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SPECIAL REPORT: State Veterans Nursing Homes

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STATE VETERANS NURSING HOMES

State veterans homes fill an important need for veterans with low income and veterans who desire to spend their last years with “comrades” from former active duty. The predominant service offered is nursing home care. VA nursing homes must be licensed for their particular state and conform to skilled or intermediate nursing services offered in private nursing homes in that state. State homes may also offer assisted living or domiciliary care which is a form of supported independent living.

There is a great demand for the services of these homes. Unlike private sector nursing homes where the family can walk in the front door and possibly that same day make arrangements for a bed for their loved one, state veterans homes have an application process that could take a number of weeks or months. Many state homes have waiting lists especially for their Alzheimer’s long term care units.

No facilities are entirely free to any veteran with an income. The veteran must pay his or her share of the cost. In some states the veterans’ contribution rates are set and if there is not enough income the family may have to make up the difference.

Most families who are seeking help for their loved ones, who are veterans, generally look to VA first before considering Medicaid. Or they are simply not aware of Medicaid. In many cases Medicaid may be the better choice.

From state to state, facilities vary in their rules for eligible veterans. Differing rules are probably based on the demand for care and the available beds in that particular geographic area. Many states have waiting lists of weeks to months for available beds.

Some homes require the veteran to be totally disabled and unable to earn an income. Some evaluate on the basis of medical need or age. Some evaluate entirely on income. Some accept spouses or surviving spouses. You must contact the veterans home you are interested in to find out the availability of beds and their application process. Once the veteran has been accepted in a state veterans home, facility staff members will file the appropriate forms to obtain all veterans benefits available to help pay the costs.

ABOUT THIS HANDOUT

This guide is provided as a courtesy to help you recognize potential estate planning issues. It is not intended as a substitute for legal advice. It is distributed with the understanding that if you need legal advice, you will seek the services of a competent elder law attorney. While every precaution has been taken to make this explanation accurate, we assume no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages resulting from the use of the information in this explanation.

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Hook Law Center focuses its practice on estate and tax planning, planning for long-term care and aging, retirement and investment advice, trust and estate administration and probate, guardianships for those unable to make sound decisions, and the unique situations associated with special needs.

Learn more about the Hook Law Center at www.HookLawCenter.com.

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