

March 10, 2004

## AUDIBLE PRESCRIPTION READING DEVICES

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides uniform criteria for the purchase of audible prescription reading devices and equipment by medical facilities.

### 2. BACKGROUND

a. The identified need for independent safe management of prescriptive medication by individuals who comprehend better by hearing than by seeing is a long-standing issue. It is known that the ability to understand and manage personal prescriptive medication is a key factor in helping individuals maintain an independent life style.

b. The audible prescription reading device enhances the medication safety of patients who have difficulty reading or understanding the instructions and warnings that appear on their medication bottle labels. When prescriptions are not taken as prescribed, serious and sometimes life threatening consequences can follow.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that audible prescription reading devices are furnished to eligible veterans by the facility Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service.

### 4. ACTION

#### a. Process

(1) When a veteran who can benefit from the issuance of an audible prescription reading device is identified by the veteran's primary health care team, the team will initiate the assessment, evaluation, review, and training in the use of the device by the Nurse Educator, or designee.

(2) When the veteran has successfully completed the workup, the case manager notifies Pharmacy Service that the veteran can be enrolled in the audible prescription reading device program.

(3) When Pharmacy Service has verified the patient information and concurs with the enrollment, a consult is generated by the appropriate health care practitioner and sent to the facility Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service requesting the audible prescription reading device.

#### b. Responsibilities

(1) **Primary Care Team.** The veteran's primary care team is responsible for the coordination of service delivery through the Nurse Educator and health care providers to ensure the following issues are addressed and documented in the patient's record:

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- (a) Confirmation that the veteran has an identified need for the device.
- (b) Implementation of standardized evaluation procedures that include:
  - 1. A review of the veteran's current knowledge of the veteran's medication.
  - 2. Education on drug interactions.
  - 3. The ability to operate the audible prescription reading device independently.
  - 4. A review of the clinical record and the training of the veteran to determine potential for independent self-medication.
  - 5. A VA contact and phone number to consult in case of malfunction of the audible prescription reading device.
  - 6. A VA contact for questions about medication.
- (c) The veteran's ability to operate and maintain the device independently is verified by the team.
- (d) The veteran's cognitive and physical ability to independently self-medicate is verified by the team, prior to issuance of the medication.
- (e) All pertinent information is recorded in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS).

(2) **Blind Rehabilitation Service.** The Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator is responsible for:

- (a) Identifying visually impaired individuals who may be appropriate candidates for training with the device.
  - (b) Acting as a resource to the Nurse Educator on aspects dealing with visual loss.
- (3) **Pharmacy Service.** The Chief, Pharmacy Service, is responsible for:
- (a) The purchase of appropriate printer, software, ribbons, and labels.
  - (b) Instructing Pharmacists to test each automated message that is generated to make sure that what is printed is accurate and matches what is spoken by the reader.
  - (c) Recording patient information, transactions, and expenditures into the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) Pharmacy Software Package.

(4) **Prosthetics Service.** The Chief, Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service, is responsible for the:

- (a) Purchase of hand-held electronic reading device.
- (b) Recording all transactions and expenditures in the Prosthetics Software Package.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Chief Consultant, Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service Strategic Healthcare Group (113), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-273-8515.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires March 31, 2009.

S/ Louise Van Diepen for  
Robert H. Roswell, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

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