

Documentation Used To Determine Service in a Theater Of Combat Operations

- Military service documentation that reflects service in a combat theater, or
- receipt of combat service medals, and/or Page 1 of 3
- receipt of imminent danger or hostile fire pay or tax benefits.

Health Benefits Under The “Combat Veteran” Authority

- Cost-free care and medications provided for conditions potentially related to combat service.
- Enrollment in Priority Group 6 unless eligible for enrollment in a higher priority group.
- Full access to VA’s Medical Benefits Package.

What Happens After The Enhanced Eligibility Period Expires?

Veterans who enroll with VA under this authority will continue to be enrolled even after their enhanced eligibility period ends. At the end of their enhanced eligibility period, Veterans enrolled in Priority Group 6 may be shifted to Priority Group 7 or 8, depending on their income level, and required to make applicable copays.

What About Combat Veterans Who Do Not Enroll During Their Enhanced Authority Period?

For those Veterans who do not enroll during their enhanced eligibility period, eligibility for enrollment and subsequent care is based on other factors such as: a compensable service-connected disability, VA pension status, catastrophic disability determination, or the Veteran’s financial circumstances. For this reason, combat Veterans are strongly encouraged to apply for enrollment within their enhanced eligibility period, even if no medical care is currently needed.

Copays

Veterans who qualify under this special eligibility are not subject to copays for conditions potentially related to their combat service. However, unless otherwise exempted, combat Veterans must either disclose their prior year gross household income OR decline to provide their financial information and agree to make applicable copays for care or services VA determines are clearly unrelated to their military service.

Note: While income disclosure by a recently discharged combat Veteran is not a requirement, this disclosure may provide additional benefits such as eligibility for travel reimbursement, cost-free medication and/or medical care for services unrelated to combat.

Dental Care

Eligibility for VA dental benefits is based on very specific guidelines and differs significantly from eligibility requirements for medical care. Combat Veterans may be authorized dental treatment as reasonably necessary for the one-time correction of dental conditions if:

- They served on active duty and were discharged or released from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable from a period of service not less than 90 days and
- The certificate of discharge or release does not bear a certification that the Veteran was provided,

within the 90-day period immediately before the date of such discharge or release, a complete dental examination (including dental X-rays) and all appropriate dental service and treatment indicated by the examination to be needed and

- Application for VA dental treatment is made within 180 days of discharge or release under conditions other than dishonorable)

Additional Information

Additional information is available at the nearest VA medical facility. VA facilities listing and telephone numbers can be found on the internet at www.va.gov/directory/, or in the local telephone directory under the "U.S. Government" listings. Veterans can also visit the VA health benefits website at <http://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/> or call VA toll free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).