



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

January 26, 2001

CARES Stakeholder Communication Bulletin #2001-05

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

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.

CURRENT NEWS

* On Tuesday January 23, 2001, meetings were held in the VISN office with representatives from Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and local Congressional offices. One of the topics discussed was CARES. The discussions focused on the progress made to date, the projected schedule and the opportunities for comments.

It was explained that there will be an opportunity for public comments when service delivery options are available. The VISN CARES Support Task Force (CSTF), the VISN CARES Clinical Task Force (CCTF) and the Headquarters National CARES Project Team (NCPT) will apply the Absolute Criteria to an array of concepts presented by the contractor. This will ensure that all draft options have passed the most basic standards for safety and quality of care. After input has been received and considered on the draft options, the Discriminating Criteria, which evaluates the options on a detailed level, will be applied.

* Over the last three weeks facility visits were conducted at every medical center in VISN 12 and concluded in Iron Mountain on January 23rd. During these visits the CARES Contractor team met with facility and clinical staff and representatives of stakeholder groups, including VSOs, academic affiliates, and employees.

On Thursday, January 25th the CARES Contractor briefed the VISN 12 CARES Support Task Force (CSTF) and CARES Clinical Task Force (CCTF). The CSTF is composed of VISN staff, staff members from each medical center, a representative from VISN 11, and a liaison from VA Central Office.

The CARES Contractor, Booz, Allen & Hamilton, reviewed the information provided at each medical center and expressed appreciation for the time and effort so many people put into making the visits productive. They reviewed the available facility data and requested input from the appropriate VISN and clinical staff.

* The Booz, Allen Facility Condition/Space Assessment Team began visits to the Chicagoland medical centers on January 22nd. The site team will 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. The schedule for the remaining facilities is:

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

COMING UP

* Data from the actuarial consultants on future unmet demand is expected to be available shortly. Additional facility service data is also being compiled.

* After the facility and demographic data is available and checked, the CARES Contractor will meet with the VISN 12 CARES Clinical Task Force.

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?

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, 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 started to come 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: <http://www.va.gov/cno>.

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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):

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>