

# Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital

## Beneficiary Travel Direct Deposit

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What will change regarding my reimbursement for Beneficiary Travel?**

The VA will transition to direct deposit/ Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) of travel reimbursement into the veterans bank account

#### **Why is the VA making this change?**

We are making this change to better serve our Veterans. Please read this information to learn more and please contact our Beneficiary Travel staff at 708-202-2568 with any questions you may have.

#### **When will this change take place?**

Hines VA Hospital will begin the direct deposit process for all Beneficiary Travel reimbursement on March 1, 2013. You may begin requesting EFT as your form of reimbursement any time before this date as well.

#### **Have the eligibility rules for Beneficiary Travel changed as well?**

No. The eligibility criteria for Beneficiary Travel benefits remain unchanged.

#### **This is new to me. How do I know if I am eligible to receive Beneficiary Travel reimbursement?**

Check with, or call the Beneficiary Travel office at Hines VA Hospital at 708-202-2568 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

#### **How does this work? How will I receive reimbursement?**

Once you complete your appointment you have up to 30 days to claim your travel reimbursement. Beneficiary Travel Staff will process your claim, and then your signed travel voucher will be forwarded to our fiscal department where the funds will be deposited directly into your bank account within 5 to 7 business days.

#### **What do I need to do?**

Veterans who are already receiving disability pay each month **do not** need to fill out an enrollment form to have travel reimbursements sent to their bank accounts. They are already registered. Enrollment forms are being mailed to Veterans who do not receive disability pay. If you do not receive a form, you may pick one up from the Beneficiary Travel office at Hines VA Hospital. Follow the instructions in the packet and fill out the attached form. Give the completed form back to the Beneficiary Travel Office or mail it to the address listed in the instructions.

#### **Can I fax my completed forms in?**

No. Faxing can result in smeared bank account numbers which will result in errors in deposits.

#### **What happens to the form after I fill it out and turn it in?**

The information you provide is processed electronically by the VA. The information is used solely for the purposes of Beneficiary Travel direct deposit.

#### **Do I sign a travel voucher each time I want to be reimbursed?**

Yes. A common misconception is that by filling out the form one time that all future appointments are tracked and automatically reimbursed. That is false information. You must visit the Beneficiary Travel Department to

submit a claim each time you want to be reimbursed. Veterans have up to 30 days to submit travel claims for reimbursement.

**How long does it take from the time I submit my claim until the funds are in my bank account?**

Up to seven business days.

**What should be done if I don't see the funds deposited into my bank account after that time?**

Contact the Beneficiary Travel office at the Hines VA Hospital by calling 708-202-2568 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Will I still be able to get cash reimbursement after March 1, 2013?**

Yes. However, there are strict limitations that you will need to be aware of. A one-time cash payment on an emergent basis will be noted in the VISTA system and the expectation is that you properly plan for your next visit by ensuring you have the means available to travel to the facility and then back to your residence.

**What if I don't have a bank account?**

By March 1, if you do not have an account with a financial institution that accepts EFT's, please contact our Beneficiary Travel Department so that we may assist you with establishing an account to receive your benefit payment. Reimbursement by check is an option, however as the Federal Government seeks to stop sending out paper checks in the near future, we strongly recommend you establish a bank account as soon as possible.

**I do not receive mail at my residential address. I use a post office box. How does that affect my claim?**

Mileage calculation is based upon the distance from the Veteran's actual residential address to the location of care within the VA Healthcare System. Therefore, proof of residential address must be provided so that the distance traveled can be accurately determined.

**What does the VA accept as proof of residential address and how often do I have to show it?**

Proof of address is required before beneficiary travel payments will be processed. Proof of address is required once every six months. We accept any one of the following documents as proof of your residential address: 1) Current residential rental or lease agreement listing the Veteran's name, street address, city, state and zip code. 2) Current mortgage document listing the Veteran's name, street address, city, state and zip code. 3) Current utility bill (gas, electric, water, sewage, cable or phone) listing the Veteran's name, street address, city, state and zip code. We cannot accept driver's license, vehicle registration, insurance documents, bank account statements, or any other documents as proof of address other than those listed in 1-3 above. Please note: Proof of address is inspected by Beneficiary Travel staff before a claim can be processed, but copies of the proof of address are not retained on file.

**We greatly appreciate the assistance, patience and understanding of all Veterans as we move forward in this important process that will allow us to serve you better. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. The Beneficiary Travel office is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and can be reached at 708-202-2568.**