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# VET NEWS

June 2007

## DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>June 6</b>	<b>D-Day (1944)</b>
<b>June 14</b>	<b>Flag Day/Army Day</b>
<b>June 16</b>	<b>American Legion Post 7 Fundraiser</b>

<b>June 19-23</b>	<b>National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Milwaukee, WI</b>
<b>June 21</b>	<b>Summer Begins</b>

## NEW VETERANS' CEMETERIES

A new State cemetery will be opening in June 2007 at Anderson, SC; actual date of opening has not been finalized.

Fort Jackson will be the site of a new national cemetery with a projected date of dedication of 2009.

## VA VET CENTER

**David Cox, the VA VetCenter counselor, is available for counseling for combat veterans each Monday and Tuesday at the Auxiliary Administration Building. You can make inquiries or appointments at the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office, 605 West Main Street, Lexington, SC or call: 803-785-8400.**

### My Health@Vet

*(The Gateway to Veteran Health & Wellness)*

My Health@Vet is a web-based application designed specifically for veterans and their families. It will help veterans work better with healthcare providers to achieve the best possible health.

#### How Does It Help Me?

You can learn more about your health and medical conditions, look up information about improving your health, enter information about your health status into your private information vault, keep track of your health status, read parts of your medical record and refresh your memory of the doctor's instructions, avoid extra visits to doctor by giving them access to information you have enter (blood pressure, weight, pulse, blood sugar levels), give permission for others to see your health information, and easily link to benefits and resources available in VA and other Federal sources.

#### Who Has Access to My Personal Account?

You have complete control over who can view or update what you have stored in your account. Only the people to who you grant access (doctors, family, veteran advocates, etc.) will be able to look at what you have stored.

#### Where Can I See This?

You can view current features at: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov/> You can also view future features at: <http://www.health-evet.va.gov/>

Username: demouserb

Password: password\_\$1

**OUTREACH IN WEST COLUMBIA SOON -  
DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION TO BE  
ANNOUNCED**

### ELIGIBILITY FACT SHEET

January 1 - December 31, 2007

#### **MEANS TEST COPAY EXEMPT VETERANS**

Non-service connected and zero percent service-connected veterans whose 2006 annual income and/or net worth do not exceed the VA means test thresholds as well as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) geographic index for their respective county of residence.

#### **MEANS TEST COPAY VETERANS**

Veterans who agree to pay specified co-payments with income and/or net worth above the VA Means Test thresholds and the HUD geographic index.

<b><u>Income Thresholds</u></b>	<b><u>Co-pay Exempt</u></b>	<b><u>Co-pay Required</u></b>
Veterans no dependents	\$27,790	\$27,791
Veteran 1 Dependent	\$33,350	\$33,351

#### **Medical Copayment Charges for Means Test Co-pay Required Veterans (Priority 8)**

Preventive Care	Zero	
Primary Care Outpatient Visit	\$ 15	
Specialty Care Visit	\$ 50	
	Hospital Care (all inclusive)	\$992 (for 1-90 days +\$2 per day)

### **Prescription Co-pay**

The \$8 medication co-payment for a 30-day supply or less of medication furnished to veterans on an outpatient basis for the treatment of a non-service connected condition. Based on the financial information provided by non-service connected veterans, or veterans who are rated at less than 50% service-connected and whose income does not exceed the maximum annual rate of pension are exempt from the co-payment.

### **GMT Co-pay Required Veterans (Priority 7)**

Veterans who agree to pay specified copayments with income and/or net worth above the VA Means Test threshold and below the HUD geographic index.

### **Medical Copayments - GMT Required Veterans (Priority 7)**

Preventive Care	Zero
Primary Care Outpatient Visit	\$ 15
Specialty Care Visit	\$ 50
Hospital Care (all inclusive)	\$198.40 (for 1-90 days + \$2 per day)

**Child Exclusion Amount** = \$8,750 (Include any income over this that the child earned during calendar).

### **Veterans Not Required to Make Co-pays:**

Many veterans qualify for cost-free health care and/or medications based on

- Receiving a Purple Heart Medal, or
- Former Prisoner of War Status, or
- Compensable service-connected disabilities, or
- Low income, or
- Other qualifying factors including treatment related to their military service experience.

### **Some of the Services Exempt from Inpatient and Outpatient Co-pays**

- Ø Special registry examinations offered by VA to evaluate possible health risks associated with military service
- Ø Counseling and care for military sexual trauma
- Ø Compensation and pension examination requested by VBA
- Ø Care that is part of a VA approved research project
- Ø Care related to a VA-rated service connected disability
- Ø Readjustment counseling and related mental health services
- Ø Emergency treatment at other than VA facilities
- Ø Care for cancer of head or neck caused from nose or throat radium treatments given while in military
- Ø Publicly announced VA public health initiatives i.e. health fairs
- Ø Care related to service for veterans who served in combat or against a hostile force during a period of hostilities after November 11, 1998
- Ø Laboratory and other services such as flat film radiology services and Electro-cardiograms

### **Limited Benefits**

The following acute care services (partial listing) have limitations and may have special eligibility criteria:

- Ambulance Services
- Dental Care
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Eyeglasses

### **Do I Have to Enroll to Receive VA Health Care?**

While most veterans must be enrolled to receive VA health care, some veterans are not required to enroll due to meeting special eligibility criteria. If you fall into one of the following categories, you are not required to enroll:

- If you are seeking care for a VA-rated service-connected disability
- If VA has rated you with a service-connected disability of 50% or more
- If less than one year has passed since you were discharged for a disability that the military determined was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, but that VA has not rated.

William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, Columbia, SC (803) 776-4000

### **FINANCING NURSING HOME CARE**

Medicare generally doesn't pay for long-term care. Medicare also doesn't pay for help with activities of daily living or other care that most people can do themselves. Medicare will help pay for skilled nursing or home health care if you meet certain conditions. You should not rely on Medicare to pay for your long term care needs.

The S.C. Medicaid Program sponsors payment of long term care for people who reside in licensed and certified nursing facilities. The Medicaid Program also pays for special services for those people who participate in the home and community based waiver program. This program is for people who need nursing home care, but choose to stay at home rather than going to a nursing home. Generally a person must be age 65 or older, blind or totally and permanently disabled. Disability is determined by using Supplemental Security Income (SSI) guidelines. You must be screened and certified by the Community Long Term Care (CLTC) Program to determine level of care. For more information, contact your regional CLTC office.

Medicare Supplement Insurance is a private insurance that helps pay for some of the gaps in Medicare coverage, such as hospital deductibles, and excess physicians' charges above what Medicare approves. Medicare policies do not cover long-term care cost. However, Medicare supplemental policies--Plans D, G, I, and J--will pay up to \$1,600.00 per year for services to people recovering at home from an illness, injury or surgery.

A Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) is a housing development that is planned, designed and operated to provide a full range of accommodations and services for older adults, including independent living, congregate housing and medical care. Residents may move from one level to another as their needs change. Financial arrangements usually include a substantial entrance fee plus monthly charge. For more information, contact the Department of Consumer Affairs.

### **Spousal Impoverishment**

In October of 1988, the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act was passed that made provisions for the community spouse or non-nursing home spouse. The income of the spouse residing in the nursing home may

now contribute to the community spouse's income. A specified monthly income for maintenance of the community spouse must be reached before Medicaid can subtract payment from the income of the nursing home spouse. The nursing home spouse is also allowed to retain certain countable assets. Information concerning spousal impoverishment may be found at: <http://www.scdhhs.gov>

## VA IMPROVES SERVICES FOR BLINDED AND LOW-VISION VETERANS

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson has announced that more than a million visually impaired veterans will receive enhanced health care services from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under a reorganization of VA's vision rehabilitation services.

"These veterans, many of whom had their vision damaged by their military service, have earned the best health care America can provide," Nicholson said. "Under this new plan, we can provide all eligible visually impaired veterans with world-class health care closer to their homes."

VA will make approximately \$40 million available during the next three years to establish a comprehensive nationwide rehabilitation system for veterans and active duty personnel with visual impairments. The system will enhance inpatient services and expand outpatient services throughout the 1,400 locations where VA provides health care. ([www.vetsinfor-service.com](http://www.vetsinfor-service.com))

Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary present a check to Gary R. Baker, Lexington County Veterans Affairs Officer, for the Lexington County Veterans DAV Van Fund.

Pictured are: Gary R. Baker, Jean Testruth, Lydia Leo, and Lib Keisler, of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Auxiliary, John Testruth, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Roger Rucker, van driver, Barbara O'Connor and Jennifer Hendrix of the Lexington County Veterans Affairs Office.

## PROBATE AND ADMINISTRATION

When a person dies, there is a process for paying his or her debts and distributing the estate to the beneficiaries named in their will or, if there is no will, to their intestate heirs. This process of estate administration is generally done through the probate court for the county in which the decedent was living at time of death.

Although the probate court supervises the administration of the estate, someone needs to be appointed as personal representative, and that person has the duty to perform the work necessary to settle the estate.

When a person leaves a will, that document needs to be presented to the probate court. It can then be proved, or probated. This is done by an order of probate. In some cases, the probate court may require the testimony of a witness, but generally, if there is no will contest or dispute, such testimony is not required. In most cases, the will is proved, or probated, at the same time that the personal representative is appointed by the probate judge.

The personal representative has 90 days from the date of his or her appointment to file an inventory of all

estate assets showing the fair market value of such assets as of the date of death.

The personal representative must ensure that an advertisement or notice is published in the newspaper giving notice to any creditors of their opportunity to file claims against the estate. Creditors generally have eight months from the date of the first publication of this notice to file claims against the estate. The personal representative has a legal duty to pay all valid claims. The personal representative is also responsible for collecting the assets of the estate and collecting any monies due the decedent or the estate.

The personal representative must also file the decedent's income tax return for any year for which the deceased person did not file such return. If it is a taxable estate, the state and federal tax returns must also be filed, and this must be done within nine months of death. If the estate earns income from estate assets during the administration of the estate, the estate income tax returns must also be filed.

### **VETERAN ASSISTANCE NEEDED:**

Veterans are needed periodically for a number of community activities:

- Ø Speakers for school groups, interviews, TV or radio programs,
- Ø Volunteers who can donate some time at DORN VA Medical Center to drive the shuttle, visit patients, and the information desk, etc.

Volunteers who would like to participate should contact the VA office at 785-8400.

**Veterans Affairs Office  
of Lexington County**

**605 West Main Street, Suite 101  
Lexington, SC 29072  
(803) 785-8400**

**JUNE OUTREACH PROGRAM**

June 5 <sup>th</sup>	8-12	Batesburg-Leesville
June 12 <sup>th</sup>	9-12	Chapin
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	8-12	Swansea

**TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Lexington Main Office:	785-8400
From Batesburg-Leesville:	332-8400
From Chapin:	941-0231

**LAUGHTER AND TEA MAY PREVENT HEART DISEASE**

The idea of laughing and the use of humor as a tool to lift ailing spirits is growing. Scientific research now indicates that the curative power of laughter and its ability to relieve debilitating stress and burnout may indeed be one of the great medical discoveries of our times.

In addition to laughter, drinking tea and eating antioxidant foods can also protect you against heart disease. Don't forget the other couple of requirements for a long and healthy life; good living habits, drinking tea, a positive attitude and lots of laughing!