

Veterans Corner  
July 2008  
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New Disease

The VA has added to their presumptive disease list Al-amyloidosis for exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange. Al-amyloidosis affects the heart, lungs, skin, tongue, thyroid glands, intestinal track, and other organs may be involved. The Vietnam veteran only has to show he stepped foot (boots on ground) in Vietnam, all others must show proof of the exposure to herbicide. Any veteran that has this disease should contact Robert Mitchell at the Saratoga County Veterans Agency at 518-884-4115.

Reaching Out

This office has improved its outreach program in the last several years, especially our efforts to inform active duty service members of their benefits before their separation. However, this office remains concerned that many of those returning from operation enduring freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are not being adequately advised of benefits and services available to them from VA, State and local agencies. I encourage veterans and their families to contact my office to discuss his or her VA benefits.

Questions Frequently Asked

*If I am enrolled in VA health care, what benefits will I receive?*

You are eligible for inpatient and outpatient services, including preventive and primary care, rehabilitation, mental health and substance abuse treatment, home health, respite, and hospice care and prescription medications.

*One I am enrolled, what are the costs?*

VA health care does not charge a monthly premium; however, you may be responsible for co-payments. If you have your own insurance, it may cover the cost of the co-payments.

*Must I reapply in subsequent years and will I receive an enrollment confirmation?*

Your enrollment will be reviewed annually without any action necessary on your part. Depending on your priority group and the availability of funds for VA to offer you services, your enrollment will be renewed. Should there be any change to your enrollment status you will be notified in writing. You will be asked to complete an updated Means Test/Financial Assessment each year.

*Is this an insurance policy or an HMO?*

It is neither. VA health care is funded through appropriations from the federal government. This is not the same as an insurance contract. You do not pay monthly premiums to receive VA health care. You are not required to use A as your exclusive health care provider. If you have health insurance, or eligibility for other programs such as Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE, you may continue to use those programs. We recommend that, if you have other insurance or HMO coverage, you keep that coverage to provide you with a variety of options and flexibility.