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Veterans' Benefits: Pension Benefit Programs

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Summary

This report discusses selected veteran pension programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):

- The **Improved Disability Pension** makes payments to certain low-income veterans. In FY2013, the program paid an average benefit of about \$11,300 to about 310,000 beneficiaries.
- The **Improved Death Pension** makes payments to certain low-income spouses or children of deceased veterans. In FY2013, the program paid an average benefit of about \$7,000 to about 210,000 beneficiaries.
- The **Medal of Honor Pension** makes payments to veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor. Fewer than 100 veterans qualify for that pension.

This report also discusses the eligibility criteria and current benefit levels of these programs and provides data on the number of pension beneficiaries and average annual benefit amounts for FY1999 through FY2013.

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Fiscal Year	Number of Improved Disability Pension Beneficiaries (Veterans)	Average Annual Benefit Amount	Number of Improved Death Pension Beneficiaries (Survivors)	Average Annual Benefit Amount
2008	315,763	\$9,006	195,612	\$4,341
2009	314,245	\$9,754	194,103	\$4,999
2010	313,563	\$10,080	198,832	\$5,478
2011	313,665	\$10,401	201,955	\$5,905
2012	314,790	\$11,038	207,453	\$6,521
2013	308,116	\$11,315	210,450	\$6,988

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on data from Department of Veterans Affairs, *Annual Benefits Report*, various years, at http://www.benefits.va.gov/reports/annual_performance_reports.asp.

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