

Prescription Drug Price Reductions

Prescription drugs received through the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) for non-service connected conditions could cost many veterans less under a new rule that kicks in Feb. 27.

Currently, the VA charges veterans who do not qualify for free health care \$8 or \$9 for a 30-day or less drug supply, depending on their category. Those costs were set to increase over time based on a Medical Consumer Price Index calculation.

The new plan, however, will categorize drugs into tiers, similar to how medication is handled by [Tricare](#). Tier 1 medications, described as "preferred generics," will cost \$5 for a 30-day or less supply. Tier 2, or "non-preferred generics," will cost \$8 for a 30-day or less supply. Tier 3, or "brand name," will cost \$11 for a 30-day or less supply.

Officials estimate that most users will see a 10 to 50 percent reduction in the cost of the drugs they receive from the VA, according to the [rule proposal](#) posted to the federal register early this year.

A series of seven criteria is used by the VA to determine which generic drugs are on the lower-cost "preferred generics" list, and which drugs are "non-preferred generics" and cost \$3 more per 30-day or less supply, according to the rule proposal.

For example, generic drugs typically used to treat a common "chronic condition," such as hypertension, will be on the list, while topical creams, products used to treat musculoskeletal conditions, antihistamines and steroid-containing generics would not because they are typically used on an "as-needed basis," the document says.

The annual drug co-payment cap for veterans in priority groups two through seven is \$700.

Veterans who meet certain qualifications, including a disability rating above 50 percent or who qualify as low-income, can receive free health care from the VA and are not subject to the co-pay costs.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license and also issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Scott Holwell if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To determine if you are eligible for any of these benefits, call or visit our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

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