

VETERAN'S CORNER

VA Long-Term Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a spectrum of geriatric and extended care services to veterans enrolled in its health care system. More than 90 percent of VA's medical centers provide home- and community-based outpatient long-term care programs. This patient-focused approach supports the wishes of most patients to live at home in their own communities for as long as possible. In addition, veterans can receive inpatient long-term care through programs of VA or state veterans' homes.

Veterans can receive home-based primary care, contract home health care, adult day health care, homemaker and home health aide services, home respite care, home hospice care and community residential care. VA's nursing home programs include VA-operated nursing home care units, contract community nursing homes and state homes. The community nursing home program has the advantage of being offered in many local communities where veterans can receive care near their homes and families. VA contracts for the care of veterans in community nursing homes approved by VA. The state home program is based on a joint cost-sharing agreement between VA, the veteran and the state.

To be eligible for nursing home care, the veteran must have a service-connected disability rating of at least 70 percent, or be rated 60 percent service-connected and be unemployable or have an official rating of "permanently and totally disabled." Nonservice-connected veterans and those officially referred to as "zero percent, noncompensable, service-connected" veterans who require nursing home care for any nonservice-connected disability and who meet income and asset criteria may also be eligible. If space and resources are available, other veterans on a case-by-case basis may also be eligible.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright 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 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 get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage 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 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.