

September 29, 2006

**MANDATORY REPLACEMENT OF VETERAN  
IDENTIFICATION CARD (VIC)**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive outlines procedures for mandatory replacement of old versions of the Veteran Identification Card (VIC) or Patient Identification Card with the new VIC.

**2. BACKGROUND:** VHA, as required by the Privacy Act of 1974 (Privacy Act), must establish appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of records and to protect against any anticipated threats or hazards to their security or integrity which could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to any individual on whom information is maintained (see Title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) 552a(e)(10)). The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published a system of records notice for Patient Medical Records (24VA19) that incorporated the photograph and other identifying information used in creating a VIC (see 69 Federal Register (Fed. Reg.) 18,428 (2004)). To comply with the Privacy Act, reduce veteran vulnerability to identity theft, and demonstrate VA's commitment to securing the confidential personal information of enrolled veterans, VHA is initiating a campaign to replace prior versions of VIC and Patient Identification Cards. Prior versions of VIC and Patient Identification Cards display information such as full social security number (SSN) and date of birth (DOB) that is considered an unwarranted risk for those veterans receiving health care services from VA. The new VIC eliminates sensitive identifying information on the front of the card. VHA's goal is to replace previously-issued versions of VIC for all enrolled veterans receiving medical care in the VA health care system. VHA anticipates that with an aggressive replacement program all prior versions of identification cards can be replaced within 12 months.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that all health care facilities with VIC image capture capability establish procedures to replace prior versions of VIC and Patient Identification Cards with the new VIC for all enrolled veterans receiving medical care at their facility.

**4. ACTION**

a. **Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) Director.** Each VISN Director must: monitor the progress of their facilities in establishing procedures for the replacement of the VIC and patient identification cards.

b. **Facility Director.** Each facility Director is responsible for ensuring procedures are established to:

- (1) Inform all staff of this replacement policy.

**THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30, 2011**

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(2) Replace prior versions of VIC and Patient Identification Cards for all enrolled veterans receiving inpatient or residential services at their facility, as well as for all scheduled and unscheduled visits.

(3) Capture digital images of enrolled veterans who are unable to visit their facility (such as nursing home patients) by having a digital picture taken remotely, downloaded and transmitted, along with the necessary information, to the card production facility.

(4) Establish outreach campaigns to inform all enrolled veterans of the necessity of replacing their VIC and Patient Identification Cards. Hold special 'VIC clinics' in local communities, and use other aggressive measures to ensure all eligible veterans receive the new card.

(4) Collect and destroy previously issued VICs and issue a new card to all veterans either receiving care or enrolled at their facility by October 1, 2007.

(5) Notify the VISN Director, on a regular basis, of progress of card replacement.

**5. REFERENCES:** None.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief Business Officer (16) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-254-0384.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires September 30, 2011.

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