

# Copayment Exemption for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans

## Six Essential Questions



### 1. What is changing?

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VA published a final rule in the Federal Register on April 4, 2023, that exempts eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from copayments for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022. Veterans seeking copayment exemption should submit copies of VA Form 10-334 and official tribal documentation to receive this new benefit.

The copayment exemption:

- Retroactively reimburses eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans from copayments for health care and all urgent care visits received on or after January 5, 2022.
- Eliminates future copayment collection of copayments for health care and all urgent care visits for eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

### 2. Why is it changing?

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For more than 200 years, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans have played a vital role in defense of the United States as members of our military. VA is committed to delivering them – as well as all Veterans – the benefits and world-class health care they’ve earned and deserve.

The U.S. government has a unique responsibility to maintain trust and provide health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Historically, this important responsibility has been led by the Indian Health Service. Recent legislation extended the responsibility of providing care to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This new policy:

- Connects Veterans to the soonest and best care.
- Removes a cost barrier, making VA health care more accessible.
- Encourages American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans to seek medical care through VA and allows VA to better ensure these Veterans receive the health care and services they have earned through their service to our nation.

### 3. Why is it changing now?

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This policy implements Section 3002 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, which was signed into law on January 5, 2021, and took effect on January 5, 2022.

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### 4. What is not changing?

VA will continue to deliver American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans – as well as all who have served our nation – the benefits and world-class health care and benefits they have earned and deserve.

Copayments for domiciliary care, institutional respite care, institutional geriatric evaluation, and nursing home care are still required.

### 5. What are the individual and organizational risks of not changing?

#### Individual Risk

- If this policy change is not implemented, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans may not seek medical care through VA and would continue to pay copays for hospital care, medical services and urgent care visits.

### 6. What are the individual and organizational benefits of the change?

#### Individual Benefits

- This policy makes health care more accessible and allows VA to better deliver world-class health care to this Veteran population that has earned this benefit through service to our nation.
- Increase utilization of VA health care among our American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

#### Organizational Benefits

- Better continuity of care for this Veteran population.
- Opportunity for VA health care providers to better understand this Veteran population's needs through increased utilization.