

## VA Medical Center FAQ for Hospice Social Workers

**IN-HOME CARE:** *Can the VA help with caregiving needs in the home when a Veteran is on home hospice?*

If a Veteran is enrolled in Veterans Healthcare Administration (VHA) and has a current primary care doctor they could be eligible for:

- VA paid Home Health Aide (HHA) program provides brief, intermittent visits by a community home health agency. Each visit requires a need for hands-on personal hygiene assistance. Hospice must first be providing the maximum number of aide visits possible.

AND/OR

- VA paid in-home respite by a community home health agency. Must have an identified caregiver in the home in need of respite services and meet VA respite care criteria. Inpatient respite may also be utilized in a VA Contract Nursing Home.

Number of hours provided for HHA and in-home respite are determined with your VA social worker completing a level of need assessment.

**TO REQUEST:** Hospice Social Worker should contact the VA Palliative Care Office to identify the primary care social worker who can help access the above services. The hospice social worker needs to be able to identify which service is requested and to report the maximum number of hospice aide visits being provided and identify each ADL and IADL need for the patient. The VA Social Worker will enter the appropriate consult for the hospice patient's PCP to sign. Once signed, the VA Community Care Referral Nurse Case Manager receives the consult and begins process to find a local agency that can accept the case. Timeline for the start of services is dependent on service and agency staffing.

\*If a Veteran is NOT enrolled in VHA see the end of this document for enrollment information

**INPATIENT CARE:** *The Veteran can no longer remain at home due to caregiving needs. What can the VA do to help?*

- **Please refer to the following attached documents:** "End of Life Contracts from RLR VAMC Palliative Care Service" for family and staff.
- **Inpatient respite** — Veterans can receive up to 30 days per calendar year of inpatient respite at a VA Contracted Nursing Home. This is in addition to HHA/in-home respite being provided and in addition to hospice respite benefits.
- **VA Medical Foster Home (MFH):** The Veteran privately pays for care in a private home or a home-like setting in the community. The cost is based on income and level of care needs. Eligible Veterans for VBA benefits like Aid & Attendance get expedited claim processing to help cover the cost. Contact the Medical Foster Home Coordinator for more information.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** *Can the VA help pay for private-paid care in the home or an Assisted Living Facility? What about help with basic needs, like rent or utilities, or indigent burial assistance?*

- **VBA PENSION:** Veterans that served during a Wartime period that meet clinical and financial criteria may want to apply for a Pension or Special Improved Pension (Housebound or Aid & Attendance benefits). Refer Veteran to local county Veteran Service Officer for assistance

determining eligibility and/or filing claim (if filing for Housebound or Aid & Attendance, the Hospice Social Worker should assist by having the Hospice Physician complete VA form 21-2680).

- **VBA SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION:** Veterans that believe that a disability, disease or injury was incurred or aggravated during active military service and wishes to file a claim for Service-Connection Disability Compensation (particularly Veterans with ALS and Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange). Refer Veteran to local county Veteran Service Officer for assistance determining eligibility and/or filing claim.
- **VA Financial Hardship Assistance:** Refer Veteran to local county Veteran Service Officer if the Veteran is struggling to pay VA debt or pay VA copays for appointments or medications.

**BURIAL ASSISTANCE:** *Will the VA pay for the funeral?*

- The VA does not pay for preparation of the body. Some Veterans are eligible for a Burial Allowance that is a reimbursement for those expenses. Indigent families should contact the local county Veteran Service Officer for Indigent Burial Fund eligibility inquiries.
- Most Veterans are eligible for burial in a VA Cemetery. Call the National Cemetery Administration Eligibility and Scheduling Office at 1-800-535-1117 for details.
- Most Veterans are eligible to receive a headstone, burial flag and more when buried in a private cemetery. The Funeral Home Director should know how to access these benefits. Visit [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) for details.

**Veteran County Service Officers:** *How do I find my local VCISO?*

- <https://www.in.gov/dva/locate-your-cvso/>

**VHA Enrollment:** *How does a Veteran enroll in VHA?*

- Send the following 2 documents to the VHA Health Benefits/Enrollment office:
  1. Application for Health Benefits: <https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10EZ-fillable.pdf>
  2. DD 214 (Military Discharge paperwork): <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>
- Call your nearest VA Health Benefits office for questions or the national VA Health Benefits office at 1-877-222-VETS (8387)