

VA Hearing Aids/Eyeglasses Update

A new directive allows VA to provide glasses and hearing aids to those who are not service connected for those conditions (Priority Groups 6-8). In the past these were available only to those service connected for the condition. These services are now considered part of the preventative care package for all veterans enrolled in the VA who meet certain criteria. Also, veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system are eligible for battery replacement and repair of hearing aids even though those aids were purchased from a private source.

Even though glasses and hearing aids may be provided at no charge, there may be a co-pay required for those in priority group 6-8. Audiology is a specialty clinic with a \$50 dollar co-pay for some services. There is no co-pay for the devices or the batteries, nor are there any charges for visits for the purpose of adjusting, repairing or modifying hearing aids.

No cost VA health care is available to many veterans, including those who recently returned from a combat zone. They are entitled to five years of free VA care. The five-year "clock" begins with their discharge from the military, not their departure from the combat zone. The VA Medical Center in Fresno has an enrollment coordinator available to provide information. Veterans can also visit our office with health eligibility questions.

There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can also get information on the web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office website at www.countyofkings.com.

- Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 West Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230, the phone number is 582-3211 ex. 2662 or email joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.