



# SERVICE DOG VETERINARY HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFIT (VHIB) RULES

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a veterinary health insurance benefit and other benefits in support of service dogs to maximize the life and utility of these specialized dogs. VA does not provide service dogs (SD) but does provide this insurance benefit for eligible Veterans through VHA Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS) which administers this program. VA's authority for this program for guide, hearing, seizure, and mobility dogs is in 38 CFR 17.148 - Service Dogs.

## SERVICE DOG VETERINARY HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFIT (VHIB) POLICY

In order to qualify the dog must be trained and from an Assistance Dogs International (ADI) or International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) accredited service dog organization. This ensures Veterans receive the highest level of quality and training standards. To apply, Veterans may contact their clinician or facility PSAS department.

### Service Dog Insurance Coverage

Veterans with medically approved service dogs are enrolled in a contracted veterinary health insurance policy to cover:

- Comprehensive veterinary services for their service dog
- Annual visits for preventive and maintenance care (i.e., immunizations, dental cleanings, screenings, etc.)
- Urgent/emergent care
- Prescription medications
- Care for chronic illnesses and/or disorders to enable the dog to perform its duties in service to the Veteran.
- Enrollment in VHIB eliminates the need for VA pre-authorization.

### Equipment

Service dogs may require specialized equipment medically indicated by the Veteran's medical provider. This specialized equipment may be eligible for provision or replacement by the facility PSAS department.

### Travel Support for Training the Veteran as a Handler

Accredited ADI/IGDF SD organizations' training includes training the dog and the Veteran together under the supervision of the organization's qualified trainer to ensure the Veteran can independently manage the service dog.

- Locations vary and may include the SD training organization, as well as the Veteran's home and community.
- The VA will provide financial support to enable the Veteran to travel to attend training at the ADI/IGDF site.

**NOTE:** The Veteran must be preapproved for VHIB to qualify for this travel benefit through the Beneficiary travel program.