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[For Veterans - Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence](#)

VA Benefits and Services for Veterans with Multiple Sclerosis

As a Veteran with MS, you may be eligible for VA's many programs and services. Access to VA health care is based upon your enrollment [eligibility](#) and discharge status from active military service. If not already enrolled, information on how to apply for VA health care can be found on the VA Benefits and Health Care [website](#). Once enrolled, you may find that navigating the large, and sometimes complex, range of VA benefits and grants can be confusing. Luckily, your VA health care team is here to assist you. It is important for Veterans receiving VA health care to know who their assigned Primary Care Team or MS social worker is. These providers can help you navigate VA services. They can also connect you to a Veteran Service Organization (VSO).

◆ **HOT TIP:** Work with your VA social worker and a VSO Officer when applying for or increasing VA benefits. They can help with the process, including monitoring and advocating for you!

The VA offers a variety of medical and support services and programs for Veterans, with several of them being of particular interest for Veterans with MS. Some of these benefits are based on [level or percent of disability](#), while others may be based on service-connection.

- *Service-connected* (SC) status refers to Veterans who are disabled by an injury or disease that was caused or aggravated by military service or occurred while serving in the military. MS is a presumptive condition, which means that it is presumed that the disability is caused by military service if diagnosed within a certain time frame. For MS, the presumption is that MS is service-connected when symptoms or a diagnosis of MS occurred during military service or within seven years after honorable discharge.

- *Non-service connected* (NSC) status refers to Veterans who have a disability or health issue not related to their military service. Veterans diagnosed with MS after the presumptive period of seven years could be eligible for some VA benefits under the non-service-connected status.

VA has a wide range of benefits that may be of particular interest to Veterans with MS. Please note that this list does not include all VA resources and programs available to Veterans. Also, some VA benefits are offered through the VA, while other benefits are offered through the [Veterans Benefits Administration](#). It is important to reach out to your assigned primary care or MS social worker to determine all the supports and benefits you may be eligible for. If you don't know who your social worker is, contact your local VA medical facility Social Work department.

Medical Care

Medical care for eligible Veterans with MS may include specialty care visits with a neurologist and/or rehabilitation medicine physician, disease modifying therapies, symptomatic medications, physical and occupational therapy, and other health care services and medical equipment. Veterans may also be eligible for services through the VA's [Extended Care](#) program.

- [Skilled Home Health Care](#) is for Veterans needing short-term care when moving from a hospital or nursing home back to their home.
- [Homemaker and Home Health Aide Care](#) provides an agency caregiver who can come to a Veteran's home and help the Veteran take care of themselves and their daily activities.
- [Respite Care](#) pays for Veteran care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days.
- Personal Emergency Response Systems help Veterans receive immediate assistance in an emergency event.
- [Veteran Directed Care](#) provides funding to Veterans to hire a person to help with personal care and activities of daily living.
- [Medical Foster Homes](#) may be appropriate for Veterans who require nursing home care but prefer a non-institutional setting with fewer residents.

Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service Program

The VA's [Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service](#) (PSAS) is an integrated delivery system designed to provide eligible Veterans medically prescribed devices such as hearing aids, eyeglasses, speech and communication devices, home dialysis supplies, orthopedic braces/supports/footwear, wheelchairs, home respiratory aids, hospital beds, and other daily living aids. The basic eligibility for prosthetic items is enrollment in the VA system and proper medical justification. Service connection does not have a role in eligibility except for certain programs. While PSAS has many programs and services, the three below may be of particular interest to Veterans with MS.

- The [Automobile Adaptive Equipment](#) program provides funding for the purchase of a vehicle and/or modifications to a vehicle. This program is primarily for SC Veterans, though NSC Veterans may be eligible for equipment/modifications that will improve entrance and exiting from a vehicle. [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Clothing Allowance](#) is a program that provides funding for Veterans who are rated for a SC disability for which he or she uses prosthetic or orthopedic appliances. This requires an annual application which must be submitted before August 1st of each calendar year.
- [Home Improvements and Structural Alterations](#) program provides medically necessary improvements and structural alterations to the primary residence of Veterans for specific purposes. This program is available to SC Veterans as well as NSC Veterans who meet specific criteria

Veterans Benefits Administration

In addition to benefits from the VA, there are benefits and grants available through the [Veterans Benefits Administration](#) for Veterans who meet certain service-connected disabilities and eligibility requirements.

- [Specially Adaptive Housing \(SAH\), Special Housing Adaptations \(SHA\), or Temporary Residence Adaptation](#) (TRA) programs are available for Veterans who need to buy, build, or change their or a family members permanent home. Veterans must be SC to receive the SAH and SHA grants while certain other requirements must be met for the TRA grant. Generally, funds can be used at different times up to the total amount.
- [Aid and Attendance or Housebound](#) benefits provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors.

Veterans can't get Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time, and must have served during wartime.

VA Caregiver Support Program

VA's [Caregiver Support](#) programs offer family caregivers of Veterans an opportunity for education, financial planning, peer support, and resources. Your [local VA Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) can connect you to resources or you can call the [Caregiver Support Line](#) at 855-260-3274.

- The [Program of General Caregiver Support Services](#) provides resources, education, and support to caregivers of Veterans.
- The [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) provides resources, education, support, a financial stipend, and health insurance (if eligible) and beneficiary travel (if eligible) to caregivers of eligible Veterans. There are several downloadable factsheets on the website which can help determine if you are eligible to apply for this program.

In addition to SC and NSC status, the percent of disability may influence benefits and/or the amount that Veterans may need to financially contribute towards their VA care, such as co-pays and travel.

Catastrophically Disabled (Priority Group 4) Rating: Being rated Catastrophically Disabled means you have a severely disabling injury, disorder, or disease that permanently compromises your ability to do your daily activities of living. This is an especially important rating for Veterans who have less than 30% SC since it will remove your copayments for inpatient, outpatient, medication, and non-institutional extended care services. It may also help you qualify for VA Special Mode Beneficiary Travel, like paratransit or a cabulance, to VA medical appointments if your income is below the income cap of this travel category.

Veterans Service Organizations

Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), like [Paralyzed Veterans of America](#), [United Spinal](#), and [Disabled American Veterans](#), can also assist you with VA disability claims, benefits, and services. To see a complete list of VSOs and designate a VSO to assist you, talk to your VA social worker about completing a [VA Form 21-22](#).

National MS Society

In addition to VA care and services, the [National MS Society](#) (NMSS) is an official partner of the VA. If you find yourself in need of additional information, resources, and support call an NMSS Navigator directly at 800-344-4867 or email them at contactusnmss@nmss.org. If desired, your VA provider, nurse coordinator, or social worker can complete an MS Navigator referral form along with a VA health release form to talk with the MS Navigator on your behalf. [VA form 10-5345](#)

In summary, working with your MS provider, social worker, and Veteran Service Organization can help make navigating VA benefits and programs easier to understand, less stressful, and provide you with assistance you may need to a better quality of life with MS.

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