

VETERAN IDENTIFICATION CARD

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive outlines department-wide policy and procedures for creation, distribution and purpose of the Veteran Identification Card (VIC).
- 2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES:** This VHA Directive updates current procedures.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** None.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Chief Business Office (16) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Directive. Questions may be addressed to (202) 461-1586.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 1610.1, Veteran Identification Card, dated August 20, 2004 and VHA Directive 2006-052, Mandatory Replacement of Veteran Identification Card (VIC), dated September 29, 2006, are rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of October 2014.

Gerald M. Cross, MD, FAAFP
Acting Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: E-mailed to the VHA Publication Distribution List 10/22/09

VETERAN IDENTIFICATION CARD

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive outlines policy and procedures for the creation and distribution of the new Veteran Identification Card (VIC).

2. BACKGROUND: VHA is currently using a VIC card production system in which medical centers capture the Veteran's identifying information through Veterans Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA). The Veteran's image is obtained for identification purposes using patient image capture software (PICS) on workstations at the local facility. The information and images are then electronically transmitted to a contract vendor who produces and mails the VIC card to the Veteran's designated home address, or to the facility requesting the card if the Veteran is homeless or does not have a valid mailing address. The VIC system and cards have the ability to support current and future needs, and ensure that cards are only issued to eligible Veterans. These cards have a color photograph of the Veteran, and do not contain any visible personally identifiable information (PII) or sensitive personal information (SPI), with the exception of the Veteran's name, on the face of the card.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that all Veterans applying for enrollment are processed for a VIC card, which is issued to eligible Veterans whose eligibility, and enrollment status has been verified, and whose identity has been uniquely verified through the Master Patient Index (MPI) system.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Facility Directors.** Facility Directors are responsible for ensuring that:

(1) All eligible Veterans enrolled at their facility receive a VIC card.

(2) Eligibility verification processes are in accordance with department-wide policy.

(3) Veterans' demographic data entered into VistA is valid and contains all required elements and in proper format, i.e., name and date of birth, in accordance with department-wide policy.

(4) Appropriate staff is trained on the use of the VIC system and are designated to resolve all local Integration Control Number (ICN) issues on a daily basis in accordance with department-wide policy.

(5) An appropriate Point of Contact (POC) is assigned to promptly resolve any Health Level Seven issues related to patient data communications.

(6) All facilities, as a minimum, including Community-based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), are required to have the capability to take pictures for VIC cards. Local VistA, PICS, workstation and cameras required to capture the Veteran's picture will be used solely for the production of VIC cards and all images are transmitted to the National Card Management Directory (NCMD).

(7) Operational guides and instructions, as provided with the VistA Informational Patch DG*5.3*794 (VIC 3.0), VistA Domain Name Server (DNS) patch DG*5.3*791 (DNS Patch for VIC 3.0), and the workstation software are followed.

(8) Local policy and procedures are established to ensure VIC cards are properly requested and issued to homeless Veterans.

(9) Local policy and procedures are established to process VIC cards that have been returned to the requesting facility as 'undeliverable' by the U. S. Postal Service. There must be a mechanism in place to obtain the Veteran's current address, update the address in VistA, and issue the card to the Veteran. In addition, returned cards must be held in a secure location for 90 days after receipt. If the Veteran has not returned to the facility during that period, the card must be destroyed in compliance with procedures in accordance with the Privacy Act (www.va.gov/privacy) and accurately accounted for and recorded.

(10) Veterans are not required to possess a VIC card in order to maintain eligibility or check-in for health care services. Any legal form of picture identification can be accepted for check-in and identification purposes (such as a state-issued driver's license) in accordance with department-wide policy.

(11) All VIC equipment is purged of patient data before it is removed from the facility, in accordance with VA's electronic media sanitization and disposal policy and procedure.

(12) Local policy and procedures are established to ensure VIC cards on hold are processed within 10 days. The National Card Management Directory (NCMD) "Card Request on Hold Report" is to be run daily. Unresolved issues will be sent to the VHA Health Eligibility Center ALERT distribution list in Microsoft Outlook.

(13) Local policy and procedures are established to ensure all card requests are monitored via the NCMD and all discrepancies resolved within 10 business days.

(14) The VIC card's photo background color will be light blue.

b. **Health Eligibility Center (HEC)**. The Health Eligibility Center (HEC) supports VA's health care delivery system by providing centralized eligibility verification and enrollment processing services. HEC is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) Images received at NCMD are processed timely and VIC cards are mailed to Veterans in accordance with contractual requirements.

(2) Lost cards returned to HEC are destroyed in compliance with department-wide procedures, and in accordance with the Privacy Act.

5. DEFINITIONS

a. **HEC.** HEC is the VHA Office that collects and verifies Veterans' income and eligibility information in support of health care enrollment and medical benefit determinations.

b. **National Card Management Directory (NCMD).** VA NCMD is the directory that stores information about VIC requests made by VHA medical facilities.

c. **Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Sensitive Personal Information (SPI).** These terms, with respect to an individual, means any information about the individual maintained by an agency, including the following:

(1) Education, financial transactions, medical history, criminal or employment history; and

(2) Information that can be used to distinguish or trace the individual's identity, including name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records.

d. **Master Patient Index (MPI).** MPI, located at the Austin Information Technology Center (AITC), Corporate Data Center Operations (CDCO) Business Service, is the actual patient index. The objective of MPI is to create an index that uniquely identifies each active patient treated by VHA and to identify the sites where a patient is receiving care. This is crucial to the sharing of patient information across sites.