IB 10-435
December 2011

Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

Description

Based on a VA clinical decision, Veterans are considered to be Catastrophically Disabled when they have a severely disabling injury, disorder or disease that permanently compromises their ability to carry out the activities of daily living. The disability must be of such a degree that the Veteran requires personal or mechanical assistance to leave home or bed, or require constant supervision to avoid physical harm to themselves or others.

Veterans determined Catastrophically Disabled are placed into Priority Group 4 unless eligible for a higher Priority Group placement based on other eligibility criteria such as being a compensable service-connected Veteran, a former Prisoner of War, or a Medal of Honor or Purple Heart recipient. A Catastrophically Disabled determination may be authorized when a VA clinician determines that there is sufficient medical documentation without further evaluation. Veterans may also request a Catastrophically Disabled evaluation by contacting the Enrollment Coordinator at their local VA health care facility. It is VA policy to provide a Catastrophically Disabled Veteran an evaluation within 30 days of the request. There is no charge for this examination.

Recent Legislative Changes

On May 5, 2010, the President signed Public Law 111-163, the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2011. The law provides Veterans determined by VA to be Catastrophically Disabled an exemption from inpatient, outpatient and prescription copays. Veterans with catastrophic disabilities are also exempt from copayments applicable to the receipt of non-institutional respite care, non-institutional geriatric evaluation, non-institutional adult day health care, Homemaker/Home Health Aide, Purchased Skilled Home Care, Home Based Primary Care, and any other non-institutional alternative extended care services. Copayments for other extended care services (ex. Nursing Home Care) not mentioned still apply.

Additional Information

Each VA Medical Center has an Enrollment Coordinator available to provide information about VA health care. Veterans may also call 1-877-222 VETS (8387) or visit http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/.