

THE DAV TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Problem – In the spring of 1987, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) stopped reimbursing veterans for the costs of transportation to and from medical facilities. The move was made necessary by Congressional budget cuts; however, tens of thousands of veterans were left without transportation and were cut off from proper medical care. Most were seeking treatment for service-connected injuries. Nearly all the rest were poor and had no other means or healthcare resources available to them.

The Need – Many veterans live on small fixed incomes, often many miles from the nearest VA hospital. When the benefit cuts occurred, many veterans had to rely on private transportation or paying for their own travel costs, which often times put many veterans through financial hardship. In some instances, veterans gave up trying to seek the medical care they needed and earned, especially when the choice came down to food, shelter or medical care.

The DAV Solution – Immediately upon hearing about the benefit cuts, DAV organized a nationwide Transportation Network. DAV jumped in to provide a total solution. Every year, DAV purchases a large number of vehicles and donates them to VA medical facilities, which are used in the Transportation Network to provide veterans free rides to and from VA facilities. In addition, DAV recruits volunteer drivers and provides the employees needed to coordinate the program.

There are Hospital Service Coordinators (HSCs) covering transportation programs at more than 150 VA medical facilities. These DAV HSCs assemble corps of volunteer drivers and coordinate them with hospital transportation requests, providing more than 782,000 rides to veterans annually.

The Result – Since the inception of the Transportation Network Program in 1987, DAV volunteers have driven 601,000,349 miles, donated 33,663,965 hours of volunteer service and provided 16,185,626 free rides to veterans. DAV is here to ensure that no veteran will ever have to neglect their health because they cannot afford transportation. Our Transportation Network saves thousands of veterans from making sacrifices between food or living expenses, so they can receive the medical care they deserve. This is a great example of how DAV responds – effectively and thoroughly – when veterans need help.

You Too Can Help – Become a volunteer driver in our Transportation Network, or if you need the services of our Transportation Network, please call your nearest VA medical facility and ask for the DAV Hospital Service Coordinator.