

ADDITIONAL FIRST STEPS FOR RETURNING VETERANS

First Steps

Most veterans including National Guard and Reservists, who served in a combat theater after Nov. 11, 1998 are eligible for free VA health care for combat-related conditions and enhanced enrollment priority for 5 years after separation from active duty. Prior to separation from your branch of service make sure to have copies of all medical records, copies of service records, and make copies of your DD form 214.

Enroll in the VA

You will need to fill out the VA 10-10EZ form to enroll. Once you have completed, printed, and signed the VA form 10-10EZ you will need to fax it or mail it to you nearest VA Health Care System or you can enroll in person at any VA Medical Center or Clinic. Call 1-888-777-4443 for the nearest location.

Identify State Benefits

Along with federal benefits each state offers its veterans additional benefits. Check your state's Veterans Service Department for additional benefits offered.

Health Insurance for Family

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, you cannot be eligible for TRICARE or CHAMPUS and you must be the spouse or child of a veteran who has been rated permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability by a VA regional office.

Consider Converting SGLI to VGLI

VGLI is a program of post-separation insurance which allows service members to convert their SGLI coverage to renewable term insurance. Members with full-time SGLI coverage are eligible for VGLI upon release from service. To convert SGLI to VGLI, an eligible member must submit an SGLV 8714, Application for Veterans' Group Life Insurance to the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance with the required premium within one year and 120 days from discharge.

If in Iraq or Afghanistan get a Gulf War Exam

Gulf War veterans have unique requirements because this group of veterans is eligible for compensation not only for disability due to diagnosed illnesses, but also for disability due to undiagnosed illnesses. An undiagnosed illness is

established when findings are present that cannot be attributed to a known, clearly defined diagnosis, after all likely diagnostic possibilities for such abnormalities have been ruled out. Examiners should follow the guidelines in the "Handout of Instructions for Compensation and Pension Examinations" but will also need to request more laboratory tests and specialists' examinations than average in these cases.

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