



Benefits for Veterans with ALS

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers many services to veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). If you are a veteran with an honorable or general discharge (under honorable conditions) from the military diagnosed with ALS, we encourage you to contact the VA, as well as a National Service Officer of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) to receive information concerning possible veteran's benefits.

Service-Connected Eligibility

If you were diagnosed with ALS while on active duty or within one year from your date of discharge, you may be determined to be service-connected for the disease. If you were not diagnosed within the period just stated, but can prove with medical evidence or otherwise that you now have ALS, and that you had symptoms of ALS within the one-year period following discharge, you may still be eligible for service-connected benefits. This may include VA compensation, a specially adapted housing grant, an automobile grant, adaptive equipment, a clothing allowance, an aide and attendance allowance, and other benefits. The VA also offers a full range of health care benefits, including prescriptions, medical supplies, prosthetic items, and a home improvement and structural alteration grant (HISA). There may be educational, death indemnity compensation (DIC), and insurance benefits for your dependents.

Non-Service Connected Eligibility

If you cannot prove that your diagnosis of ALS is service-connected, you may still be entitled to receive health care benefits from the VA, including medical and respite care and prosthetic items, such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc. Prescriptions and medical supplies also may be included, as well as a HISA grant. Eligibility will depend upon your period of service, type of discharge, and income level. A medical co-payment may be incurred for medical services obtained through the VA. A list of available health care benefits can be obtained by calling your local PVA National Service Officer.

Veterans Health Administration (www.va.gov)

To receive VA health care benefits, you must enroll in the VA health care system. The enrollment forms are easy to complete and can be done by mail. Once enrolled, you will be assigned to one of 8 priority groups (see attached). You may have to complete an income questionnaire and provide insurance information if you have health insurance. Also you may have to provide the VA with a copy of your DD-214 or similar discharge documentation.





Enrollment in VA's Health Care System

Once you apply for enrollment and your eligibility is verified, you will be assigned to a priority group based on your eligibility status. There are eight (8) priority groups ranging from 1 – 8, 1 being the highest priority for enrollment. You can locate this information on the Internet at http://www1.va.gov/elig/docs/Benefits_Guide_v4.pdf.

Paralyzed Veterans of America (www.pva.org)

PVA is a congressionally chartered veteran's organization that has been serving veterans with spinal cord injury and disease since 1946. Call the National PVA office at 1-800-424-8200 for information about how to contact your local National Service Officer to help you to receive maximum VA benefits.

If your case is determined to be non service-connected and you do not have any other service-connected disabilities, there are two things you should know.

- If you are the recipient of the Purple Heart, you will be automatically eligible to be placed in a priority group 3, with no co-payments for medical care.
- If you are determined to be catastrophically disabled, you may be eligible to be placed in priority group 4, regardless of income level, however, you may be required to make co-payments for medical care. See the VA or your PVA Service Officer for further information.

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The ALS Association thanks Ms. Aulenbacher for her contribution to this FYI.

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