

**AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SUPPLY PRODUCTS
FOR SPINAL CORD INJURY AND DISORDERS PATIENTS**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy regarding the availability of medical and surgical supply products for Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders (SCI&D) patients at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care facilities.

2. BACKGROUND

a. In May 1997, VA implemented a VA National Formulary (VANF) that contains a section dedicated to outpatient medical and surgical supply products.

b. The medical and surgical supply products listed on the VANF are intended to provide each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) and local facility direction in the selection of the formulary items that must be made available at all facilities for the care of veterans. The medical and surgical supply section of VANF is a generic listing of the broad range of products that must be made available.

c. The medical and surgical supply section of VANF is not intended to be exclusionary or to preclude a patient from receiving a particular product deemed medically necessary. It is recognized that for some of these products, patient-specific needs require the use of a particular brand of product for which a normally interchangeable alternative may not be medically acceptable. It is acknowledged that a number of patients have used a particular medical and surgical supply product for years, and that the continued availability of those products in lieu of a standardized product is appropriate.

d. VISN practices are expected to include the medical and surgical supply products specificity necessary to achieve the intent of this Directive.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that the unique medical and surgical supply needs of SCI&D patients must be addressed within the parameters of the VANF process.

4. ACTION: The VISN Director is responsible for ensuring the:

a. Medical and surgical supply product needs of patients with SCI&D are met.

b. VISN Commodities Standards Committee and the VISN non-formulary request process is used to address unique patient needs for medical and surgical supply products. *NOTE: When patient care is transferred between VA facilities, non-formulary products are to be provided without requiring a second non-formulary request.*

VHA DIRECTIVE 2006-022

May 1, 2006

c. Clinicians educate patients about the availability of standardized medical and surgical supply products. **NOTE:** *Before any change in a medical and/or surgical supply product is made, both prescriber and patient acceptance issues must be addressed.*

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Consultant for SCI&D (11S), Chief Logistics Office (10F) and Pharmacy Benefits Management (119) in the Office of Patient Care Services are responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to 202-273-8472.

7. RESCISSIONS: VHA Directive 2003-049 is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires May 31, 2011.

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