



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

March 30, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-14

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

CURRENT NEWS

VA has posted a summary of the data that the CARES Contractor, Booz·Allen & Hamilton, is using to draft options for future veterans health care service delivery in VISN 12 on the web site at: www.va.gov/CARES/VISN12htm. Additional data will be posted as it is available.

Booz·Allen and Hamilton is expecting to begin shortly a telephone survey on veteran preferences for health care delivery. Veterans to be contacted were randomly selected according to protocols set by the contractor, shared with VA and endorsed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). To ensure representation of those who may not be reachable by telephone, Booz·Allen will also conduct some personal interviews during the month of April throughout VISN 12.

The information obtained from the telephone surveys and personal interviews will be included as part of the Discriminating Criteria. The Discriminating Criteria represent the second level of analysis that will be conducted on all options that pass the Absolute Criteria.

Recent comments VA has received on the VISN 12 study include questions about the Absolute Criteria. The Absolute Criteria represent the first evaluation of each option developed by the contractor. They are applied as a pass/fail standard. The Absolute Criteria include the elements that VA deems to be vital to the delivery of health care in the VISN. Should an option fail one of these criteria, it will no longer be considered as a service delivery option. The Absolute Criteria include analyses of health care needs and clinical, safety and environmental requirements.

The first application of the Absolute Criteria will be conducted by a VISN Clinical Work Group. They apply the criteria and make a recommendation to the Headquarters Clinical Work Group. The Headquarters Clinical Work Group will make the final determination as to whether an option passes the Absolute Criteria.

Detailed information on the criteria is available in the CARES Guidebook and Appendix 1 of the Statement of Work, both of which can be found on the web site at www.va.gov/cares/library.htm .

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/CARES>