



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

March 16, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-12

CARES: The right care, at the right place, at the right time

CURRENT NEWS

* VA has a new CARES web site, located at www.va.gov/CARES for Internet and vawww.va.gov/CARES for the Intranet. The existing Internet site (www.va.gov/CNO) will link to these sites in the future. The VISN 12 Intranet site, which also provides information on CARES, will continue.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

* VA will soon be releasing summary information on the data that the CARES Contractor, Booz-Allen & Hamilton, is using to develop service delivery options. This information includes:

* Actuarial projections developed by VA's actuarial consultant which include data projections for veteran enrollees and health care needs for 2010.

* Facility condition and utilization summary data compiled from: (1) the VA Facility Condition Assessment Survey and; (2) the VA Space and Functional Survey, as verified in the field by the Booz-Allen Team.

Booz-Allen has reviewed this data and is currently supplementing it with information from other sources to develop the broad spectrum of information needed to develop service delivery options.

VA will make the data summary report available as soon as possible.

* Last week's item concerning the veterans preference survey elicited a few questions. Booz-Allen & Hamilton has provided additional information on the survey to respond to these queries.

An important element of the CARES study is determining veteran preferences for care. Booz-Allen will be surveying veterans in VISN 12 to gather data on their

preferences. All survey questions and the sampling methodology must adhere to federal standards as required by federal law and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations. Federal approval is required before any veterans are contacted.

The proposed survey is based primarily on a random sample of veterans from the total population of all veterans who received treatment at a VISN 12 VA facility in the year 2000. The survey design has a stratified sample based on the type of treatment received. The sample will cover veterans who received care in the following areas: ambulatory care, acute inpatient, extended care, mental health, severe mental illness, post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, spinal cord injury and disease, blind rehabilitation, amputees, homeless, and traumatic brain injury.

The survey represents a systematic approach to gathering and analyzing information on veterans' preferences from a sample of individuals. However, Booz-Allen and the VA remain very interested in input from all veterans. In addition to looking at information collected through surveys, Booz-Allen will continue to consider all comments received from interested persons who write the VA about the CARES project. The comment form is attached to every weekly bulletin.

WHAT IS CARES?

CARES (Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services) is about providing veterans the right care, at the right place, at the right time. 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.

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 pre-approved criteria to various options.

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

Input into the CARES process will continue to be collected from both internal and external stakeholders. To date, we have received valuable information from our stakeholders during the facility visits that occurred during January. Additionally, we have received e-mails and letters from interested persons and groups about the CARES study. This input will be very valuable in developing the health care service delivery options.

Input into the CARES process will be considered throughout the process. Send comments or questions via mail, or e-mail.

Mail: CARES Comments
VISN 12 Office (10N12)
P.O. Box 5000, Building 18
Hines, IL 60141-5000

E-mail: CARES.mailbox@med.va.gov

All of the comments will be forwarded to the contractors for their use during the development of the options.

Comments have been coming in. While individual comments cannot be acknowledged and answered individually, comments 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 weekly. The CARES web site will also be updated periodically. There are now two web sites 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 web site has been established at the following address-
www.va.gov/CARES

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Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Comment Form
VISN 12 CARES STUDY

Areas of Interest: _____

Comments (Please add additional pages if needed):

*While all comments are taken into consideration, comments cannot be
acknowledged and answered individually.*

Name (please print): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: _____ Date: _____

Mail comments to: CARES Comments
VISN 12 Office (10N12)
P.O. Box 5000, Building 18
Hines, IL 60141-5000

E-mail comments to: CARES.Mailbox@med.va.gov

Washington Website: <http://www.va.gov/cno>