

THE SKETCHLEY LAW FIRM, P. A.

Providing Compassionate Support & Guidance Through Elder Law & Guardianship

VETERAN'S BENEFITS

August 2008

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides many programs and services for veterans of the armed forces. Many of VA benefits are based upon discharge from active military service other than dishonorable conditions. Since documentation is very important to the application process, keep military discharge documents handy.

Health Care

Veterans not receiving VA disability compensation or pension payments must provide information on their gross annual household income and net worth to determine whether they meet financial thresholds. Veterans with income above the thresholds must pay copays.

Once a veteran has enrolled, he/she can receive health care at any VA health care facility. Since demand is high, veterans are assigned into priority groups. This grouping also affects the amount of co-pays to be paid. Special access to care is granted under various conditions, such as for veterans who are 50 % or more disabled from service-connected conditions.

Currently, most veterans are charged \$8 for each 30-day supply of medications for treatment of non-service connected conditions. For some veterans, medications are free, such as those veterans receiving medication for service-connected conditions, or those vets whose income does not exceed the maximum annual rate of the VA pension.

VA bills private health insurers when it treats non-service connected conditions. It does not bill Medicare generally, but can bill Medicare supplemental health insurance for covered services.

Various types of medical programs include counseling services, prosthetic and sensory aids, home improvements, blind

services, mental health care treatment, outpatient dental treatment, and more. The VA provides some nursing home services; the closest are in Panama City and Lake City.

Travel costs when traveling for VA medical care may also be reimbursed.

Compensation

Veterans who are disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service may be entitled to monthly disability compensation. Compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of dependents. Additional compensation is available for veterans with certain severe disabilities. Fortunately, these benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

Available programs include vocational rehabilitation, housing grants, clothing allowances, adaptive housing grants, and aid and attendance allowances.

Pensions

Additional monetary support is available for veterans with low incomes who are permanently and totally disabled, or are age 65 and older, if they have 90 days or more of active military service, at least one day of which was during a period of war. Discharge must have been under conditions other than dishonorable and the disability must be for reasons other than the veteran's own willful misconduct. Payments are made to bring the veteran's total income, including other retirement or Social Security income, to a level set by Congress.

If you would like to arrange for one of our attorneys to speak to your group or organization about this topic, please contact Tracy Rouse at (850) 894-0152. Past newsletters can be found at www.sketchleylaw.com.



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