



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

April 6, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-15

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

CURRENT NEWS

*The Secretary for Veterans Affairs, Anthony J. Principi, spoke at the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Thursday, March 29th. He discussed CARES during his speech saying, "There is no question but that we can improve the quality of care we provide our veterans if we can shape our infrastructure to the needs of twenty-first century medicine. CARES has the potential to be a major enabler of needed improvements as well as a means to more cost-effective healthcare."

Secretary Principi emphasized the interests of many people in this process. He stated: "...We have a responsibility to remain mindful of the impact of this process on the veterans we serve, on our employees, and the communities where they live. When we talk about our facilities we are also talking about human lives: the lives of our veterans, the lives of our employees, the lives of our partners in affiliated medical schools, and the lives of the communities within which we live. We cannot arbitrarily or casually dismiss their concerns. I am deeply concerned that CARES be properly conducted and that our veterans, VSOs, and other stakeholders be kept informed as we move forward."

*On April 2nd Kathryn Maginnis became the new CARES Program Director. She is responsible for coordinating the VA's national CARES program. Ms. Maginnis was the Associate Medical Center Director at the Long Beach VA Medical Center. She chaired the VISN 22 CARES Support Task Force for six months before assuming her new position.

CARES IN VISN 12

*Additional information was made available this week on projections of future veteran health care demand. This information expands on the data provided two weeks ago. Specifically, it provides data on current and projected use of inpatient, ambulatory and special disability programs. This information will be posted on the web site (www.va.gov/CARES/) early next week.

The projections show an approximate 11% increase in the demand for ambulatory and ancillary services from the year 2000 actual demand to the year 2010 projected

demand. Long-term inpatient care is also expected to increase, from year 2000 actual bed days of care (BDOCs) of 429,739 to 521,807 BDOC projected for 2010. Inpatient demand for medicine and surgery is expected to drop from a combined total of 211,168 BDOC to 160,382.

The current summary also includes a brief look at unmet demand. This is one of seven factors that Booz-Allen & Hamilton, the CARES Contractor, will factor into the sensitivity analysis that will be used to assess the options for service delivery in VISN 12.

Briefings on this data were held this past week in Washington, D.C. for Congressional staff and National Veteran Service Organizations.

*Booz-Allen and Hamilton is continuing the telephone survey on veteran preferences for health care delivery. Veterans were randomly selected according to protocols set by the contractor, shared with VA and reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Plans are underway to conduct focus groups with veteran users of VA's healthcare in VISN 12 and with VA healthcare employees. The input of these two groups is essential to the Discriminating Criteria. These focus groups will be held after the options are developed. Participants will be randomly selected using established protocols and in accordance with OMB requirements.

*The current schedule for CARES in VISN 12 is for the application of the Absolute Criteria in VISN 12 and Headquarters in early May. Clinical Workgroups in both locations will be tasked to evaluate draft options based on an analysis of clinical programs, health care needs and requirements and safety and environmental requirements. Options that do not meet these criteria are considered no further.

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

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