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MEMBER



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NURSING HOMES FOR VETERANS

Nursing home coverage for veterans is available from two sources within the Department of Veterans Affairs – the veterans health care system and the state veterans homes system. This week's issue of the Oast & Hook News will cover the veterans health care system. Next week's issue will cover the state veterans home system.

Nursing Home Coverage through the VA Health Care System

Nursing home coverage along with other long-term care services, such as home care, and assisted living as well as geriatric care management are available through the Veterans Health Administration for qualifying veterans.

In order to get into the veterans healthcare program, the veteran must have service-connected disabilities, or be below a qualifying income level, or be receiving Veterans Pension income. Once in the system, a veteran is not guaranteed long-term care services, including nursing home care, unless the veteran meets specific requirements. Here is a list of these requirements for nursing home coverage.

Who is Eligible for Nursing Home Care?

- Any veteran who has a service-connected disability rating of 70% or more;
- A veteran who is rated 60% service-connected and is unemployable or has an official rating of "permanent and total disabled;"
- A veteran with combined disability ratings of 70% or more;
- A veteran whose service-connected disability is clinically determined to require nursing home care;
- Nonservice-connected veterans and those officially referred to as "zero percent, noncompensable, service-connected" veterans who

require nursing home care for any nonservice-connected disability and who meet income and asset criteria; or

- If space and resources are available, other veterans on a case-by-case basis with priority given to service-connected veterans and those who need care for post-acute rehabilitation, respite, hospice, geriatric evaluation and management, or spinal cord injury.

VA's nursing home health system programs include VA-operated nursing home care units and contract community nursing homes. Many VA hospitals operate nursing home care units located in or near the hospital. Other hospitals, without adequate nursing home beds, contract with approximately 2,500 community private nursing homes nationwide to provide services.

Ask Allie

O&H: Allie, we've heard there is an update to your story on Operation Baghdad Pups. Can you tell us about it?

Allie: Sure! I'm always glad to share a story with a happy ending. I wrote about Operation Baghdad Pups in an earlier column. The program is run by SPCA International, and its mission is to rescue dogs (and cats!) who have been befriended by U.S. service members deployed to Iraq. The program has rescued 75 animals so far, including Sako, a dog adopted by Petty Officer 1st Class Joan Steates, a locally based Seabee. The cost is approximately \$4,000 per animal, and the program is supported entirely through donations to SPCA International. For more information on Operation Baghdad Pups, please visit its website at www.baghdadpups.com. Speaking of rescues, please remember that there are lots of dogs and cats in our area local shelters waiting for adoption. I'm lucky to have found a good home at Oast & Hook; I hope that some of our readers have room in their homes and hearts for some of these great animals.



Please feel free to e-mail your pet- and animal-related questions to Allie at: allie@oasthook.com.

Announcements

Oast & Hook is pleased to announce the launch of our new website. It still contains all the information of the old one as well as some new information. To view our website please go to www.oasthook.com.

The Adult Protective Services Unit of the Hampton Division of Social Services and Riverside PACE will be hosting its first "Interagency Community Resource Expo" from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 17th at the Y. H. Thomas Community Center in Hampton, Virginia. Oast & Hook is pleased to

announce that it will be an exhibitor at this expo. This expo is geared toward senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, children of seniors, children of disabled individuals, and other relatives, neighbors and advocates of seniors and those with disabilities. To register for this expo, please phone the reservation hotline at 757-727-1949.

Save the date for some spring cleaning. On May 9th, Stealth Shredding will have a truck at Oast & Hook's Portsmouth office so Oast & Hook's client and friends can bring their papers to be shredded at no cost. (Stealth Shredding recycles the shredded material.) The *Oast & Hook News* will provide more information about this spring cleaning opportunity in upcoming issues.



Distribution of This Newsletter

Oast & Hook encourages you to share this newsletter with anyone who is interested in issues pertaining to the elderly, the disabled and their advocates. The information in this newsletter may be copied and distributed, without charge and without permission, but with appropriate citation to Oast & Hook, P.C. If you are interested in a free subscription to the *Oast & Hook News*, then please e-mail us at mail@oasthook.com, telephone us at 757-399-7506, or fax us at 757-397-1267.

Please visit us on the world wide web at:

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Our website contains information about Oast & Hook and an archive of our newsletters and other estate planning, estate administration, and elder law articles in searchable format.

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