



CARES Monthly VISN Communication Report JUNE 2003

The VISN-level CARES Communication Report for June 2003 is summarized on the attached spreadsheets. The first spreadsheet contains the “Stakeholder Outreach” summary; the second spreadsheet includes the unsolicited input or inquiries received from the stakeholders and others, and the third contains the substantive comments by VISNs.

In summary, there were 554,129 stakeholders, veterans, and members of the public briefed on the CARES process. This represents an increase of 457,174 stakeholders and veterans briefed from the total briefed in May 2003. The increase may be a result of the fact that the CARES Commission has begun to hold public hearings on the proposed Care Draft National Plans. For June, all VISNs submitted CARES Stakeholder Outreach information. Most of the VISNs used communication modes consisting of briefings, websites, e-mails and mailings (e.g., brochures, newsletters). Of the 3,860 Veterans & Relatives contacts, 1,175 or nearly 30.4% were from VISN 19 mainly in the form of newsletters, briefings and publications. Of the 96,046 Employee contacts, 19,043 or nearly 19.8 % were from VISN1. Of the 1,839 volunteer contacts, 400 or 21.8 % from VISN 21. Finally, of the 6,158 VSO contacts, 1,193 or 19.4% were from VISN 6– mostly in the form of briefings.

Overall, of the 554,219 total stakeholders and veteran’s contacts 444,749 (other) or nearly 80.2. % includes all outreach in the form of mail outs (e.g., e-mails, brochures, mass mailings and newsletters) and 99% of these were in VISN 8.

The June analysis showed that the outreach activities reported with the Affiliates, Unions, increased from May, however Local Organizations, and DoD showed a slight decrease from the previous month.

According to the Substantive comments concerns continue to be voiced in the majority of the VISNs focused on the overall CARES process (i.e., Congressional involvement, funding, accuracy of CARES data and impact), employee anxiety, potential closures, and special populations. Most of the substantive comments are coming from coastal areas (especially VISNs 20-22 – 23 and VISN 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9,10,18,19, 20). Many of the comments related to the status of the CARES hearings, mental health issues and transportation and access for the aging veteran population.



Additionally, of the 554,129 total stakeholders contacts, 43 or 0.08% were face-to-face outreach contacts, and the contacts decreased from 59 in May to 43 in June

Now that the CARES Commission public hearings have been scheduled the Networks and VISN level staff are reminded **to report any questions dealing with the Commission in the substantive comment section.**

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July 18,2003

Distribution: 00, 00A, 10, 10A, 10B, 10N
VHA/VACO Program Offices
VISN Directors, Communications Coordinators
VSO Representatives

ALL VISNs

June

2003

Outreach Audience

VISN	Employee	Veteran/Rel	Congressional	VSO	Affiliate	Volunteer	Union	Local Org	DoD	Other	Total
0											0
1	19043	0	188	391	39	105	48	22	4	27	19867
2	1152	21	1	54	0	80	0	50	0	0	1358
3	8508	175	1	157	0	0	11	0	2	1	8855
4	11825	0	173	705	14	0	2	0	0	205	12924
5	3000	0	51	83	4	10	7	0	0	95	3250
6	5885	200	154	1193	20	77	16	90	7	28	7670
7	5043	558	15	726	7	58	13	20	19	6	6465
8	3589	0	0	2	0	0	0	220	0	444300	448111
9	5477	460	14	46	2	0	2	0	0	12	6013
10	3062	354	6	20	1	0	0	22	5	10	3480
11	626	213	0	450	0	0	1	0	0	0	1290
12											0
15	5855	275	31	331	7	73	12	0	2	13	6599
16	7442	9	2	432	1	478	0	0	0	0	8364
17	3100	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3150
18	1402	0	2	14	0	0	12	0	0	0	1430
19	472	1175	11	1044	15	230	6	0	0	0	2953
20	4600	80	0	154	5	0	3	0	1	26	4869
21	4239	40	3	63	42	400	13	16	0	6	4822
22	1950	0	0	24	0	328	8	17	0	0	2327

23	81	250	5	269	0	0	3	0	9	20	637
	96351	3860	657	6158	157	1839	157	457	49	444749	554434

CARES Stakeholder Outreach

ALL VISNs

June/2003

Contacts															
VISN	Employee	Veteran/Rel	Senator	Representative	VSO	Affiliate	Volunteer	Union	Local Org	DoD	State Gov	Local Gov	Media	Other	Total
0															0
1	1							1							2
2															0
3					2				1			1			4
4			2		1										3
5					1										1
6			1	1	1								1	1	5
7	1												2		3
8	1		2									1	1	4	9
9					1										1
10													1		1
11															0
12															0
15															0
16		2													2
17															0
18														6	6
19	2														2
20													1		1
21				1								1			2
22															0
23		1													1
	5	3	5	2	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	6	11	43

Summary of Substantive Comments

For: June/2003

Facility	Who	What they said	Action taken / Impact on plan
Asheville, NC	JEWEL WILSON FROM ASHEVILLE OFFICE CALLED TO REQUEST INFO ON WNC CBOC.	MS. WILSON REQUESTED COPY OF LATEST INFO ON CARES. INFORMATION WAS SENT TO MS. WILSON AS REQUESTED.	CONTINUED COMMUNICATION
Augusta, GA	Tom Corwin, Medical Reporter	The reporter contacted the medical center because he was in possession of an internal document titled, "Suggested Strategies to Eliminate 24-hour operations at the Augusta VA Medical Center's Uptown Division." We discussed the CARES process and the fact that it was ongoing. He asked when the CARES process would be completed and I explained that the Under Secretary was asking for additional information. He asked about the upcoming visit by the CARES Commissioners and I confirmed they would be at the medical center to tour both divisions and meet with top management. He asked if he could talk with the Commissioners and the Director after the meeting and we set up a time; but the reporter called back later to cancel because of another breaking story.	The story appeared in the June 29, 2003 issue of the Augusta Chronicle.
Augusta, GA	Intern reporter	They had read the story in the newspaper and wanted to know if VA was closing the Uptown Division. I explained to the reporter that CARES is an ongoing process and that we did not anticipate a decision by the Secretary until December.	The story did not run.
Bay Pines, FL	Mayor Humphrey	Conversation with Sue Young which covered CARES, facility outreach, patients who will be taken care of and the commission.	Impact on CARES Commission.
Bay Pines, FL	Mr. Simpson	Mr. Simpson had multiple questions about CARES, hospitalizations, county population.	Bay Pines followed up with Mr. Simpson and provided the requested information.
Denver, CO	ECHCS employees	Questions regarding process	Explanations provided
Denver, CO	Discussions of upcoming CARES Commission hearings		Plans underway for hearings
Dublin, GA	Employee	Requesting Updated Info on CARES	Info available provided
East Orange, NJ	William Dozier, Field Representative, VFW Washington, DC	Mr. Dozier called VANJHCS Director asking about the "Lyons mission change." The Director explained that several VISNs, including VISN 3, were asked to reevaluate their proposed CARES plans, and the Lyons Campus was one of the sites recommended for review. The Director advised that the proposed plan originally submitted was again forwarded to VA Central Office, recommended that the Lyons Campus remain the same.	None
Erie, PA	Andy Kistler, Past National Commander of the DAV	He expressed concerns about the delay in the CARES process and the feel that the process is becoming 'closed', meaning that there does not appear to be as much free flowing information as we had in the beginning of the CARES process. He expressed his worry that the process was taking a 'bad' turn. He appeared satisfied with the VISN's and Erie's communication methods and process.	I reaffirmed Erie's commitment to keep all our stakeholders informed on a routine basis. I reviewed all we know about the delay in the process and what was taking place at the national level at this time.
Fargo, ND	Veterans and relatives from the Bemidji, MN area sent multiple petitions requesting to have a CBOC in Bemidji.		

Gainesville, FL	Mary Kay Hollingsworth	Write-Up regarding Lake City Facility possible closure of inpatient and nursing home beds.	Negative image for VA.
Northport, NY	Edward Aulman, Director of the Nassau Veterans Service Agency	Called to say he received a letter from Senator Clinton advising that all the draft CARES plans were returned to the VISNs for revision. He wanted to know if the Long Island Market Plan was returned.	PAO told Mr. Aulman that the LI plan had not been sent back for revision.
Palo Alto HCS	Congressman Cardoza	Concerned for the future of the Stockton Clinic	Explained our planning initiatives for the Stockton Clinic and the delivery of health care for veterans in the San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties. Explained the CARES process
Palo Alto HCS	Jack Sieglock Chairman, Board of Supervisors Stockton,CA	Oppose the closure of the Stockton Clinic	Explained the current initiatives for the VA Stockton Clinic. Explained the CARES process and how it will enhance health care services for veterans in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.
Portland, OR	Gretchen Fehrenbacher, the Columbian (Clark Co., WA daily)	She heard a rumor that the PVAMC Vancouver Division would closed under CARES, wanted to know if true and impact on the Clark Co./VA building collaboration.	Gretchen initially called Bernie Deazley, who had worked with her on the Clark Co. collaboration story. He said there were no plans to close Vancouver and collab. building plan was on schedule. Reporter lost interest.
Southern Arizona HCS	City of Tucson - Veterans Committee Meeting - 22 individuals present at meeting.	Informational purposes only. Neutral	None - INFO ONLY
Southern Arizona HCS	VSO Representatives, Commanders, Congressional Liaison Offices, 330 newsletters mailed out reflected CARES website for informational purposes only. Title of newsletter Veterans Update Newsletter.	Informational purposes only. Neutral	None INFO ONLY
Southern Arizona HCS	SAVAHCS VSO Officers, Representatives 12 total in attendance.	Informational purposes only.	None - Neutral INFO Only
Southern Arizona HCS	City of Tucson - Veterans Committee 22 in attendance.	Informational purposes only.	None Neutral - INFO ONLY
Southern Arizona HCS	SAVAHCS Veteran Services Officers, 12 total in attendance.	Informational purposes only.	None Neutral - INFO ONLY
Tampa, FL	Congressman Dave Weldon	Visit to the Viera Clinic in VISN 8. 13 Attendees.	Information provided regarding CARES to Congressman Dave Weldon.
VISN 3 Office	Kathy Hrvatin and Jeremy Chwat	Asking about the return of the CARES plan for consideration.	Will keep stakeholders posted as the process develops.
VISN 3 Office	Mike Suter	Asking if we would be having any VISN level meetings at the request of Dr. Roswell.	Shared that we are working on site visits which may include MAC discussions with the Commission but nothing was finalized.
VISN 4 Office	Ann Blocksidge of Sen. Santorum's office contacted network office.	An Attorney in Butler had contacted Sen. Santorum's office to inquire about a rumor that VAMC Butler was closing.	Network requested director at Butler VAMC contact attorney. Attorney was contacted and concerns were addressed.
VISN 4 Office	Letter from Sen. Biden, Sen. Carper, Congressman Castle all of DE.	Letter to Secretary expressing support for VISN 4 CARES plan submitted in April.	VISN 4 assisted in providing information for Secretary's response.
VISN 5 Office	Mr. Nolan, National Service Officer for AMVETS	Called to complain that he showed up to the CARES Hearing on June 12th, only to find that it had been cancelled.	Mr. Nolan was contacted and apology was made that he did not receive the cancellation notice about the hearing. For future reference, we recommend that an RSVP be placed on all announcement regarding CARES Hearings.
VISN 6 Office	North Carolina state adjutant	Wanted to know format for CARES hearing testimony	Sent samples of recent testimony delivered by Dr. Roswell and Secretary Principi to address format question. Offered assistance when more information about the hearing is available.

VISN 6 Office	Staffer from the office of Rep. Virgil Goode	Called for a constituent who wanted to make Boydton (Virginia) Medical Center into a CBOC.	Explained current moratorium on new CBOCs, and how CARES will impact placement of future CBOCs
VISN 6 Office	Member of the Board of Directors, Boydton (Virginia) Medical Center	Followed up on call from Rep. Virgil Goode's office, expressing interest in Boydton Medical Center as a future CBOC	Explained CARES process as it relates to CBOC development. Mailed him the draft CARES market plan for VISN 6.
VISN 6 Office	Cory Reiss, reporter with the NY Times	Wanted to know about CARES market plan for North Carolina; asked about any delays in the process.	Shared information from draft market plan for VISN 6; article not published yet.
VISN 8 Office	Secretary Principi	CARES timeline has been extended because of incomplete data.	Timeline extension for the CARES steps and review process.
VISN 8 Office	Senator Bill Graham	Senator Graham is requesting " advanced notification of congress regarding any action proposed to be taken by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs" during the CARES process.	The creation of a Bill can create additional sessions in congress covering CARES.
VISN 8 Office	Genie Norman	Mrs. Norman asked Charlene Koonce about the potential discontinuation of services at Lake City.	Charlene Koonce responded with a careful, thorough response, which answered her questions.
VISN 8 Office	Tammy Lytle	The topic of the article was regarding the Orlando facility that has been proposed during the CARES process.	Additional facility added to the VISN 8 network.
VISN 8 Office	Senator Bill Nelson.		VISN 8 has provided documentation for McCarthy, Thomas, and Senator Bill Nelson if requested. VISN 8 will be prepared for any future questions or concerns.