

## Little-Known Program Helps Veterans Pay for Assisted Living

Aging military veterans who live in assisted living communities or nursing homes may be eligible to receive as much as \$1,632 a month, over and above their regular military

pensions, from a little-known program called "Aid and Attendance."

Married veterans who qualify for the Department of Veterans

Affairs (VA) program can receive up to \$1,949 per month while surviving spouses could qualify for a \$1,055 monthly payment.

The Aid and Attendance program is not new, but it is often overlooked by families with veterans or surviving spouses, according to veterans advocate Debbie Burak. Veterans can qualify for the benefit if they served in the military during a period of war, meet the VA's income requirements and are unable to carry out certain activities of daily living, including feeding, dressing or toileting.

The VA determines the amount of the Aid and Attendance benefit by subtracting non-reimbursed medical expenses from the veteran's or surviving spouse's total household income. If the remaining income amount falls below the program's annual income threshold, the agency pays the difference between the claimant's household income

and that threshold. In 2006, the annual income threshold for Aid and Attendance was \$18,234 for a veteran without dependents and \$11,715 for a surviving spouse without dependents.

The V A can take as long as six months to process an Aid and Attendance application, according to Burak, whose VeteranAid Web site provides information about applying for the benefit. Applications may be submitted through the VA Web site.

- Choosing Services
- Homes And Services Directory
- Paying For Aging Services
- Planning Ahead
- Volunteering In Aging Services
- Advocacy
- Assisted Living
- Continuing Care Retirement Communities
- Home And Community-Based Services
- Housing
- Legal Issues
- Nursing Homes
- Leadingage Listservs
- Careers
- Conferences And Education
- Connect: Social Media
- Leadingage Quality First
- Savings And Solutions Center
- Data