Accommodation and Compliance Series: Employees with Multiple Sclerosis

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Funded by a contract with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor
Preface

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JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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Updated 01/24/2019.
JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at https://askjan.org/soar.

Information about Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic autoimmune disease of the central nervous system. It causes destruction of myelin (a protein that forms a protective coating around nerve cells) in the central nervous system. When myelin is destroyed signals traveling through the nerve cells are interrupted or delayed, resulting in various neurologic symptoms occurring at different locations throughout the body. The progress, severity, and specific symptoms of multiple sclerosis in any one person cannot yet be redacted, but advances in research and treatment are giving hope to those affected by the disease.

Multiple sclerosis is often characterized by a pattern of exacerbation and remission. Symptoms may be mild, such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision. Possible symptoms include fatigue, loss of coordination, muscle weakness, spasticity, numbness, slurred speech, visual difficulties, paralysis, muscle cramps, bladder or bowel problems, and sexual dysfunction.

The initial symptoms of MS are most often difficulty walking; abnormal sensations such as numbness or "pins and needles"; and pain and loss of vision due to optic neuritis, an inflammation of the optic nerve. Less common initial symptoms may include tremor; lack of coordination; slurred speech; sudden onset of paralysis, similar to a stroke; and decline in cognitive function.

JAN's Effective Accommodation Practices (EAP) Series: Executive Functioning Deficits is a publication detailing accommodations for individuals with limitations related to executive functioning. These ideas may be helpful in determining accommodations.
Multiple Sclerosis and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA has a general definition of disability that each person must meet. A person has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

Accommodating Employees with Multiple Sclerosis

People with multiple sclerosis may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with multiple sclerosis will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

Questions to Consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee’s job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Attentiveness/Concentration

- Alternative Lighting
• Applications (apps)
• Apps for Memory
• Behavior Modification Techniques
• Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
• Electronic Organizers
• Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
• Flexible Schedule
• Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
• Job Coaches
• Job Restructuring
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• Noise Canceling Headsets
• Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
• Task Separation
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Timers and Watches
• Uninterrupted "Off" Work Time
• Verbal Cues
• Wall Calendars and Planners
• Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
• Written Instructions

Balancing
• Living Independently
  • Bath Chairs
  • Canes
  • Crutches
  • Grab Bars
  • Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
  • Rollators and Rolling Walkers
- Scooters
- Stair Assists
- Stair Lifts
- Swing Away Grab Bars
- Toileting Aids
- Walkers with Seats
- Walkers

- Moving Around
  - All-Terrain Scooters
  - All-Terrain Wheelchairs
  - Canes
  - Crutches
  - Personal Transportation and Mobility Products
  - Rollators and Rolling Walkers
  - Scooters
  - Stair Assists
  - Stair Lifts
  - Walkers with Seats
  - Walkers

- Working at Heights
  - Aerial Lifts
  - Fall Protection
  - Rolling Safety Ladders

- Working Safely
  - Anti-fatigue Matting
  - Evacuation Devices
  - Fall Protection
  - Padded Edging
  - Protective Eyewear

Decreased Stamina/Fatigue
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Anti-fatigue Matting
• Elevating Wheelchairs
• Ergonomic Assessments
• Ergonomic Equipment
• Flexible Schedule
• Job Restructuring
• Periodic Rest Breaks
• Scooters
• Stand-lean Stools
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Walkers
• Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
• Wheelchairs
• Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Executive Functioning Deficits
• Apps for Concentration
• Checklists
• Color Coded System
• Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
• Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
• Form Generating Software
• Job Coaches
• Job Restructuring
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• Noise Canceling Headsets
• Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
• Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
• Speech Recognition Software
• Timers and Watches
• Wall Calendars and Planners
• Written Instructions

Low Vision

• Accessing Computers
  • Enlarged Keyboard Tops and Labels
  • External Computer Screen Magnification
  • Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
  • Screen Magnification Software

• Accessing Telephones
  • Accessible Mobile Phones
  • Accessible Telephones
  • Apps for Individuals with Vision Impairment
  • Large Button Phones
  • Large Visual Display for Telephone

• Magnifying Materials
  • External Computer Screen Magnification
  • Head-mounted Magnifiers
  • Magnification (Hand or Stand)
  • Portable Video/Electronic Magnifiers
  • Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
  • Screen Magnification Software

• Talking Products
  • Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
  • Talking Alarm Clocks
  • Talking Bar Code Scanner/Reader
  • Talking Blood Glucose Monitors
  • Talking Blood Pressure Monitors
  • Talking Cash Register
  • Talking Color Detector
  • Talking Copier
  • Talking Money Identifier
• Talking Scales
• Talking Telephones
• Talking Watches

Memory Loss
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Apps for Memory
• Electronic Organizers
• Memory Software
• Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
• Reminders
• Support Person
• Verbal Cues
• Wall Calendars and Planners
• Written Instructions

Organizing/Planning/Prioritizing
• Applications (apps)
• Apps for Organization/ Time Management
• Color-coded Manuals, Outlines, and Maps
• Electronic Organizers
• Ergonomic Equipment
• Job Coaches
• Job Restructuring
• On-site Mentoring
• Organization Software
• Professional Organizers
• Reminders
• Supervisory Methods
• Task Identification
• Task Separation
• Timers and Watches
• Wall Calendars and Planners
• Written Instructions

Temperature Sensitivity
• Sensitivity to Cold
  • Air Deflectors
  • Cold Resistant Gloves
  • Flexible Schedule
  • Heated Clothing
  • Heated Ergonomic and Computer Products
  • Heated Gloves
  • Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  • Vent Covers
  • Workstation Space Heaters

• Sensitivity to Heat
  • Air Deflectors
  • Cooling Clothing
  • Fans
  • Flexible Schedule
  • Portable Air Conditioners
  • Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  • Vent Covers

Work-Related Functions

Access Information
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Adjustable Desk Top Workstations for Office Settings
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Alternative Input Devices
• Alternative Keyboards
• Alternative Mice - Limiting Tremors
• Alternative Mice
- Amplified Stethoscopes and Related Products
- Assistive Listening Devices (personal)
- Assistive Listening Devices and Sound Field System
- Audio Descriptive Services
- Braille Notetakers and Personal Digital Assistants
- Braille Printers & Embossers
- Breath and Mouth Controlled Alternative Computer Input Devices
- Closed Circuit TV (CCTV)
- Color Contrast Overlays
- Color Identification
- Computer Braille Display
- Enlarged Keyboard Tops and Labels
- External Computer Screen Magnification
- Eye Controlled Alternative Computer Input Devices
- Head Controlled Alternative Computer Input Devices
- Keyguards
- LCD Pen Tablet Displays
- Line Guides
- Locator Dots
- Low Vision Enhancement Products
- Magnification (Hand or Stand)
- On-Screen Keyboards
- One-Handed Keyboards
- Portable or Handheld Readers
- Prism Glasses/Bed Spectacles
- Screen Magnification Software
- Screen Reading Software and Training
- Speech Recognition Software
- Talking Coin Counter/Sorter
- Talking Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Maps
- Talking Money Identifier
• Talking Scales
• Talking Thermometers
• Training Modifications

Communicate
• Accessible Telephones
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Apps for Individuals Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
• Assistive Listening Devices (personal)
• Assistive Listening Devices and Sound Field System
• Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Device
• Behavior Modification Techniques
• Bluetooth Products
• Bone Conduction Technology
• Braille Telephones
• Braille TTY
• Captioned Telephone Calls
• CART Services
• CART Services - Remote
• Cellular Telephone Technology: Deaf & Hard of Hearing
• Communication Access Technologies
• Hands-free Telephones
• Headsets - Computer (USB, VOIP etc.)
• Headsets - Hearing Aid Compatible, Amplification
• Hearing Carry Over (HCO) TTYs
• Interpreters
• Neckloops
• On-site Mentoring
• Outgoing Voice Amplification - Telephone
• Scribe/Notetaker
• Service Animal
- Speech Recognition Software
- Talking Telephones
- Telecoil Compatible Headsets
- Telephone Amplification
- TTYs (Text Telephones)
- Verbal Responses
- Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Video Remote Interpreting Services (VRI)
- Voice Amplification
- Voice-Carry-Over (VCO) Telephones
- Word Prediction/Completion and Macro Software
- Writing/Editing Software

Commute
- Flexible Schedule
- Ridesharing/Carpooling
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Transportation Assistance

Manipulate Items
- Aerial Lifts
- Anti-vibration Gloves
- Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
- Auto-dialers
- Automatic Door Openers
- Compact Mobile Cranes
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Grip Aids
- Tool Balancers
- Vacuum Lifts
- Vacuum Pickup Tools

Off Site Access
• Accessible Vehicles
• All-Terrain Scooters
• All-Terrain Wheelchairs
• Flexible Schedule
• Personal Transportation and Mobility Products
• Scooters
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Transportation Assistance

Operate Equipment/Vehicles
• Anti-vibration Gloves
• Anti-vibration Seats
• Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
• Ergonomic Equipment
• Gear Shift Adapter/Extension
• Hand Controls
• Swivel Seats and Seat Extenders
• Vehicle Rear Vision System
• Wheelchair Lifts

Parking
• Accessible Parking Space
• Flexible Schedule
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Wheelchairs

Policies
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Flexible Schedule
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• Periodic Rest Breaks
• Policy Modification
• Reassignment
• Service Animal
• Supervisory Methods
• Support Animal
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Temperature
• Sensitivity to Cold
  • Air Deflectors
  • Cold Resistant Gloves
  • Flexible Schedule
  • Foot Warmers
  • Heated Clothing
  • Heated Ergonomic and Computer Products
  • Heated Gloves
  • Modified Break Schedule
  • Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  • Vent Covers
  • Workstation Space Heaters

• Sensitivity to Heat
  • Air Deflectors
  • Cooling Clothing
  • Fans
  • Flexible Schedule
  • Modified Break Schedule
  • Personal Visors
  • Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
  • Vent Covers
  • Workstation Space Heaters

Use Cognitive Function
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Color Coded System
• Counting/Measuring Aids
• Electronic Dictionaries
• Electronic Organizers
• Extra Time
• Job Coaches
• Line Guides
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• On-site Mentoring
• Reassignment
• Reminders
• Service Animal
• Support Person
• Training Modifications
• Uninterrupted Work Time

Work Site Access
• Accessible Toilets and Toilet Seats
• Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
• Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
• Alternative Locks
• Anti-fatigue Matting
• Braille and/or ADA Signage
• Building Accessibility Products
• Door Knob Grips and Handles
• Flexible Schedule
• Portable Ramps
• Ramps
• Scooters
- Service Animal
- Support Animal
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Lifts
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

**Work Station Access**
- Adjustable and Ergonomic School Desks and Equipment
- Adjustable Desk Top Workstations for Office Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Articulating Keyboard Trays
- Assist Lift Cushions
- Chair Mats
- Chairs for Little People
- Chairs for People who are Tall
- Dual Monitors
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Expanded Keyboards
- Forearm Supports
- Forward Leaning Chairs
- Large-Rated Chairs
- Monitor Mirrors
- Monitor Risers
- Mousing Surfaces
- Stand-lean Stools
- Supine Workstations
- Work Platforms
- Zero Gravity (reclining) Chairs
Situations and Solutions:

A teacher with multiple sclerosis was having difficulty communicating with students because his speech became soft and slurred when he was fatigued. He was given a personal speech amplifier so he would not have to strain to project his voice, and he was allowed to schedule his classes so he could take periodic breaks.

An engineer with multiple sclerosis was experiencing heat sensitivity. She was provided a private office where the temperature could be lower than in the rest of the facility. She was also encouraged to communicate with coworkers by telephone or e-mail when possible to reduce the amount of walking she had to do.

A claims representative for an insurance agency was having difficulty reading files due to a vision impairment caused by multiple sclerosis. His employer purchased a stand magnifier and added task lighting to his workstation.

An employee with multiple sclerosis had fallen multiple times at work, resulting in disruption to the workplace. After the employer told the employee that the issue needed to be addressed, the employee asked the employer to add a railing along the wall from her desk to the restroom, breakroom, and copy machine room. The employer installed the railing as requested and that addressed the issue.

A retail store manager with multiple sclerosis uses a scooter to move distances throughout the store. She also has an accessible parking space near the rear entrance of the store.

An insurance agency employee with multiple sclerosis and anxiety requested that the employer permit her to use a service dog on the job for mobility and stress reduction. The employer agreed to allow the employee to bring her service animal to work, provided training to staff on service animals as workplace accommodations, and installed new doors that were easier for the individual to open.

An operations clerk for a large distribution center was having difficulty working at full production due to fatigue caused by multiple sclerosis. Her employer moved her to a shift that was not as busy so caused less stress and made less physical demands of the clerk. The clerk was also able to take more frequent breaks on the new shift.

A clerical worker was having difficulty concentrating and remembering job tasks due to cognitive impairment caused by multiple sclerosis. Her employer added sound-baffle panels to reduce distractions in her work area. In addition, her employer gave her written job duties at the beginning of each day and provided a notebook that contained outlines of what each job duty entailed.
A manager with multiple sclerosis working for a publishing company was having difficulty transferring from her wheelchair to the toilet in the employee restroom. Her employer installed additional grab bars.

An attorney with multiple sclerosis was having difficulty carrying documents to meetings at various locations due to upper extremity weakness. His employer purchased a portable cart that was easy to get in and out of his car.

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at https://askjan.org/soar is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.
Resources

Job Accommodation Network
West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234
TTY: (304) 293-7186
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
http://AskJAN.org

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

Office of Disability Employment Policy
200 Constitution Avenue,
NW, Room S-1303
Washington, DC 20210
Toll Free: (866) 633-7365
odep@dol.gov
http://dol.gov/odep

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor. ODEP provides national leadership to increase employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities while striving to eliminate barriers to employment.

ActiveMSers
706 Los Prados de Guadalupe Dr NW
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM 87107-6619
Direct: (505) 890-1764
dave@ActiveMSers.org
http://activemsers.org/
Information:
Present unbiased, practical info for those with multiple sclerosis, regardless of physical disability.

Inspiration:
Showcase stories of active MSers doing extraordinary things, inspiring all of us.

Connection:
Bring together MSers online to share their active passions and discover new ones.

Attention:
Highlight the active MSer through a continual, targeted public relations campaign in a range of media.

Participation:
Encourage MSers to share successes online, healthcare providers to promote ActiveMSers, and relevant businesses (cooling vest companies, internet brain game sites, etc.) to provide discounts for MSers.

American Chronic Pain Association
P.O. Box 850
Rocklin, CA 95677-0850
Toll Free: (800) 533-3231
Fax: (916) 632-3208
ACPA@theacpa.org
http://www.theacpa.org

The purpose of the American Chronic Pain Association is to facilitate peer support and education for individuals with chronic pain and their families so that these individuals may live more fully in spite of their pain.

American Physical Therapy Association

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
636 Morris Turnpike
Suite 3A
Short Hills, NJ 07078
Toll Free: (800) 225-0292
Direct: (973) 379-2690
TeamReeve@ChristopherReeve.org
http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.ddJFKRNoFiG/b.4048063/k.67BA/The_Christopher_amp_Dana_Reeve_Foundation__Paralysis_amp_Spinal_Cord_Injury.htm

The Reeve Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy.

Independent Living Research Utilization Program
TIRR Research Center
1333 Moursund Street
Houston, TX 77030
Direct: (713) 520-0232
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ilru@ilru.org
http://www.ilru.org/

A national center for information, training, research, and technical assistance in independent living. They operate the IL NETWORK with the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), organizations, and individuals involved in independent living nationwide.

Mayo Clinic
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http://www.mayoclinic.org/

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.
MedlinePlus
8600 Rockville Pike
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custserv@nlm.nih.gov
https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health's Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world’s largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

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Direct: (954) 776-6805
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support@msfocus.org
http://msfocus.org/

The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation provides a comprehensive approach to helping people with MS maintain their health and well-being. We offer programming and support to keep them self-sufficient and their homes safe, while our educational programs heighten public awareness and promote understanding about the disease.
**Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada**  
250 Dundas Street West,  
Suite 500  
Toronto M5T 2-2Z5  
Toll Free: (800) 268-7582  
Direct: (416) 922-6065  
Fax: (416) 922-7538  
info@mssociety.ca  
https://beta.mssociety.ca/

The MS Society provides services to people with multiple sclerosis and their families and funds research to find the cause and cure for this disease.

**National Association for Continence**  
PO Box 1019  
Charleston, SC 29402  
Toll Free: (800) 252-3337  
http://www.nafc.org/

The focus of the National Association for Continence is to provide quality continence care through education, collaboration, and advocacy. We offer up many different avenues so you can start to have important and meaningful conversation about your experience with incontinence. Here you can read in-depth explanations and get straight talk about every type of continence from medical experts. We can even help you connect with physicians local to you who specialize in dealing with this life-altering condition.

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**  
8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20894  
pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov  

MISSION: IMS brings together an international community of health care professionals, researchers, educators, and others to improve care and transform delivery of treatment to those suffering from soft tissue pain through the promotion and exchange of globally recognized research, education, and innovation in patient care.
The NINDS, an agency of the U.S. Federal Government and a component of the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, is a lead agency for the congressionally designated Decade of the Brain, and the leading supporter of biomedical research on disorders of the brain and nervous system.

The National MS Society is a collective of passionate individuals who want to do something about MS now—to move together toward a world free of multiple sclerosis. MS stops people from moving. We exist to make sure it doesn't.

NORD is a unique federation of voluntary health organizations dedicated to helping people with rare "orphan" diseases and assisting the organizations that serve them. NORD is committed to the identification, treatment, and cure of rare disorders through programs of education, advocacy, research, and service.
Remedy's Health Communities  
http://www.healthcommunities.com

Remedy Health Media is America’s fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Toll Free: (844) 698-2311  
http://www.va.gov/

The Agency is responsible for providing employment, training, educational and reemployment rights information and assistance to veterans, and other military personnel who are preparing to transition from the military. Also provide hearing aids. All World War I veterans are eligible to receive free hearing aids. Other veterans can receive free hearing aids if their hearing loss is at least 50% service-related.
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