-term co-payments, home based primary care, adult day health care, caregiver resources, respite care, medical foster home, contract nursing home benefits and palliative and hospice care services.

Minneapolis VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive, Suite 2G (100-122),  
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