

## DEATH PENSION AWARD ATTACHMENT

Information concerning Department of Veterans Affairs, Federal, State or local benefits may be obtained from your nearest VA office or any national service organization representative. You may call VA toll-free at 1-800-827-1000 (Hearing Impaired TDD line 1-800-829-4833) or contact VA by Internet at [iris.va.gov](http://iris.va.gov).

### WHEN IS YOUR VA CHECK DELIVERED?

A check covering the initial amount due under this award will be mailed within 15 days. Thereafter, checks will be delivered at the beginning of each month for the prior month.

### HOW CAN YOU RECEIVE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS?

You may be entitled to additional benefits for the veteran's unmarried children if the children are under age 18 or under 23 if attending an approved school, or if, prior to age 18, the child has become permanently incapable of self-support because of mental or physical defect. Children who meet one of these criteria may receive pension in their own right if there is no surviving spouse. You may contact VA as shown above for information on applying for this benefit.

### HOW CAN YOU RECEIVE AID AND ATTENDANCE OR HOUSEBOUND BENEFITS?

VA may pay a higher rate of pension to a surviving spouse who is blind, a patient in a nursing home, otherwise needs regular aid and attendance, or who is permanently confined to his or her home because of a disability. You may contact VA as shown above for information on applying for this benefit.

### HOW CAN CERTAIN EXPENSES INCREASE YOUR RATE OF IMPROVED PENSION?

Family medical expenses and educational or vocational rehabilitation expenses actually paid by you may be used to increase your rate of pension. Family medical expenses are amounts paid by you for medical expenses, including premiums paid for health insurance for yourself and relatives you are under an obligation to support. VA will deduct the amount you paid for medical expenses from your countable income if the expenses qualify for exclusion under the formula provided by law. Educational or vocational rehabilitation expenses are amounts paid for courses of education, including tuition, fees, and materials, and may be deducted from the respective incomes of a surviving spouse and the earned income of a child, if the child is pursuing a course of postsecondary education or vocational rehabilitation or training. Keep track of the unreimbursed amounts you pay. Normally these expenses are reported at the end of the year with an Eligibility Verification Report.

### ARE YOUR BENEFITS EXEMPT FROM CLAIMS OF CREDITORS?

VA pension payments are exempt from claims of creditors. With certain exceptions, the payments are not assignable and are not subject to attachment, levy, or seizure except as to claims of the United States.

### HOW DO YOU REPORT A CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Please notify this office immediately of any change of address.

### WHAT CONDITIONS AFFECT RIGHT TO PAYMENTS?

1. Your benefits may be affected by any changes in the amount of family income and marital or dependency status of the surviving spouse or children.

- a. Change in family income and net worth: You are required to report the total amounts and sources of all income and net worth for you and your dependents for whom you have been awarded benefits. Some income is not countable. If you report such income, VA will exclude it when computing your income for VA purposes. Benefit rates and income limits change frequently; however, you can find out what the current income limitations and rates of benefits are by contacting VA as shown above.
- b. Change in marital or dependency status: You or your survivors must notify us of any change in marital or dependency status or upon your death. Examples of changes in marital or dependency status include the death of a dependent, the marriage of you or your dependent child, and discontinuance of a child's school attendance. **Note: The law provides that entitlement to benefits is permanently lost if the surviving spouse or child marries or enters into a relationship where the individuals hold themselves out to the public as being married.**

Any reduction or discontinuance of benefits caused by a change in marital status, death of a dependent, or discontinuance of a child's school attendance will be effective the first day of the month following the date the change occurred. Discontinuance due to remarriage will be effective the last day of the month before marriage.

2. If your award includes aid and attendance benefits based on nursing home patient status, you must immediately notify us when you are no longer a nursing home patient.
3. Benefits for a surviving spouse or child will be discontinued effective the 61st day of incarceration in a Federal, State or local penal institution following conviction for a felony or misdemeanor. The amount not payable may be apportioned to dependent children.
4. Monthly payments of your award may be stopped if you fail to furnish evidence as requested or if you furnish VA, or cause to be furnished, any false or fraudulent evidence.
5. Information submitted, including income information, is subject to verification through computer matching programs with other agencies.
6. The law provides severe penalties which include fine or imprisonment, or both, for the fraudulent acceptance of any payment to which you are not entitled.

### **IMPORTANT**

Notify us immediately if there is a change in any condition affecting your right to continued payments. Failure to notify us of these changes immediately will result in an overpayment which is subject to recovery.