



Aging Deliberately

Most of us age accidentally, without forethought....actual text of mission would go here....



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Dear Readers,

Reading the news these days reminds me of the Depression era song my mom used to sing: "Happy days are here again. The skies above are clear again....."

Can we say that yet about our own time and economy? Some experts say we can, but I keep wanting to insert an "almost" or "maybe, baby," or "I hope, I hope" (except it wrecks the rhythm).

I think it'll be awhile before we know whether we're out of the woods. Spending bazillions of dollars to correct a horrible economic abyss may work -- I certainly hope so.

Today's feature focuses on another way to increase your monthly income if you need long-term care -- not by using your home, but by using a little known pension benefit available to veterans and their spouses. As I come across other options, I'll write about them in future issues.

Til next time.

Liz Taylor

Aging Deliberately

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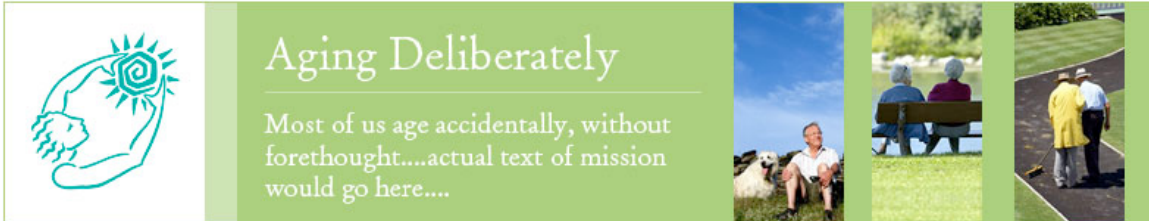
Feature Column: Little known financial help for those who served their country

by Liz Taylor

One of the Catch-22's in the eldercare world is being too poor to be able to afford what you need when you need care - and being too wealthy to qualify for government assistance. There's a little-known financial aid program available only for veterans and their spouses that may offer you or someone you know much needed help.

Aid and Attendance Special Pension program

Passed into law by Congress under the Truman Administration, The Aid and Attendance (A&A) Special Pension provides additional income for veterans and surviving spouses who need assistance (or "attendance") with their daily activities. This income is used to offset the costs of needed care, such as help with eating, bathing, dressing, escorting to the dining room, taking medications, or going to the toilet.



You can use the financial aid to pay for help in an independent retirement community, assisted living, adult family home, nursing home or at home (though home care is more difficult to obtain).

The A&A Pension can provide up to \$1,644 per month to a single veteran, \$1,056 per month to a surviving spouse, \$1,949 per month to a veteran with a spouse, or \$2,540 for two veterans married to each other.

To qualify, a vet must have served at least one day in the military during wartime (though not necessarily in combat), show financial need, and prove he can't live by himself. If the veteran has died, a surviving spouse can apply for the benefit. The disability does not have to be service related.

Three factors make this benefit work better than many other government programs. One, you don't have to exhaust your assets, like you must before applying for Medicaid. A vet may keep a portion of his assets to qualify, plus a home, car and personal possessions.

Second, VA regulations currently allow you to transfer your assets to your children or others to reduce your net worth in order to qualify (Medicaid has strict limits on asset transfers).

Third, financial need is usually fairly easy to show when a person facing tens of thousands of dollars in care each year doesn't have the income to cover it.



The one significant problem with the A&A benefit is the application process - it's demanding, involving many documents, and everything must be submitted to the Veteran Administration exactly right. Approval usually takes six to nine months (although benefits are retroactive to the date of application). You can apply on your own, or work with a professional trained to help you with the process. There is no fee to apply.

A private, nonprofit organization - Veterans Assistance Association -- operates in six states, including Washington, to help veterans apply for the Aid & Attendance benefit. You can find out more at its website by clicking [here](#) or by calling Rick Kamenshine at Senior Assurance Consultants, Inc, its local representative, at 425-275-9555.

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