

January 22, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-04

CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) is about providing veterans the right care, at the right time, at the right place. It is about providing appropriate access and service for those who currently use VA's health care system, and for those who will use it in the future. The program will assess veterans' health care needs across the country, identify delivery options to meet those needs in the future, and guide the realignment and allocation of capital assets to support the delivery of health care services. Through CARES, VA will optimize care delivery in terms of both quality and access.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SCHEDULE FOR CARES IN VISN 12?

Facility visits have been completed for Hines, VA Chicago, North Chicago, Tomah, Madison, and Milwaukee. Iron Mountain will be visited on January 23. Network meeting - January 25 (with VISN staff, the CARES Support and Clinical Task Forces).

We were advised Friday, January 19, 2001, that the Facility Condition/Space Assessment Site visits have been scheduled as follows:

Hines VA Hospital-January 22-23, 2001

VA Chicago Health Care System/West Side Division-January 24, 2001

VA Chicago Health Care System/Lakeside Division-January 25, 2001

North Chicago VA Medical Center-January 26, 2001

Iron Mountain VA Medical Center-January 30, 2001

Tomah VA Medical Center-January 31, 2001

Madison VA Hospital/Appleton Clinic-February 1, 2001

Milwaukee VA Medical Center-February 2, 2001

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE FACILITY MEETINGS?

The site team will primarily be meeting with Engineering staff at the facilities to verify and answer any questions that have arisen regarding the previously submitted facilities assessment data which dealt with the physical plants and the inventory of functional space use.

This process will be applied to health care delivery in every VA health care network in the country. In 2001, VA expects to begin CARES initiatives in Networks 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 21, and 22.

WHO IS CONDUCTING CARES?

To ensure objectivity in this analysis, VA has hired outside health care consultants. Two companies are involved in the study. Actuarial Consultants are conducting a study of factors such as demand for VA health care services, demographics, and other data to project what services will be needed and where. Booz-Allen Hamilton will be using this data, incorporating information from stakeholders, analyzing current operations during their visits to the facilities and develop options to meet the future needs of veterans. The consultant will be applying a standard set of preapproved criteria to various options.

WHAT OPPORTUNITY IS THERE FOR PEOPLE AND GROUPS TO HAVE A SAY IN CARES?

During the study, input will be gathered in many different ways. During the facility visits, the input sought from the many internal and external stakeholders will focus on what is important about VA health care to the individuals in the meetings. This input will help to frame the subsequent development of options. People wishing to give input at this stage should attempt to focus their comments and ideas on what is beneficial and desirable about VA health care and what is particularly important to them about that care. In addition to the meetings, input can be sent via mail, e-mail or through the use of the new CARES web site. All of the comments will be forwarded to the contractors for their use during the development of the options. Below is a suggested format with all the address information listed.

Comments have started to come in both through the mail and through the special CARES Mailbox. While individual comments cannot be acknowledged and answered individually, every comment will be forwarded to the contractor for use in the development of the options and later to the National CARES Project Team (NCPT) for their use in the evaluation of the options.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON CARES?

There will continue to be regular bulletins about CARES with updated information. It is expected that these bulletins will be sent out at least monthly and more often if needed. The CARES web site will also be updated as frequently as needed. There are now two websites that individuals may use. For VA employees and any others who have access to the VA Intranet, there is a link on the VISN 12 Home Page for CARES. In addition, VA's Internet website has been established at the following address: <http://www.va.gov/cno>. The form below has been updated to include the new internet site address.