

Fertility Counseling and Treatment

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced recently that it is amending its regulation regarding fertility counseling and treatment available to eligible Veterans and spouses. VA currently provides certain infertility services other than in vitro fertilization (IVF) services to Veterans as part of the medical benefits package. This interim final rule authorizes IVF for a Veteran with a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the Veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment. It also states that VA may provide fertility counseling and treatment using assisted reproductive technologies (ART), including IVF, to a spouse of a Veteran with a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the Veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment.

“I have always believed that one of the main responsibilities of a grateful nation is to make whole the men and women who have made sacrifices on our behalf,” said VA Secretary Bob McDonald. “It is important that we fully understand the needs of our Veteran population, and incorporate the major scientific advances available today that can allow them to live a full life. Providing fertility counseling and treatment, including in vitro fertilization, is consistent with VA’s goal of restoring reproductive capabilities of Veterans and improving the quality of their lives.”

As part of the medical benefits package, VA provides many different types of fertility treatments and procedures to Veterans. These include infertility counseling, laboratory blood testing, surgical correction of structural pathology, reversal of a vasectomy or tubal ligation, medication, and various other diagnostic studies or treatments and procedures

Full implementation of this regulation requires that VA utilize and optimize existing capabilities for care in the community and develop internal processes that will provide Veterans with a seamless path to receiving ART services. Veterans can immediately schedule appointments with their local health care system for eligibility determinations, clinical evaluation and consultation, and initial treatment. For more information contact your local VA hospital/clinic.

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.

Scott Holwell, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail scott.holwell@co.kings.ca.us.