

VA Healthcare System of Ohio

Benefit Plan

Summer 2001

The VA Healthcare System of Ohio is one of 22 integrated service networks of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA Healthcare System of Ohio provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient healthcare and limited nursing home and domiciliary care to eligible veterans of the United States Armed Services. Healthcare services are provided through a network of medical centers, outpatient clinics, nursing homes and domiciliaries located throughout Ohio and northern Kentucky.

What does the Millennium Bill mean to veterans?

On November 30, 1999, the President signed the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117). The act provides an array of services, including improved long-term care and other reforms of the VA healthcare system, new veterans cemeteries, speedier construction of the national World War II memorial and expansion of sexual trauma services and various other benefits.

What does this bill mean to our veteran patients? VA will provide nursing home services for eligible veterans who are in need of nursing home care and who are not 70 percent or above service-connected or in need of nursing home care for a service-connected disability (some copayments may apply). Also, VA long-term care had been limited to six months on the provision of adult day care and respite care, but under the act, VA is allowed to include noninstitutional extended care in the medical benefits package, including adult day healthcare, geriatric evaluation and respite care to veterans.

Related to emergency care services, the law also authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make payments for emergency care in the community on behalf of uninsured and enrolled veterans who have received VA care within a two-year period.

Additional components of the bill include expanding the evaluation of the health status of Gulf War veterans' dependents for an additional four years, providing specific healthcare eligibility for veterans awarded the Purple Heart, extending Vietnamera veterans' eligibility for readjustment counseling services, establishing a policy regarding chiropractic treatment, authorizing VA to increase the \$2 drug copayment amount, expanding sexual trauma programs and expanding homeless and post-traumatic stress disorder programs.

How do I enroll with the VA Healthcare System of Ohio?

If you are an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces, you can apply for enrollment by visiting, calling or writing your nearest VA healthcare facility or benefits office. You can also apply directly for VA healthcare benefits by using www.101Oez.med.va.gov

on the Internet. Your Internet enrollment may require you to print, sign and forward the application and will be confirmed in writing. Veterans can apply for enrollment at any facility, at any time, in any year.

What are the priority groups?

Priority Group 1

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more disabling

Priority Group 2

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40% disabling

Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are former POWs
- Veterans awarded the Purple Heart
- Veterans whose discharge was for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20% disabling
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, “benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation”

Priority Group 4

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5

- Nonservice-connected veterans and service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled whose annual income and net worth are below the established dollar threshold

Priority Group 6

- All other eligible veterans who are not required to agree to make copayments for their medical care, including:
 - World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
 - veterans receiving care solely for disabilities resulting from exposure to toxic substances or radiation, for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998
 - compensable 0% service-connected veterans

Priority Group 7

- Subpriority a: noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans whose annual income and net worth are above the established dollar threshold
- Subpriority c: all other priority group 7 veterans with income and net worth above the statutory threshold who agree to pay specified copayment

How do I get VA healthcare services?

You may obtain services by contacting your primary care provider, by calling the VA Tele Nurse Program toll free at 1-888-VET-OHIO (838-6446) or by reporting to one of these VA healthcare facilities:

Akron VA Campus
676 South Broadway Street
Akron, OH 44311
330-344-4177

Dayton VA Campus
4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

Mansfield VA Campus
1456 Park Avenue West
Mansfield, OH 44906
419-529-4602

Athens VA Campus
510 West Union Street
Athens, OH 45701
740-593-7314

East Liverpool VA Campus
332 West 6th Street
East Liverpool, OH 43920
330-386-4303

Marietta VA Campus
418 Colegate Drive
Marietta, OH 45750
740-568-0415

Bellevue VA Campus
103 Landmark Drive
Bellevue, KY 41073
859-392-3840

Ft. Thomas VA Campus
1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075
606-572-6202

McCafferty VA Campus
4242 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
216-939-0699

Brecksville VA Campus
10000 Brecksville Road
Brecksville, OH 44141
216-526-3030

Grove City VA Campus
1953 Ohio Avenue
Grove City, OH 43123
614-257-5800

Middletown VA Campus
675 North University Blvd.
Middletown, OH 45042
513-423-8387

Canton VA Campus
221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702
330-489-4660

Hillsboro VA Campus
135 North High Street
Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-8176

New Philadelphia VA Campus
1260 Monroe Avenue, Ste. 15H
New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330-602-5339

Chillicothe VA Campus
17273 State Route 104
Chillicothe, OH 45601
740-773-1141

Lancaster VA Campus
1550 Sheridan Drive
Colonnade Medical Building
Lancaster, OH 43130

Otis Moss/University
Hospital VA Campus
8819 Quincy Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-721-7221

Cincinnati VA Campus
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

740-653-6145
Lima Campus
1220 E. Elm St.
Lima, OH 45804

Painesville VA Campus
W 7 Jackson Street
Painesville, OH 44077
440-357-6740

Clermont County VA Campus
Suite 270
4355 Ferguson Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45245
859-392-3853

419-227-9676
Lorain VA Campus
205 West 20th Street
Lorain, OH 44052
440-244-3834

Portsmouth VA Campus
621 Broadway Street
Portsmouth, OH 45662
740-353-3236

Columbus VA Campus
543 Taylor Avenue
Columbus, OH 43203
614-257-5200

Louis Stokes VA Campus
10701 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Ravenna VA Campus
Medical Arts Blvd., Suite 11A
6693 North Chestnut Street
Ravenna, OH 44266
330-296-3641

Richmond/Hagerstown
VA Campus
Nettle Creek Health Center
State Route 1
Hagerstown, IN 47346
765-489-3950

Sandusky VA Campus
3416 Columbus Avenue
Sandusky, OH 44870
419-625-7350

Springfield VA Campus
512 South Burnett Road
Springfield, OH 45505
937-328-3385

Warren VA Campus
Riverside Square
Warren, OH 44485
330-392-0311

Youngstown VA Campus
2031 Belmont Avenue
Youngstown, OH 44505
330-740-9200

Zanesville VA Campus
1400 Tod Avenue (NVV)840 Bethesda Drive
Building 3A
Zanesville, OH 43701
740-453-7725

How do I get services when I'm outside Ohio?

You may receive care from any of the more than 1,100 VA healthcare facilities in the United States.

Is there an extra charge for VA services received outside the VA Healthcare System of Ohio?

No. Fees for VA services you receive outside the network are the same as those within the VA Healthcare System of Ohio. However, keep in mind that you may *be fully* responsible for payment of services received at non-VA facilities.

How do I get services not covered in the benefits package?

You can get services not covered in the benefits package through non-VA healthcare providers at your *own expense*.

Where can I get emergency care?

Emergency services are available at these VA medical centers:

Cincinnati
3200 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45220
513-861-3100

Cleveland-Wade Park
10701 East Boulevard
Cleveland, OH 44106
216-791-3800

Dayton
4100 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45428
937-268-6511

When traveling outside Ohio, you may receive emergency services at any VA healthcare facility in the United States. If there is no VA medical facility in the area where you are traveling, seek emergency medical care from the closest non-VA medical facility. However, you may be *fully* responsible for payment of those services (*see "Emergency care in non-VA facilities" in the chart on page 6*).

What charges am I responsible for?

Most VA healthcare services are free of charge; however, some copayments apply. The copayments listed below are before any insurance payments are applied to your bill.

- \$2 for each 30-day supply of medication for nonservice-connected conditions.
 - If you have a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, or if your annual income is below \$9,305, you may not have to make this copayment. Veterans with dependents have a higher income threshold to be eligible for the medication copayment exemption.
- Most nonservice-connected veterans and noncompensable zero percent service-connected veterans are required to complete an annual means test. The means test measures your income and assets. This includes income for your spouse and dependent children as well.

- If income and assets fall below the means test threshold*, there are no copayments for medical treatment.
- If income and assets are above the means test threshold, the following copayments** apply:
 - \$50.80 for each outpatient visit
 - \$792 for the first 90 days of acute inpatient care within a 365-day period
 - \$396 for each additional 90 days of acute inpatient care within a 365-day period
 - additional \$10 per day for acute inpatient care
 - \$792 for each 90 days of nursing home or domiciliary care
 - additional \$5 per day for nursing home or domiciliary care
- VA will apply any insurance payments to these bills. These are the amounts owed before any insurance payments.
- VA bills and receives payments from insurance carriers to recover costs associated with providing healthcare to veterans for their nonservice-connected conditions. This includes policies held by veterans, their spouses, guardians and so on. You should provide your insurance card when you receive VA care.

*The means test threshold for 2001 is \$23,688 for a single veteran, \$28,429 for a veteran with one dependent, plus \$1,586 for each additional dependent. The means test threshold amounts change every year on January 1. In addition, if income and assets together equal \$50,000, the copayments apply.

**These figures are the 2001 copayment amounts. Copayments change every year on January 1.

Can copayments be waived?

You may file for a waiver of copayment charges by contacting the billing office at the VA facility that issued the bill. You must file a written request within 180 days of the date of the charge.

How do I change my assignment of a primary facility?

You may change your primary facility assignment by contacting your nearest VA facility or by calling toll free 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387).

How do I change my assignment of a primary care doctor?

To change your primary care doctor, consult your primary care team leader or patient representative.

How do I know my doctor is qualified?

Doctors and other healthcare providers are not hired by the VA Healthcare System of Ohio until their education and experience have been reviewed by other doctors in the same specialty area. Reviews are repeated every two years to make sure providers stay current in their medical knowledge.

What services are provided by the

SERVICE	PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED	LIMITED AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
Abortion		✓		
Adult day health care			✓	
Comprehensive rehabilitation care	✓			
Cosmetic surgery			✓	Reconstructive (plastic) surgery required as a result of disease or trauma is covered, but not cosmetic surgery that VA determines is not medically necessary.
Dental care			✓	Specific eligibility requirements apply. To determine if you are eligible for dental care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Diagnosis and treatment	✓			
Domiciliary care			✓	Specific eligibility requirements apply. To determine if you are eligible for domiciliary care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Emergency care in VA facilities	✓			
Emergency care in non-VA facilities			✓	Coverage provided in limited circumstances where VA's facilities cannot furnish emergency care or are geographically inaccessible. Coverage may be provided if you require emergency medical care for a service-connected disability. You or your representative should contact the nearest VA medical facility within 72 hours of receiving non-VA medical care for authorization.
Gender alteration		✓		
Home health care services			✓	May be provided when determined by VA to be necessary or appropriate for the effective and economical treatment of your disability. The provision of personal care services is more limited.
Homeless programs	✓			VA furnishes care to homeless veterans in a variety of settings ranging from outreach and referral services to residential psychosocial rehabilitation services.
Hospice care	✓			
Infertility services		✓		
Inpatient medical and surgical care	✓			If medically necessary.
Inpatient mental health care	✓			If medically necessary.
Inpatient substance abuse care	✓			If medically necessary.
Maternity services			✓	VA provides maternity benefits but has no authority to provide care for a newborn infant.

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SERVICE	PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED	LIMITED AVAILABILITY	COMMENTS
Membership in health clubs and spas		✓		
Non-VA care			✓	Non-VA care may be provided in limited circumstances and must be authorized in advance. To determine if you are eligible for non-VA care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Nursing home care			✓	VA or private nursing home care may be provided for a limited time, as space and resources permit, to veterans who are acutely ill or incapacitated but not in need of hospital care. To find out if you're eligible for VA nursing home care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Orthotic appliances	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient medical and surgical care	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient mental health care	✓			If medically necessary.
Outpatient substance abuse	✓			If medically necessary.
Prevention and primary care	✓			
Private-duty nursing		✓		
Prosthetics	✓			If medically necessary.
Readjustment counseling services (Vet Centers)			✓	Veterans who served in the military in a theater of combat operations during any period of war, or in any other area during a period in which hostilities occurred in such area, are eligible for readjustment counseling at VA Readjustment Counseling Centers (Vet Centers). Eligible veterans include veterans of the Vietnam era, World War II, the Korean and Persian Gulf wars and the conflicts in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama and Somalia. Family members and/or significant others are also eligible for readjustment counseling at Vet Centers to the extent needed to assist the veteran.
Reconstructive surgery			✓	May be covered if necessary as a result of disease or trauma.
Reproductive sterilization			✓	Only therapeutic sterilization may be provided.
Respite care			✓	Specific eligibility rules apply. To determine if you are eligible for respite care, contact the nearest VA medical facility.
Sensorineural aids (i.e. eyeglasses, hearing aids)			✓	Eyeglasses and hearing aids are provided to veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 10% or greater. Otherwise, hearing aids and eyeglasses are provided only in special circumstances and not for generally occurring hearing and vision loss.
Services not ordered or provided by licensed/accredited VA staff		✓		
Sexual trauma counseling			✓	Special eligibility rules apply. To determine your eligibility for sexual trauma counseling, contact the nearest VA medical facility.

Do people other than doctors treat patients?

Other qualified healthcare providers such as physician assistants, nurse practitioners and clinical pharmacists also treat patients. These healthcare professionals have received additional medical training and are fully licensed. These practitioners work closely with your doctors to coordinate your care.

Several facilities in the VA Healthcare System of Ohio are affiliated with medical schools. As part of that affiliation, medical students and doctors completing specialty training work in VA facilities. Treatment teams may include these individuals. Other staff physicians closely supervise these doctors in training.

Is there someone I can call with a healthcare question?

The VA Healthcare System of Ohio operates the VA Tele-Nurse program 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may speak with a nurse at any time by calling toll free **1-888 VET-OHIO (1-888-838-6446)**.

How can I play a bigger role in my healthcare?

There are many ways you can participate in your healthcare:

1. Get yearly checkups, scheduled screenings and immunizations.
2. Get to know a primary care doctor who will manage your complete medical care, including referring you to specialists. This will help streamline any health-related services you may need.
3. Ask your doctor or other healthcare provider to explain all treatment options if you are diagnosed with an illness. That will help you make an informed decision.
4. Follow your doctor's orders and promptly report side effects of any medication you may be taking. (Never stop or change the amount of your medication without your doctor's okay.)
5. Make any lifestyle changes your doctor recommends such as stopping smoking, changing your diet or increasing your physical activity.
6. Prepare an advance directive that outlines the type of medical treatment you would like to receive in case injury or illness makes it impossible for you to make decisions yourself.

How do I disenroll?

You may disenroll by calling toll free **1-877-222 VETS (1-877-222-8387)** or by sending a letter to:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Health Eligibility Center
1644 Tullie Circle
Atlanta, GA 30329

Due to new laws and regulations, VA healthcare benefits change occasionally. Any changes to the benefits outlined in this brochure will be presented in future Issues of *Veterans' Health*.