

August 31, 2009

**QUALITY OF MEDICAL SERVICES PERFORMED WITHIN VA FACILITIES BY  
ACADEMIC AFFILIATES UNDER CONTRACT**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive defines the responsibilities for ensuring the quality of medical services performed within VHA facilities by academic affiliates under contract with VHA.

**2. BACKGROUND**

a. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) academic affiliates (schools of medicine, academic medical centers and their associated clinical practices) provide a large proportion of contracted clinical care both within and outside of VA.

b. VA retains ultimate responsibility for the quality of care delivered within its facilities to Veteran patients. VA exercises this responsibility through several clinical and administrative oversight mechanisms, including credentialing and privileging, quality and patient safety monitoring, and the inclusion of specific quality of care provisions in the contract itself.

c. Quality assurance is a shared responsibility of VA and the vendor (see VA Directive 1663).

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that the responsibility of monitoring the quality of services provided within VHA by academic affiliates under contract to VHA remains with VHA, specifically the facility Director. *NOTE: This responsibility cannot be delegated outside VHA; it remains intrinsic to the VA health care system.*

**4. ACTION**

a. **VA Central Office's Sharing Contract Review Committee.** VA Central Office's Sharing Contract Review Committee is responsible for providing an additional level of review, including review of the quality assurance provisions (see VA Directive 1663). Within this committee, Patient Care Services has primary responsibility for assuring that medical sharing contracts contain appropriate quality and patient safety provisions (see subpar. 5d).

b. **Veterans Integrated Service network (VISN) Director.** The VISN Director, or designee, is responsible for ensuring each facility Chief of Staff has:

- (1) Appropriate quality assurance standards in place;

**THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES AUGUST 31, 2014**

- (2) Appropriate data methods defined; and that
- (3) Data collection, analysis, and reporting are performed as specified.

c. **Facility Director.** Each facility Director, or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring oversight mechanisms are consistently and effectively applied to all in-house contracted care.

(2) Ensuring monitoring processes for medical services provided under contract in VA facilities are established and in place.

(3) Ensuring practitioners providing medical services under contract in VA facilities are subject to VA's credentialing and privileging policies and procedures (VHA Handbook 1100.19).

(4) Ensuring that the joint and separate responsibilities of VA and the vendor are spelled out in advance, in writing, so that medical care delivery under a sharing agreement or contract can be effectively monitored.

(5) Ensuring that, although quality and safety standards and monitoring procedures vary as a function of the specific service being provided, all applicable VA quality and patient safety standards are met for the medical services provided under contract. ***NOTE: The Joint Commission also has specific standards for focused monitoring whenever new procedures or new technology are involved.***

d. **Service Chief.** Each clinical Service Chief has the primary responsibility for the oversight of quality and safety monitoring; i.e., the quality of care within their clinical discipline. This responsibility is exercised through oversight of credentialing and privileging, review of provider-specific data, and peer review processes. ***NOTE: In the absence of a Service Chief, the Chief of Staff assumes primary responsibility for oversight of credentialing and privileging.***

## **5. REFERENCES**

- a. VHA Handbook 1100.19.
- b. VA Directive 1663.
- c. Joint Commission Standards: MS.03.01.01, MS.04.01.01, MS.08.01.01, LD.04.03.01, and LD.04.03.09.
- d. Sharing Contract Review Committee Organizational Charter, February 12, 2008.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Office of Academic Affairs (14) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-461-9490.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires August 31, 2014.

Gerald M. Cross, MD, FAAFP  
Acting Under Secretary for Health

**DISTRIBUTION:** E-mailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List 9/1/2009