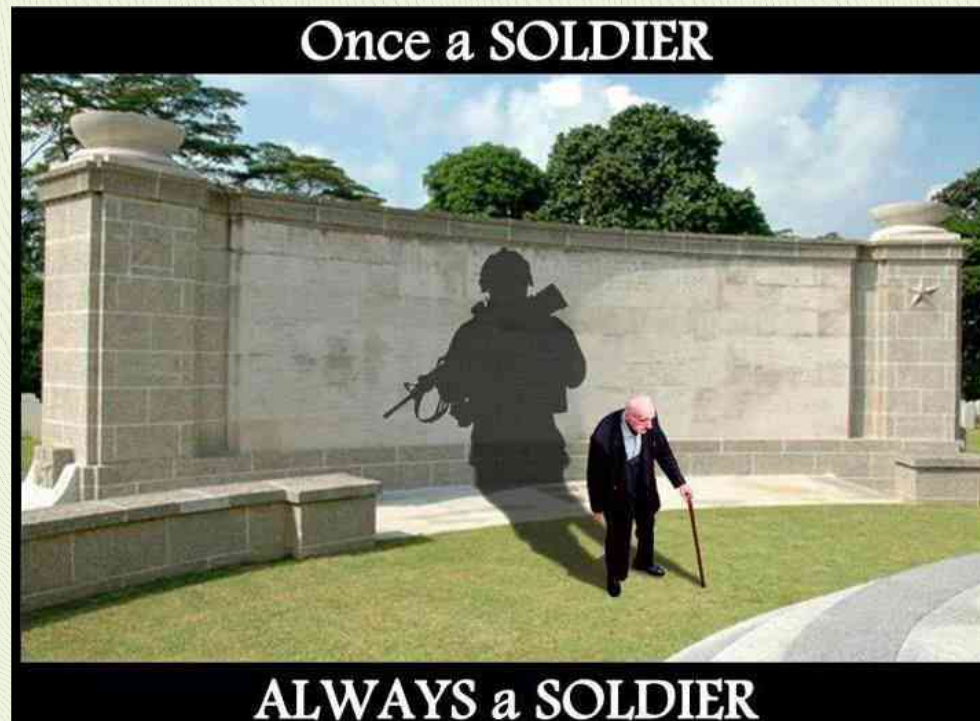


EXCITING NEW VA BENEFIT FOR EVERY  
VET NEEDING  
HELP TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY



VETERAN-  
DIRECTED  
CARE

Wes Carter

C-123 VETERANS ASSOCIATION



## HELPING OUR VETS LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

I ask for your help to spread word about a free VA program that helps keep veterans living at home if they need assistance with “activities of daily life.” Independence is the goal.

It is called “**Veteran Directed Care**” a terrific program from VA that is free to any veteran based only on need for help living independently; it is in addition to any other VA or military benefit and is tax-free. No requirement for a VA disability rating, and it is not income-based...all VA wants is to help vets continue living at home as long as that is their wish.



## QUALIFICATIONS

### VETERAN DIRECTED CARE:

- Veteran must be enrolled, or get enrolled, in VA healthcare
- Veteran must need assistance with two or more “activities of daily life” (ADL)
- Veteran must have referral from local VA social worker
- Care can be provided by family members, friends or commercial services
- Veteran is given a budget calculated by VA to address ADL needs; self-directed then
- General rule of thumb: if a veteran would be in a nursing home except for help from the family, that’s the right veteran for Veteran Directed Care

# Vets' Favorite VA Benefit After Compensation & Medical Care

That’s right! Vets already in this program rate its importance to them just behind compensation and medical care itself. This new and truly phenomenal VA program is called Veteran-Directed Care (VDC.) Veterans’ organizations worked with Congress and elder care experts to create a special benefit design to serve vets of all ages who want to live independently.

Why? Because VDC helps veterans who need help from others to live at home. We wanted VDC to help all vets living at home (and their families!) when otherwise a veteran might be forced to make an assisted living or nursing home decision.

VCD helps veterans get and pay for in-home care if experiencing one or more “activities of daily life” (ADL) problems. Often, when ADLs are difficult a veteran is faced with the need to finally seek assisted living or even a nursing home. Neither the VA nor the veteran want that day to come any sooner than necessary.

Thus Veteran Directed Care. The reason veterans and families in dozens of VA regions nationwide embrace VDC is the help it delivers resolving a veteran’s difficulties of hygiene, transportation, housecleaning, yard work and snow removal, companionship, home health care and so many other ADLs. Perhaps these needs are being met by family members’ loving care, (however difficult) or at family expense by hiring assistance from care providers or commercial services.

To help continue living at home, VA will help address these ADL issues at VA expense, exactly as directed by the veteran. Thus the name **Veteran-Directed Care**, because it is the **veteran’s** choices that are observed as important needs are met.



## WHY YOUR HELP?

- VA doesn't seem to actively promote this program: Word of mouth does more to enroll veterans. You know other veterans and their needs (and their families'.) They need for a word from you about VDC
- If you see a veteran who but for help from a spouse or family member would need assisted living or a nursing home, that veteran is likely to benefit. Typically a VDC vet is older but **every** vet needing help can participate in the benefit.
- Have the veteran or family member contact a VA social worker at the local VA clinic or hospital. A VA primary care provider can also get the wheels turning for the vet's needs to be assessed. VA contracts with local non-profit or government agencies to get a budget set up to get financial help to keep living at home.

Veteran-Directed Home and Community Based Services gives Veterans of all ages the opportunity to receive the Home and Community Based Services they need in a consumer-directed way.

"As a result of the excellent service and funding from this program, I am able to continue living on my own with my dog, in my own home, even though I am 90 years old and blind."

- Veteran receiving VDC

"I enrolled in the VA program because I was taking care of my husband 18 hours a day...for the first time in a long time I am free to leave my house...To not be stuck in the house 7 days a week is highly beneficial for the emotional outlook. I am not as depressed as I was. I don't sleep as much. I am out there enjoying life."

- Caregiver of a Veteran receiving VDC

My daughter has lost so much of her independence and she is so young. This program allows her to live in the community where she grew up, close to her support network, and it gives her a degree of control over her care and her future.

- Veteran's mother and caregiver



## USEFUL RESOURCES

- [VDC video](#)
- [VDC video #2](#)
- [Veteran Directed Care brochure](#)
- [VA program web page](#)



## VA STATEMENT ON VETERAN DIRECTED CARE:



The **Veteran Directed Care Program** (VDC, formerly VD-HCBS) gives Veterans of all ages who are at a nursing home level of care the opportunity to live at home and direct their care and services. In VDC, Veterans are given a flexible budget for services that can be managed by the Veteran or the family caregiver. Veterans decide what mix of services will best meet their needs; hire their own personal care aides (which might include family members, friends or neighbors); and buy items and services that will help them live independently in the community. Services and products must be unavailable from the VA itself. For instance, wheelchairs can be prescribed by VA and thus, not purchased under VDC. Chair lifts, however, are not provided by VA and can be budgeted with VDC.

As part of this program, Veterans and their caregivers have more access, choice and control over their home care services or long-term care services. Caregivers of Veterans may find this program helpful because the Veteran can customize their care to fit their life, hire family, friends and neighbors to provide care and services, and support their family caregivers through consumer-directed respite and other caregiver support services.



## PLEASE CONSIDER:

- If you know an elderly veteran in any way dependent on family care, that vet is likely to benefit from VDC
- Elderly veterans with elderly companions are very likely to benefit as VDC services, like housekeeping and yard work, help both live independently.
- Veterans living alone might be especially helped with VDC, considering the safety factor of having outside involvement and by assisting with difficult chores like snow removal, gutter cleaning and lawn care, activities where falls are a risk
- Please take a few minutes to consider a few minutes to think of a vet who might benefit from this program...or a family struggling to care for their vet who needs help to continue living independently instead of in a nursing home.



## Vietnam Veterans of America Statement on Veteran Directed Care

Wes Carter,  
Member, National Agent Orange Advisory Committee  
National Chairperson, The C-123 Veterans Association

VDC is a fantastic program of service to all our veterans, their families and our community. Advocates have worked hard with Congress and VA, the goal being nationwide coverage. We're almost there!

VDC provides a budget for veterans enrolled in VA health care for help to live independently, avoiding nursing homes or assisted living solutions whenever possible. The program is not income-based and is offered to all, regardless of income high or low, who have an honorable discharge or commission. Veteran Directed Care is tax-free help to keep living at home,

VDC is in addition to any other benefit a veteran may have. Veterans don't need a VA disability rating to qualify...**only** the need for help to live independently to avoid or postpone a nursing home decision. What services have veterans received through VDC? Lawn care, snow removal, general yard cleanup, gutter cleaning, housekeeper, meal prep, meal deliveries, medication supervision, transportation, general handyman, power chair lift, home healthcare aide and more.

Our community benefits as well. Services are provided veterans at no expense to the veteran or charitable community services. Veterans get assistance they might otherwise have missed or not afforded, such as snow removal or meal preparation. Veterans can use their VDC budget to hire family members to provide necessary care, or to pay for outside help

## THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW

Long-Term services and supports (LTSS) are one of the fastest drivers of health care spending and accounts for **11.5%** of all VA Spending in FY2017.

Over **115K** Veterans are projected to receive VA paid or provided nursing home care in FY2030, an increase of **36%** over FY2016.

VA LTSS costs are projected to grow to over **\$15B** in FY2030.

By providing innovative services that address the whole health of Veterans, increasing access to home and community based services (HCBS), providing quality HCBS and partnering with community providers, VAMCs can keep Veterans at home and avoid costly nursing home care costs with the VDC Program.

Data provided by the Veterans Health Administration's Office of Geriatrics & Extended Care

"VDC has helped our VAMC with delaying nursing home placement, increasing Veteran satisfaction, providing Veteran-centric care and reintegrating Veterans into the community."

– St. Louis VAMC VDC Coordinator

### VDC IS A POWERFUL TRANSFORMATION TOOL FOR VAMCS

VAMCs with VDC Programs have had a positive impact improving Veteran experience with health care, reducing nursing home use and effectively delivering LTSS.

VDC expansion and growth also helps VA achieve goals established in the VA Choose Home Initiative and VA MISSION Act legislation. By investing in VDC, VA is increasing their ability to provide the right care at the right time from the right provider.

### VAMCS WITH VDC CAN SERVE MORE COMPLEX, YOUNGER AND RURAL VETERANS AND IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION WITH CARE. VETERANS IN VDC ARE:



#### MORE SERVICE CONNECTED

35% of VDC Veterans are Priority Group 1 Veterans that VA is required to pay or provide NH care for.



#### LIKELY TO LIVE IN RURAL AREAS

50% of VDC Veterans live in rural or highly rural areas.



#### YOUNGER

50% of Veterans are under 75 years old.

### PERSON-CENTERED COUNSELORS

at the VDC Provider give Veterans the opportunity to have a trusted partner assist them in receiving Veteran-centric care. It also gives VAMCs the resource to enhance community partnerships and promote independent living.

#### PROVEN BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- ✓ Increased access to HCBS.
- ✓ Link to public LTSS resources.
- ✓ Community relationships for isolated Veterans that desire connection with others.
- ✓ Increased engagement with Veterans, allowing them to establish strategies that address their needs and set goals for independent living.

## GOAL

Meet the needs of the evolving Veteran population, while providing greater choice and control, to improve Veterans' experience with aging, satisfaction with VA, and allow Veterans to choose home over nursing home.



"The VDC Program has provided an opportunity for all Veterans to have home care; especially where there are no agencies available to care for them. It has also provided an alternative to nursing home care and decreased wait lists for VA nursing homes."

– Salt Lake City VAMC VDC Coordinator

## CHOICE

An analysis of Veteran satisfaction found that **100%** of Veterans are able to choose who provides their care. **99%** feel that their caregiver does things the way they want and **91%** feel that they control how their VDC budget is spent.

## COST

**14 Veterans** in Chillicothe were able to transition out of VA nursing homes back to their home with VDC. The West Haven VAMC found that VDC saved over **\$600K** per year by enrolling Veterans in VDC and discharging them from a nursing home setting.

## ACCESS

The San Diego VAMC found that Veterans receive **415%** more hours in VDC compared to traditional VA Programs.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

A study by VA found that Veterans enrolled in VDC experience a **37%** decrease in nursing home use one year after enrollment, compared to **55%** increase in nursing home use for Veterans enrolled in the Homemaker and Home Health Aid Care Program one year after enrollment.

Statistics reported can be found at [nwd.ad.gov/vdc](http://nwd.ad.gov/vdc) under "VDC Resources"





# The VA: Our Veterans' Health Care

*To care for him who  
shall have borne the  
battle, and for his  
widow, and his orphan*