

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

HOLIDAY PAY

Q: Are employees eligible for holiday pay?

A: If you are referring to a Christmas Bonus, then no that is not an expense that can be paid for with budgeted funds. Good question...let me know if you have any more and any time! (ASI)

EXISTING SERVICES

Q: Will veterans lose existing services being handled through HHA?

A: Yes, existing services will stop and VD-HCBS will take their place. (MH)

- Aid and Attendance will not affect the VDHCBS services, and vice versa.

-Skilled care is also not affected. This includes med set up, wound care, etc. These things come out of the medical center and are ordered separately by the doctor. Plugging and unplugging edema pump is not considered skilled care. (JR)

BUDGETING FOR SALARY INCLUDING FRINGE (Revised 7/1/15)

Q: What percentage of fringe should be worked into their budget for the workers that they are looking to hire?

A: The fringe for MO employers currently looks like this:

FICA 6.20 Med 1.45 SUTA 3.51 FUTA 0.6 WC 2.04

Total: 13.8% of the hourly wage is payroll tax. For example, if an employee is paid \$10/hr. the employer tax would equal \$1.38, or the total hourly rate equals \$11.38. (ASI)

FINAL EXPENSES

Q: What happens to the VDHCBS dollars when/if a veteran passes away while enrolled in the program. If there is a rainy day fund/savings, could that money be used to cover any final expenses?

A: We were not able to use funds to cover final expenses. As a matter of fact we are still sitting on the last portion of unused funds for that veteran that we have been trying to return to the VA. This is not an issue that is covered in the manual or anywhere that I am aware of. (CF)

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

USING CURRENT IN-HOME AGENCY/HOME CARE WORKER FOR VDHCB

Q: What if a newly, referred Veteran wants to maintain his/her current HHA agency aide for homemaker & personal care services when transitioning to VDHCB?

A: ~~It is possible.~~ Veteran/Authorized Representative must make the phone call to their current HHA agency to discuss Private Pay options. OC cannot be involved in this process; it must be self-directed by the Veteran. Veteran/Authorized Representative should discuss private pay hourly rates, including the issue that VDHCB payment cannot exceed \$20 per hour. (CF) **NO LONGER ALLOWABLE** (DJ 12/2016)

Additionally, Veteran/Authorized Representative must inform the agency that a Fiscal Agent will be handling the payment of invoices on his/her behalf for VDHCB. ASI will need the Agency name, location, phone, and the Agency contact; individual that will be familiar with the Veteran's financial management service connection. ASI needs to have a direct Agency contact to work with, regarding VDHCB paperwork & reporting required for Veterans direct billing. (ASI) **NO LONGER ALLOWABLE** (DJ 12/2016)

YEARLY ASSESSMENT DATE

Q: Did we ever discuss the yearly reassessment, in terms of when we count the year starting? The question has come up here; does it go from date of assessment or start date of the program?

A: It seems to make sense to do the yearly assessment one year after the first assessment regardless of the date the service began. (MEAAA & AgeSmart)

VETERAN HOSPITAL RESPITE

Q: Does VDHCB adversely impact the yearly Veteran Hospital Respite stays (up to four weeks per year), available to caregivers receiving this for their spouse?

A: In Home and In Patient respite are not affected by this program as available to the veteran however they still have VA billed co-pays of \$15 a day in home (1-6 hours) and 0-\$99 a day in-patient respite and the 7 days that the veteran is in respite is subtracted from that month's caregiver salary. (MW)

BLADDER & BOWEL PROGRAM (1st Question)

Q: Is it possible for a Veteran's spouse to continue to be compensated for providing daily Bladder & Bowel care, even though spouse will be Veteran's Authorized Representative in VDHCB?

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

BLADDER & BOWEL PROGRAM (1st Question) Continued

A: VA's Bladder & Bowel Program is separate from VDHCB. The Bladder & Bowel Program provides technical training to spouses to manage advanced needs of bladder & bowel personal care. **MW's written response via email, "If family member / caregiver does the B&B care...then that person should be hired as a caregiver and some of that budget pays for B&B care. If an agency provides the care, then the VA continues to pay...at least this is how I understand it."** MW verbal clarification, "If a Veteran is currently on the Bladder & Bowel Program and spouse/family want to remain managing that care, they can do so & would continue being compensated by Bladder & Bowel Program. However, if family chooses to transition that care to aide, then it would be considered personal care under VDHCB budget." (MW)

BLADDER & BOWEL PROGRAM (2nd Question)

Q: Let's say a veteran receives Bladder & Bowel Program and has hired an aid to do that. He also privately pays that aid for additional care and is interested in hiring her for VDHCB. Can Bladder & Bowel Program and VDHCB be provided at the same time by the same aid? Would we then limit personal care tasks under VDHCB since he is getting the B&B program?

A: MW sent email to VA VDHCB Team restating question: "I have a veteran whose wife has hired a non-related caregiver to provide bowel and bladder care with the B & B monies the veteran receives. They are working on their VDHCB budget now and want to hire the same person to be the primary care provider and are asking if the B&B money goes away when the same person is the primary care giver in this program?"

B&B program still can pay for caregiving and that caregiver can get paid through the program, they just can't get paid for the same hours – (VDHCB Team)

HOME MODIFICATION THROUGH EXISTING VA PROGRAMS

Q: Can funds be used to purchase a garage door opener?

A: As to the gentleman with the garage door opener. This is not something the VA would provide and since the cost of that item is so small it would be to his advantage to purchase one rather than try for a **HISA grant since you only get one HISA grant in a lifetime.** (MW)

CHANGES TO AN APPROVED BUDGET

Q: Does a change to the Veteran's Spending Plan (budget) require VA approval?

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

CHANGES TO AN APPROVED BUDGET Continued

A: Minor changes in the budget—like changes in who the caregiver are or other small changes that just re-direct the money to something covered in the directive do not need additional approval from us but if the revised budget reflecting that change is included in the quarterly report we can have it on record. Use your professional judgments. (MW)

PAYING FOR SERVICES WHILE VETERAN IS IN-PATIENT AT HOSPITAL OR REHAB FACILITY

Q: We have approved payment for lawn care during the time that a Veteran who lives alone was in the hospital. We have another situation with a hospitalized Veteran whose family is being paid to provide the lawn care. Our thought is that we can also approve the lawn care in this situation even though the gentleman is out of the house for a while. Do you agree?

A: In regards to your question, technically VDHCBS services are supposed to be put on hold while the Vet is out of the home. Your organization did recently approve some cleaning services while a Vet was out of the home but was able to justify why they were warranted (because there was a fruit fly infestation and someone had to clean up). We will pay the provider if you approve it. Basically, it is your call. (ASI)

SERVICES WHILE VETERAN IS ON VACATION

Q: Can a spouse, who is also an attendant, get paid to provide personal care to the Veteran/spouse while they are on vacation?

A: Per page 5 of the VDHCBS Veteran's manual under the "items not allowable" bullet point, "vacation expenses other than **the cost of direct services**".

HIRING AGENCY AIDES

Q: We've had several Veterans that have wanted to maintain working with their HHA Agency aide, going forward into VDHCBS. We inform Veterans/Authorized Representative that they must make contact the agency directly to inquire about private pay rates (maximum \$20) & arrangements within VDHCBS. We explain that we're unable to assist, as this is part of VDHCBS self-direction. Our ASI representative just informed an Options Consultant, that while we have had Veterans approved to use an agency previously, she has heard there may be a change with that being allowed by the VA. It was suggested someone contact VA to determine if this is okay to do or not.

A: ~~No change. They can hire whomever they want.~~ (MW) **NO LONGER ALLOWABLE** (DJ 12/2016)

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

ADULT DAY SERVICES (ADS)

Q: What ADS funding options are available to Veterans through their VDHCBS budget, as described in the VDHCBS Veteran Manual (page 11)?

A: ADS & ADS transportation are allowable and coverable expense in VDHCBS budgets, regardless if the Veteran attends a private adult day service or a VA **contracted** adult day service. The VDHCBS Veteran Manual (page 11) refers to optional coverage through “**ADS Centers operated by the VA**”. The VA does not operate ADS in the St. Louis area. They do however **contract** with independent ADS Centers, which is not the same. Therefore, the VDHCBS budget can include payment for private or VA **contracted** ADS services, if the Veteran participates in the VDHCBS program. (MW & KD)

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Q. Can a caregiver hired directly by the veteran get paid using direct deposit into her account?

A: Yes, she will be able to be paid via direct deposit. The direct deposit authorization is part of her new employee packet. (ASI)

HOSPITALIZATIONS AND BUDGET

Q: If a Veteran is hospitalized or institutionalized for a partial month, is the monthly budget prorated?

A: No, the full monthly budget can be utilized (or remainder rolled to Savings), but services cannot be provided on days the Veteran is institutionalized. However, if the Veteran is institutionalized for an entire calendar month, those funds will not accumulate in Savings, as the Veteran was inactive for the month. – (LK, DJ, ASI)

HIRING AN AIDE WITH AN OUT OF STATE ADDRESS

Be aware that if a participant hires an aide who lives out of state, ASI must send different paperwork to the potential aide and ASI must also run a background screen in that person’s state; therefore, knowing ahead of time if the potential aide lives somewhere other than Missouri will save everyone time with getting the correct paperwork and background screens in (so that the Vet can start services on or as close to their wanted start date as possible). The Vet or family does not always have the potential aide’s full address but they should know whether or not the person is a Missouri resident. If we know a potential aide is not a Missouri resident then we can inform ASI and she can send out the correct forms so that the process is not slowed down by the wrong paperwork being sent out. (JC)

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

ASSISTANCE WITH BILL FROM A NON- VA HOSPITAL OR AMBULANCE SERVICE TO NON-VA HOSPITAL

Q: Where can a veteran turn for help with a bill for transport to a non-VA hospital or a stay in a non-VA hospital?

A: Help with this process can be found with this contact:

Annette Limpert, Lead Fee Basis Claims Assistant

314-652-4100 ext 66345, Direct Line: 314-894-6603, Fax 314-845-5018

e-mail: annette.limpert@va.gov

Veteran Affairs Medical Center

#1 Jefferson Barracks

St Louis MO 63125

Attention: 04FJB Fee Basis Submitted by TK

HOME DELIVERED MEALS (HDM)

Q: Home Delivered Meals are listed on Page 3 of the Program Policy Manual as an example of possible VDHCBS coverage. Can the “contribution” to MEAAA meals be included as part of Spending Plan budget?

A: NO, not if the HDM is from MEAAA or other federally funded meal programs. This would be considered “double dipping” of federal funds and therefore is not allowable. However, if the Veteran is receiving HDMs from another meal program that does not accept federal funds, then it would be allowable. (LK)

UNEXPECTED CHECKS DIRECT DEPOSITED

Q: Veteran called to ask why an unexpected check was direct deposited into his account from the VA. He is the employer and wondered if it could be from the VDHCBS.

A: MW reports that there would be no reason the VDHCBS would direct deposit a check to the employer and they would not even have his account information. She advised that the veteran contact the Veteran’s Benefit Administration at 314-552-9884 and ask them why the check came. MW also advised not to spend the money in case the check was in error because the VA would expect to have the money sent back to them.

HIRING AN EMPLOYEE UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN (18)

Q: Is it possible to hire an employee under the age of 18 to provide home chore related tasks?

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

HIRING AN EMPLOYEE UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN (18) Continued

A: MW previously stated that she was informed the “age limits on persons who can hire can be reviewed & determined through state labor relations laws”. So I guess, if you can google MO State Labor Relations Law on working ages, particularly general services. It may be possible, if approved thru MO Labor Laws & with a waiver from Veteran/Authorized Rep. <http://labor.mo.gov/DLS/YouthEmployment>

294.027. Work certificates shall permit

(1) The employment of children between fourteen and sixteen years of age during non-school hours during the school term; or

(2) The employment of children between fourteen and sixteen years of age who are excused from attendance at school by the provisions of chapter 167.

HOSPITAL OVERSIGHT “SITTER” SERVICE

Q: Can employees be compensated for providing oversight care to Veteran, when he/she is hospitalized?

A: Hospitals are required to provide “sitters” if a patient’s condition requires around the clock oversight. Some hospitals charge for the service and therefore families usually do it so they are not billed. Theoretically, when a Veteran is hospitalized, the VDHCB program is suspended so an employee cannot be compensated for that service. (MW)

DENTURE ADHESIVE-ALLOWABLE EXPENSE

Q: Is Poligrip, or another denture adhesive an allowable expense on the monthly spending plan?

A: Poligrip can be added since:

1. Allowable purchase except when covered by other insurance: * Any other good/services needed to maintain the Veteran’s health, well-being...
2. Additional VDHCB guidelines: Over the counter medications are allowable if they are not covered by insurance or VA benefits. (DJ)

VA HBPC

Q. How does a Veteran go about requesting VA HBPC?

A. They need to discuss it with their PCP and request he/she put in a consult for HBPC. However, Veteran did put in a request but was told they are now on a 3 month waiting period as of October 2016.

MEAAA – FAQs (Cont.)

Other Health Insurance (OHI)

Q. Can VDHCB services cover similar services as those that an OHI (such as a Long Term Care Policy) covers?

A. Proof needs to be shown that the OHI was billed for their portion first and that the VA was only billed for the cost of services that is above and beyond that which the OHI covers. Proof must be sent to GTI monthly that OHI was billed first and VDHCB will pay the remaining portion. (MW)