

## **VA “Means” Test**

By law VA is required to verify the self-reported gross household income (veteran, spouse and dependents, if any) of certain nonservice-connected veterans to confirm the accuracy of their Eligibility for VA health care, Copay status, and Enrollment Priority Group assignment. This financial information is verified by matching financial records maintained by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). If the result of the income match reveals that the veteran's gross household income is higher than the established VA national means test threshold, the veteran will be contacted via mail to help resolve the income discrepancy. These contacts from VA gives the veteran and spouse the opportunity to dispute income as reported by IRS and SSA and/or reduce the total gross household income by providing proof of allowable deductible expenses.

VA requires most veterans not receiving VA disability compensation or pension payments to provide information on their annual gross household income and net worth to determine whether they are below the annually-adjusted VA national means test threshold (income threshold), in order to qualify for exemption from outpatient, inpatient and medication copays. At the end of the income verification process, if it is determined that the veteran's gross household income is higher than the VA national means test income threshold, the veteran's priority group assignment will be changed, and the veteran may be required to pay health care and medication copayments. VA health care facilities that provided care to the veteran will be notified to bill the veteran for services provided for their nonservice-connected conditions during the period covered by the income assessment. If the veteran is financially unable to pay the assessed copay charges, they can request a Waiver of Debt for the past debts owed. They can also request a Hardship Determination to prevent future billing.

If you need assistance with income verification, stop by our office. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can also get information on the web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office website at [www.countyofkings.com](http://www.countyofkings.com).

- Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 West Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230, the phone number is 582-3211 ex. 2662 or email [joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us).