

New Law Supports Home Care, Caregivers for Military Veterans

January 16, 2025

In the News, VA Benefits

On January 2, 2025, President Biden signed into law the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. The legislation represents a significant step forward in supporting the needs of veterans, their families, and their caregivers.

Named in honor of former United States Senator Elizabeth Dole, a longtime advocate for military families, the law represents a significant advancement in the services and support provided to U.S. veterans. Through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), this new legislation aims to enhance veterans' access to home and community-based services (HCBS). The Act also recognizes the critical role that caregivers play in ensuring the well-being of veterans and seeks to provide them with better support and resources.

Expansion of Home and Community-Based Services

The Act requires the VA to increase access to HCBS for eligible veterans, enabling them to receive care in their own homes or communities rather than institutional settings. Before this law passed, a veteran could receive HCBS only if those services did not exceed 65 percent of the cost they would be if administered in a VA nursing home.

Under the new law, veterans can receive HCBS if the cost is equal to the cost of receiving the same care in a VA nursing home. The VA can also allow home and community-based services that exceed the cost of VA nursing home services if the VA determines that paying the higher cost is in the best interest of the veteran.

HCBS can include personal care, homemaker services, adult day health care, respite care, and other services.

Support for Caregivers

In addition, the Elizabeth Dole Act will provide enhanced training and education programs for caregivers of veterans. Such programs will seek to help them manage the unique challenges of caring for this population. The legislation also will make more veterans and their

families eligible for the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Pilot Programs and Innovation

The law calls for the development of various pilot programs, including one focused on exploring innovative HCBS models that provide homemaker and home health care services to veterans who live in communities with a shortage of home health aides. Recognizing the importance of a skilled workforce, the Act provides funding for training programs to increase the availability of home health aides and other professionals specializing in veteran care.

Addressing Challenges for Veterans and Caregivers

Veterans often face unique health challenges, including physical disabilities, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and chronic illnesses. These conditions can make daily living tasks difficult, increasing reliance on caregivers. For many veterans, caregivers are loved ones who often sacrifice their own well-being and financial stability to provide care. By strengthening HCBS and caregiver support, the Elizabeth Dole Act addresses both veteran-specific health needs and the burdens placed on caregivers.

Other Benefits of the Legislation

The law's emphasis on home-based care aligns with veterans' preferences to age in place and maintain their independence. By reducing the reliance on institutional care, the legislation also has the potential to lower overall health care costs. Furthermore, the Act's focus on caregiver support may help improve the mental and physical health of those providing care, ultimately benefiting veterans by ensuring consistent and high-quality assistance.

"The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act will better support veterans, caregivers, and survivors by improving access to VA health care and benefits, expanding long-term care programs, strengthening programs for student veterans and military family members, and more," said U.S. Senator Jerry Moran, a sponsor of the bill.

Barnestorm offers VA billing services--please email us at customersupport@barnestorm.com to get help!

Expansion of Home and Community-Based Services for VA

Knowledgebase

<http://kb.barnestorm.biz/KnowledgebaseArticle51723.aspx>