



VA Secretary Establishes ALS as a Presumptive Compensable Illness

AUGUST 2017

On September 23, 2008 the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released news regarding Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Veterans may receive badly-needed support for themselves and their families from the VA after announcing that ALS has become a presumptively compensable illness for all veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military.

“Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake said. Secretary Peake based his decision primarily on a November 2006 report by the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine (IOM) on the association between active-duty service and ALS. “ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly, once it is diagnosed,” the Secretary explained. “There simply isn’t time to develop the evidence needed to support compensation claims before many veterans become seriously ill. This decision will make those claims much easier to process, and for them and their families to receive the compensation they have earned through their service to our nation.

ALS, also called Lou Gehrig’s disease, is a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States, is often relentlessly progressive, and is almost always fatal. The VA has been working hard to identify and contact veterans with ALS, including those whose claims for ALS were previously denied, through direct mailings and other outreach programs. If you know a veteran that is dealing with this terrible disease, please ask them or their family to visit our office or go to the VA’s disability compensation program at www.va.gov or contact 1-800-827-1000.

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=1583>

WHERE TO CONNECT WITH US:

Tuesdays, 8:30am to 3pm, VA Menlo Park Building #348

August 3rd, 17th, and 31st - 8:30am-3pm, VA Palo Alto Building #4, Room #B210

August 18th - 8am-4pm, Peninsula Vet Center 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park

If You Served, You Earned!

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



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