

August 22, 2011

**AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SUPPLY PRODUCTS
FOR VETERANS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY/DISORDER**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy regarding the availability of medical and surgical supply products for Veterans with spinal cord injury and disorders (SCI/D) at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facilities.

2. BACKGROUND

a. In May 1997, VA implemented a 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 the VANF is a generic listing of the broad range of products that must be made available.

c. The medical and surgical supply section of the 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 Veterans with SCI/D must be addressed within the parameters of the VANF process.

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

a. Medical and surgical supply product needs deemed a medical necessity by providers for Veterans 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.*

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c. Clinicians educate patients about the availability and any differences between standardized medical and surgical supply products and the requested non-standardized product.

NOTE: Before any change in a medical or surgical supply product is made, both prescriber and patient acceptance issues must be addressed.

5. REFERENCE: VHA Handbook 1108.08.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Consultant for SCI/D Services (10P4S), Chief Logistics Office (10F) and Pharmacy Benefits Management (10P4P) in the Office of Patient Care Services (10P4) are responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be referred to (202) 273-8472.

7. RESCISSIONS: VHA Directive 2006-022, is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires August 31, 2016.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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