



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington DC 20420**

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**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH INFORMATION LETTER**

**STORAGE AND INSPECTION OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES IN RESEARCH**

1. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Information Letter provides clarification on the policy for the storage and inspection of controlled substances in research areas.
2. With the exception of the weekly automation equipment quality control inventory, there is no specific VHA policy guidance regarding shift counts in the pharmacy, research, and nursing (patient care) areas.
3. VHA policy only requires that research areas maintain copies of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Form 10-2638, Controlled Substance Administration Record, and make sure all controlled substance storage areas are accessible for monthly unannounced inspections.
4. There is no VHA policy requirement for interim (shift change, daily, weekly, etc.) inventory counts by research personnel or other hospital personnel beyond the monthly unannounced inspections.
5. In accordance with VHA Handbook 1108.1 Controlled Substances (Pharmacy Stock), any discrepancies found during the course of normal use in research are to be reported to the Controlled Substance Coordinator.
6. If a pattern of discrepancies is identified in any controlled substance storage area, sites are encouraged to consider a temporary increase in the frequency of accountability oversight (e.g., daily, weekly) until the cause of the discrepancies is established and the effectiveness of any corrective actions can be verified.
7. Questions concerning this information may be directed to Jeff Ramirez, Pharm.D., Associate Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management (119) at (202) 273-8428.

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Acting Under Secretary for Health**

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