

Giving Thanks for Veterans and Caregivers

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In November we give thanks for our blessings. Each November we also remember and honor Veterans and caregivers. November 11 is Veteran's Day and all of November is designated as National Family Caregivers Month. I wish to honor Veterans and caregivers by sharing information about services and resources designed to support caregivers of Veterans or Veterans who are themselves caregivers. Two primary types of assistance are available for qualified Veterans – financial assistance in the form of direct payments and direct care services provided by professionals.

Direct payments can assist Veterans experiencing financial challenges. County Veteran Affairs Offices can provide assistance with addressing a one-time financial need, such as paying an overdue utility bill or purchasing a new stove if a Veteran meets the requirements of these State of Michigan programs. A Veteran considering this resource should call their County Veteran Service Officer to make an appointment.

The Aid and Attendance benefit is available to qualified Veterans and/or their spouses who require personal care assistance or live in a nursing home or assisted living facility. If the Veteran meets criteria, the monetary benefit is paid directly to the Veteran or spouse to supplement the costs of that care. Veteran Service Officers work full time to assist with securing Veteran benefits. They can guide the Veteran through the application process, submit the application on behalf of the Veteran and/or their family and track the processing of the application. They can be reached through County Veteran Affairs Offices, Veteran Service Organizations (such as Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc.) and sometimes have scheduled hours on the campus of Veteran Affairs Medical Centers and Outpatient Clinics.

Veterans serving our country since September 11, 2001, who sustained or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty including physical injury, traumatic brain injury, psychological trauma or other mental disorder may be eligible for a stipend paid to their caregiver. These Veterans must require assistance with meeting personal care needs or require supervision or protection due to neurological impairment or injury. To learn more about this program, contact the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a Veteran Affairs Medical Center.

The Veterans Health Administration provides a variety of services to Veterans enrolled and receiving healthcare through a Veteran Affairs Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic. Services in the home and community are designed to provide care through programs like skilled home health care, homemaker/home health aide assistance, Home Based Primary Care and palliative and hospice care. Respite care is designed to give caregivers a break. It includes in-home respite, attending an Adult Day Health Care Center or even a short stay in a long term care setting. Caregiver education, training programs, support groups and other services are also being developed. The Veterans Health Administration provides durable medical equipment, prosthetic and sensory aides, financial assistance with home modifications and transportation assistance to

qualified Veterans. To access these services and resources contact your closest Veteran Affairs Medical Center or Outpatient Clinic.

I hope this brief introduction to Veteran services has been helpful. I hope you will join me in giving thanks for and paying tribute to Veterans who have served our country and caregivers who selflessly meet the needs of so many.

Caregiver's Corner is provided as a public service of the **Caregiver Resource Network**. The Caregiver Resource Network is a collaboration of West Michigan organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American's Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support funds. For more information consult our website at www.CaregiverResource.net or call toll free at 1-888-456-5664.