75th ANNIVERSARY
PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
EST. 1946

Overview of VA's Home and Community-Based Services and Caregiver Programs

June 29, 2021

Webinar Process

- Today's webinar will be recorded and available for viewing on PVA.org.
- Closed Captioning is available. Click the CC button in the meeting controls bar at the bottom of your screen to turn it on.
- If you have a question, please type it into the Q&A box.

Introductions and Overview

- Roscoe Butler, PVA Associate Legislative Director
- Ms. Leah Christensen, National Clinical Program Coordinator, Caregiver Support Program
- Ms. Cheryl Schmitz, National Director, Home & Community Based and Purchased Care
- Q&A and Wrap Up

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

VA Caregiver Support Program

Date June 29, 2021

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)
Educational Presentation

Leah Christensen, LCSW
National Clinical Program Coordinator
Caregiver Support Program

Overview

- **Introduction to VA Caregiver Support Program**
- **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**
- **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)**

Caregiver Support Program Mission Statement:

To promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our nation's Veterans, through education, resources, support, and services

Caregiver Support Program: PCAFC & PGCSS

Other VHA Veteran services that support Caregivers

- Home Tele-health
- Home-maker and Home Health Aides
- Respite Care
- Veteran Directed Care
- Home Hospice Care
- Adult Day Health Care Centers
- Home-Based Primary Care
- Skilled Home Care
- Choose Home
- Other Services: MHICM / PACT / Mental Health

Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)

- Training and Education
- Coaching, Skills Training,
- Group & Individual Interventions
- Building Better Caregivers
- Caregiver Support Line
- Diagnosis Specific Programs for Caregivers
- Caregiver Support Program Website
- Peer Support Mentoring
- Email Listserv
- Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) Self-Care Courses

Four Core Elements:

- **Education & Support**
- **Collaboration & Partnerships**
- **Outreach**
- **Resources & Referrals**

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)

- Monthly stipend
- Access to CHAMPVA (if eligible)
- Mental health counseling
- Caregiver training
- Enhanced respite services
- Certain beneficiary travel
- Ongoing monitoring

MISSION Act and Caregivers

The VA MISSION Act of 2018 was designed to improve Veteran access to healthcare.

- The MISSION Act gives Veterans greater access to healthcare in VA facilities and the community, expands benefit for caregivers, and improves VA's ability to recruit and retain the best medical providers.

- The MISSION Act enhances VA support for Family Caregivers through the PCAFC.

The MISSION Act of 2018 authorized VA to:

- Expand PCAFC to eligible Veterans of all eras of service, which will occur in two phases:
  - **Phase I:** Eligible Veterans injured on or before May 7, 1975
    - Went live 10/01/2020
  - **Phase II:** Eligible Veterans injured between May 7, 1975-Sept. 11, 2001
    - Anticipated to launch in 2022

PCAFC Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria

- The Veteran must need in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on either:
  - An inability to perform an activity of daily living, or
  - Need for supervision, protection, or instruction.
- ***Previously***: VA required a connection between the need for personal care services and the qualifying serious injury.
- ***Expansion Changes***: Eliminates the need for a connection between personal care services and the qualifying serious injury. Also redefines serious injury to now include any service-connected disability – regardless of whether it resulted from an injury, illness or disease.
- ***Why This is Important***: In most cases, the eligible Veteran has multiple conditions that may warrant a need for personal care services. Veterans' needs may be so complex that it can be difficult to determine what specific condition causes the need for personal care services.

PCAFC Services

- Education and Training
- Enhanced Respite Care
- Counseling
- Beneficiary Travel
- Monthly Stipend – based on OPM General Schedule Grade 4, Step 1.
- Access to healthcare through Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA), if eligible
- Financial planning and legal resources for Primary Family Caregivers. VA is actively working to establish a viable contract vehicle for these services

High-level Steps of the Application Process

- Once the Veteran's application is received by the Caregiver Support Program (CSP), a preliminary review will be performed.
- A Veteran assessment, a functional assessment, and a caregiver assessment will be scheduled and completed by the CSP team.
- The CSP team will collaborate with the Veteran's Primary Care Provider to obtain input regarding the Veteran's needs.
- The completed assessments are then reviewed by a Veterans Integrated Service Network Centralized Eligibility Appeals Team (CEAT) to determine initial eligibility.
- Once initial eligibility is established, the caregiver is referred to training, and when complete, a home-care assessment will take place.
- The CEAT receives verification of caregiver training and results of home-care assessment and makes the final eligibility determination and stipend level (Level 1 or Level 2).

How To Apply

Veterans and Caregivers may apply for PCAFC in three ways:

- Complete the application online at: http://www.caregiver.va.gov
  - For most, this is the fastest and easiest route!

- Access and download the application (VA Form 10-10CG) and mail to your local Caregiver Support Program.
  - You may also contact your local Caregiver Support Program for assistance.

- Connect with your local Veteran Service Office/Officer for assistance in completing and submission of the application.

PGCSS

- The PGCSS provides resources, education and support to caregivers of all era Veterans.
- The Veteran must be enrolled in VA healthcare but does not need to have a service-connected condition.
- *No formal application is required.*

PGCSS Four Core Elements

Education and Support

Collaboration and Partnerships

Outreach

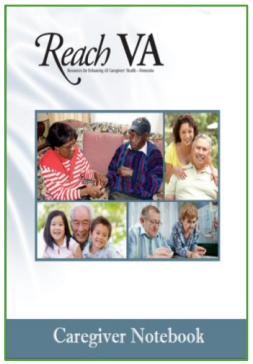
Resources and Referrals

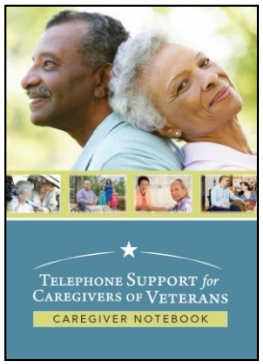
Coaching & Skills Training

Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH VA) Caregiver Program

Individual Coaching

Telephone Support Groups





S.A.V.E. Suicide Prevention Skills Training

Signs
Ask
Validate
Encourage & Expedite

Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Caregivers

National CSP Resources

- Building Better Caregivers
- Self-Care Courses for Caregivers
- Caregiver Support Line (CSL) Education Calls
- Peer Support Mentoring
- REACH VA Caregiver Program
- Annie Caregiver Text Program

Summit & Resource Fair

Caregiver Summit

The CSP hosts an annual summit to include caregiver-specific topics.

- Includes VA and external organizations/agencies that regularly support caregivers and families.
- Goal: to increase awareness of the needs of caregivers in the local community and the available resources.

Caregiver & Family Resource Fair

Offered at every VA facility annually with a focus on resources for caregivers and families to include:

- VHA resources
- VBA resources
- Local non-profits
- County agencies

CSL

The VA CSL responds to calls from caregivers, Veterans and community agencies seeking information about VA caregiver services.

- Monday - Friday 8:00AM - 8:00PM (EST)
- Staffed by VA clinical social workers
- Links callers to their local Caregiver Support Program Team
- Provides information about assistance through the VA
- Offers supportive counseling when needed

Caregiving During the Pandemic

- A tip sheet was created to provide additional information and guidance to Veterans and caregivers regarding COVID-19.
- This document provides information on:
  - How to protect against COVID-19
  - Ways to connect and receive support
  - CSP, VA, and other Resources

Caregiving During COVID-19: Tip sheet located on the https://www.caregiver.va.gov

How Do You Contact the Caregiver Support Program?

VA Caregiver Support Line
1-855-260-3274

To find your local Caregiver Support Program, or for more information: http://www.caregiver.va.gov

VA Caregiver Support

Honor Veterans' preferences to age in place with equitable access to necessary home care services in an Age-Friendly Health System with well-trained staff and a full continuum of care with accessibility to modern institutional care if needed

VA's Home and Community-Based Services

VHA Geriatrics and Extended Care Program Office
Cheryl Schmitz, MS, RN, CNS-BC, NE-BC
National Director, Home & Community-Based and Purchased Care Programs

June 2021

ChooseVA

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Agenda

1. VHA-Provided Home Care Program
   a. Home Based Primary Care
   b. Medical Foster Home
   c. Adult Day Health Care
2. VHA's Purchased Home Care Programs
   a. Skilled Home Health Care
   b. Homemaker & Home Health Aide
   c. Respite Care
   d. Veteran-Directed Care
3. Access with Technology
4. Conclusion

VHA-Provided Home Care Programs*:

Home-Based Primary Care, Medical Foster Home, Adult Day Health Care

**Not all-inclusive*

Home Based Primary Care

- Home Based Primary Care is health care services provided to Veterans in their home. A VA physician supervises the health care team who provides the services. Home Based Primary Care is for Veterans who have complex health care needs for whom routine clinic-based care is not effective.
- The program is for Veterans who need team based in-home support for ongoing diseases and illnesses that affect their health and daily activities. Veterans usually have difficulty making and keeping clinic visits because of the severity of their illness and are often homebound, but that is not required.

- This program is also for Veterans who are isolated, or their caregiver is experiencing burden. Home Based Primary Care can be used in combination with other Home and Community Based Services.

All enrolled Veterans are eligible IF they meet the clinical need for the service and it is available.

Medical Foster Homes

- Medical Foster Homes are private homes in which a trained caregiver provides services to a few individuals. Some, but not all, residents are Veterans. VA inspects and approves all Medical Foster Homes
- A Medical Foster Home can serve as an alternative to a nursing home. It may be appropriate for Veterans who require nursing home care but prefer a non-institutional setting with fewer residents

Washington Post, 2018

Adult Day Health Care

- Adult Day Health Care is a program Veterans can go to during the day for social activities, peer support, companionship, and recreation.
- The program is for Veterans who need help with activities of daily living. Examples include help with bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. This program is also for Veterans who are isolated, or their caregiver is experiencing burden.

The program may be provided at VA medical centers, State Veterans Homes, or community organizations.

All enrolled Veterans are eligible IF they are eligible for community care and meet the clinical criteria for the service and it is available.
A copay for Adult Day Health Care may be charged based on your VA service-connected disability status and financial information.

VHA's Purchased Home Care Programs*:

Skilled Home Health Care, Homemaker & Home Health Aide, Respite Care, Veteran-Directed Care

**Not all-inclusive*

Skilled Home Health Care

- Skilled Home Health Care is for Veterans needing short-term care as they are moving from a hospital or nursing home back to their home. It can also be used to provide continuing care to people with ongoing needs.
- The program is for Veterans who need skilled services such as: skilled nursing, case management, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, wound care, or IV antibiotics

The care is delivered by a community-based home health agency that has a contract with VA.

All enrolled Veterans are eligible IF they are eligible for community care meet the clinical criteria for the service and it is available.

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Homemaker & Home Health Aide

- A Homemaker or Home Health Aide is a trained person who can come to a Veteran's home and help the Veteran take care of themselves and their daily activities. Homemakers and Home Health Aides are not nurses, but they are supervised by a registered nurse who will help assess the Veteran's daily living needs.
- This program is for Veterans who need personal care services and help with activities of daily living. This program is also for Veterans who are isolated, or their caregiver is experiencing burden.

All enrolled Veterans are eligible IF they are eligible for community care and meet the clinical criteria for the service and it is available. Services may vary by location.

A copay may be charged based on VA service-connected disability status.

Respite Care

Program that pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregiver.

- **There are two types of respite:**

Nursing Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a Veteran to go to a nursing home while the family goes out of town for a few days without worrying about leaving the Veteran alone at home. Nursing home respite may take place in a VA Community Living Center or a community nursing home and is available for a maximum of 30 days each calendar year.

Home Respite Care is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to an adult day health care program while their family caregiver takes a break or runs errands.

Veteran-Directed Care

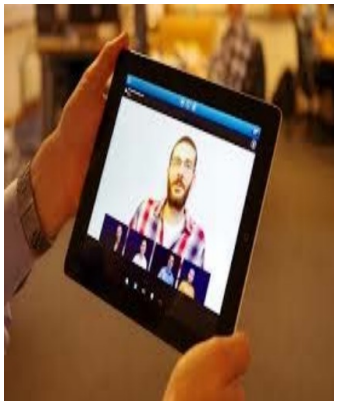
Veterans in this program are given a budget for services managed by the Veteran or the Veteran's representative. With the help of a counselor, Veterans hire their own workers (which might include their own family member or neighbor) to meet their daily needs to help them live at home or in their community.

Examples of daily activities you may be able to receive help with include:

- Eating
- Getting dressed
- Personal grooming
- Bathing
- Using the bathroom
- Moving from one place to another
- Grocery Shopping

Access with Technology

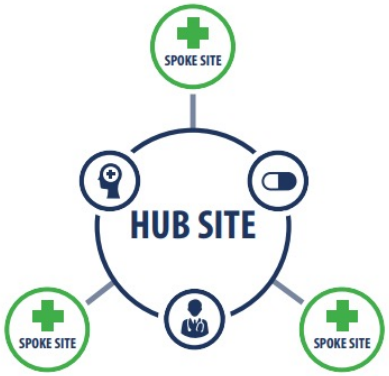
The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that improving access with technology is essential for Veterans to have more immediate access to VHA specialty clinicians.



Telehealth has become a true lifeline for many Veterans

Geriatric/Palliative Clinical Resource Hubs (Geri/Pall CRHs)

To ensure the most vulnerable Veterans have timely access to interdisciplinary assessment and care planning by Geriatric and Palliative Care Specialists



Thank you!

Questions

Contact Information:

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Resources:

- PVA's Legislative Priorities: https://pva.org/research-resources/legislative-priorities/.
- VA Caregiver Fact Sheets: https://www.caregiver.va.gov/.
- VA Home and Community Based Services: https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Home_and_Community_Based_Services.asp?utm_source=geriatrics_home_page.