The American Legion

bulletin

NATIONAL VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION

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For God and Country

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VA Announces New Benefit "CHAMPVA for Life"

Improvements to the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) will bring financial relief to older survivors and dependents of some disabled or deceased veterans who face medical expenses not paid by Medicare or other third-party payers.

Called "CHAMPVA for Life," the new benefit is designed for spouses or dependents who are 65 or older. They must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death. They also must have Medicare coverage.

"This improved benefit is part of VA's continuing effort to make sure the families of disabled veterans have health care when the veterans can no longer provide it," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "I'm delighted we can provide prescription outpatient medication coverage, a benefit not offered by Medicare."

Beginning October 1, CHAMPVA will pay benefits for covered medical services to eligible beneficiaries who are 65 or older and enrolled in Medicare Parts A&B. The "CHAMPVA for Life" benefit is payable after payment by Medicare or other third-party payers. For services not covered by Medicare or other insurance, such as outpatient prescription medications, CHAMPVA will be the primary payer.

CHAMPVA beneficiaries who reached age 65 as of June 5, 2001, but were not enrolled in Medicare Part B on that date, will be eligible for this expanded benefit even though not enrolled in Medicare Part B. There is no change in CHAMPVA coverage for those beneficiaries 65 and older who do not qualify for Medicare.

Information about the new benefit was recently mailed to all previous CHAMPVA beneficiaries and providers who have filed claims with CHAMPVA.

People over age 65 who have never been eligible for CHAMPVA can request an application by writing to the VA Health Administration Center (HAC), P.O. Box 469028, Denver, CO 80246-9028.

Veterans and family members can also call toll-free, 1-888-289-2411, to obtain the latest recorded information, leave a change of address, or request information to be mailed to them. This phone line is available 24 hours a day. Inquiries may also be e-mailed to hac.inq@med.va.gov.

Updates about "CHAMPVA for Life" and other benefits information will be posted to VA's Health Administration Center Web site at www.va.gov/hac.

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National Veterans Affairs and
Rehabilitation Commission