

# Veterans Living with ALS

Because of your service, you should qualify for VA benefits that will help pay for the majority of your expenses associated with ALS. These benefits are available because the VA listed ALS as a service-connected disease in 2008. Studies have shown that military veterans are 1.5 to 2 times as likely as civilians to be diagnosed with ALS.



## Am I eligible?

If you have been diagnosed with ALS, served in the U.S. military for 90 or more consecutive days of active duty, and have been honorably discharged, you will likely be eligible for special service-connected benefits.

## What are service-connected benefits?

If you qualify, you can receive numerous benefits through the VA, including:

- access to VA multidisciplinary ALS clinics
- durable medical equipment
- disability compensation
- a specially-adapted housing grant
- an automobile grant

## Can I attend an ALS clinic before getting approved?

Yes, it is very important to begin attending an ALS clinic as soon as possible after your diagnosis. Even if you have not yet been approved for service-connected benefits, you can request a referral to VA ALS clinics and services as long as you have a confirmed ALS diagnosis and supporting documentation. There is an established process that can get you the care you need while you are waiting for approval. A VA staff person, often a social worker or nurse care coordinator, should be able to guide you through the process and discuss your options.

## Can I attend a non-VA ALS clinic?

Yes. You can choose to go to a community ALS clinic, though most veterans eventually make the transition to the VA because all their care and benefits can be coordinated in one place. If you choose to attend an ALS clinic outside of the VA, you will need to use other insurance to pay for your care. If there is no VA ALS clinic in your area, your local VA may make a referral and pay for you to attend a community ALS clinic.

## How do I apply for service-connected benefits?

To apply for your service-connected benefits, we recommend reaching out to a veterans service organization like the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) ([www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)) or Disabled American Veterans (DAV) ([www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)). Navigating the VA system on your own can be a confusing and frustrating process. PVA or DAV can be your advocate—they will explain your benefits, answer questions, give you tips, help you with paperwork, and expedite your application, which may take 90 days or so to get approved.

While waiting for your benefits, you should get connected with your local ALS Network care manager. You can receive support from the VA and your local ALS organization at the same time.

When the VA accepts your application and approves your service-connected benefits, you will automatically get an appointment within 30 days. You will also be assigned a social worker/case manager and primary doctor.

## Can I receive VA benefits and Medicare benefits?

Yes. In addition to your VA benefits, you can also qualify for and receive Medicare benefits—as long as you are eligible. Medicare can help you pay for services outside the VA system that the VA might not cover, such as visits to non-VA ALS clinics or other medical professionals. If you don't qualify for Medicare, you will still receive full coverage within the VA system.

## Can I receive VA benefits and Medicaid benefits?

When you are diagnosed with ALS and start receiving monetary disability compensation from the VA, you will no longer qualify for Medicaid benefits but will be fully covered by the VA. If you also have Medicare, that will continue to be your primary insurance and the VA will become secondary.

### Get Local Support



*Formerly ALS Golden West*

[www.alsnetwork.org](http://www.alsnetwork.org)

(866) 750-2572

[info@alsnetwork.org](mailto:info@alsnetwork.org)

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