

VA Contract Nursing Home

Your treatment team at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center has recommended that you live in a community nursing home. This pamphlet will answer some of the questions you may have about living in a community nursing home, paid for by a VA contract. You and/or your family may want to visit at least three homes. This will help you decide which home will be best for you.

What types of VA contracts are available to me as a veteran?

1. **Mill Bill Contract** – This contract is available if a veteran is rated 70% service connected or greater through Veteran's Benefits Administration. If a veteran is rated 60% service connected or less then the reason for placement at a contract nursing home needs to be relating to the service connection disability. It may be a good idea to collaborate with your VA social worker regarding any questions you may have.
2. **Hospice Contract** – This contract is available to veteran's who are currently enrolled in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, have updated eligibility paperwork and are enrolled in a hospice service. Under this contract, the VA is responsible for room and board at a VA contract facility and the hospice service is billed to Medicare.
3. **Respite** – This contract is available to veteran's who are current enrolled in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, have primary care established and have updated eligibility paperwork. Veterans are eligible for 30 days of respite care in a contract nursing home each calendar year. Contact your VA social worker for further questions regarding eligibility and coordination of this benefit.

What will the VA contract cost me?

Some veterans may have a co-pay for each day of nursing home care. If you qualify for a Mill Bill or hospice contract, you may not have to pay anything for your nursing home stay. Please check with your VA social worker to see if you will have co-payment charges or any costs.

What does the VA contract include?

The VA contract covers:

- A semi-private room
- Meals
- Medical care at the nursing home
- Medications/supplies
- X-rays
- Laboratory services
- Doctor visits
- Restorative, physical, occupational, and speech therapy according to Medicare standards
- Other necessary services or supplies routinely given to all nursing home residents

VA doctors do not provide primary care for nursing home residents. The assigned nursing home doctor will take care of you. If you have any questions about this, ask the social worker at the nursing home. VA Medical Center specialists can consult with the nursing home doctor.

Will I lose my Medicare or Medical Assistance coverage for a nursing home stay if I have a VA contract?

No, the VA works in cooperation with nursing homes to assure that veterans remain eligible for Medicare and Medical Assistance. Often the nursing home and VA will plan on a VA contract within a sequence of payers. However, the sources of payment cannot overlap for the same period of care. Call your social worker for help if there are billing problems.

What if I need to return to the hospital while I am in the nursing home?

In non-emergency cases, the nursing home staff will call the VA Medical Center and ask that you be admitted. If it is an emergency, you will be taken to the nearest hospital. If this happens, you or your insurance company may have to pay the hospital and ambulance bills. In some cases, the VA may help service-connected veterans pay the private hospital bill. You are eligible for a 48 hour bed hold during hospitalization paid through your VA contract. You can be moved from a private hospital to the VA Medical Center when it is safe to move you or when a bed is available. Ask your nursing home social worker if you have any questions about this.

May I go on an overnight pass from the nursing home?

Yes, the VA will pay the nursing home to hold your bed for 48 hours if the nursing home approves a therapeutic pass.

How long does the VA contract last?

The length of the contract depends on your clinical needs and is reviewed every 30-90 days by the VA contract nursing home team. If your condition improves and you no longer require skilled nursing care 24 hours/day, the contract nursing home team may work with you, your family and the contract nursing home on a discharge plan. You may be eligible to receive additional services or support authorized by the VA.

What happens when the contract is about to expire?

The nursing home social worker will help you and your family make plans for your care. Your eligibility for VA benefits, services, and equipment will be reviewed at this time. If you need ongoing nursing home care, the cost is usually paid by you, Medicare, or Medical Assistance.

How may a VA contract affect my veteran's benefits?

You will continue to receive your service connection income while on contract at a VA contract nursing home. If you are at a nursing home on VA contract and receive Aid and Attendance, you will have a reduction in the amount of Aid and Attendance after approximately 90 days in a VA-paid contract nursing home.

Who do I call if I have questions while in the nursing home?

Please talk to the social worker at the nursing home first. The VA social worker can help plan your care. He/she can answer your questions about VA rules, benefits, and services, and help you solve any problems you may have.

How will I know who the VA social worker and nurse are?

The nursing home social worker can provide you the contact information for your VA social worker or nurse that will visit you regularly at the nursing home. The VA staff works closely with the nursing home staff. If you need to see the VA staff, the nursing home staff can help you contact him or her. The VA staff are interested in hearing from you and your family and welcome any questions you may have. Minneapolis VA Health Care System, Home and Community Care staff can be reached by calling 612-725-1994.

What happens when I am ready to be discharged from the nursing home?

The nursing home staff and the VA will plan your discharge. The nursing home should supply a 14-day supply of medications. They will tell the VA that you are being discharged. If you have had a VA primary care provider in the past, we can easily re-enroll you and mail your medications to you once you return home. If you did not have a VA primary care provider before entering the nursing home, you may need to get your prescriptions from a primary care provider in your community and have them filled at a local pharmacy until you can be enrolled in a primary care clinic at the VA.