



**Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Numbered
Administrative Issue Documents
Program Guide 6330.01**

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Regulatory and Administrative Affairs
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VHA Numbered Administrative Issue Documents Program Guide

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1. GUIDE TO THE INFORMAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. OVERVIEW: This is a guide to the informal review process recommended in the February 2013 Policy Task Force Report. New or significantly revised policy documents should be developed in accordance with the Task Force Report's "pre-work" recommendations. The informal review process should be used only after such development has occurred.

The informal review process should be conducted entirely through e-mail.

The purpose of the informal review process is to ensure adequate opportunity for review and comment *before* a document is put into VA's official e-concurrence system (VAIQ). The Task Force believed that this will reduce or eliminate problems including signatures becoming outdated; version control issues; and other complications and delays that arise when negotiating edits using the official system instead of using e-mail and other informal communications.

STEP 1:

After appropriate development (see above), the originating program office e-mails the document concurrently to 10N and 10P. 10N and 10P assign the document to affected subordinate offices for review and approval, as needed. The originating program office may wish to copy to subordinate offices that assisted in the development of the document, so that 10N and 10P are aware of those offices' input.

E-mails should be sent to the following mail groups, with the subject line: "Informal Review Requested":

- VHA 10N Action
- VHA 10P Actions

STEP 2:

After revising based on input from 10N and 10P, the originating program office e-mails the document to 10A. 10A assigns the document to affected subordinate offices for review and approval, as needed. The originating program office must include Workforce Management Consulting (10A2A).

E-mails should be sent to the following mail groups, with the subject line: "Informal Review Requested":

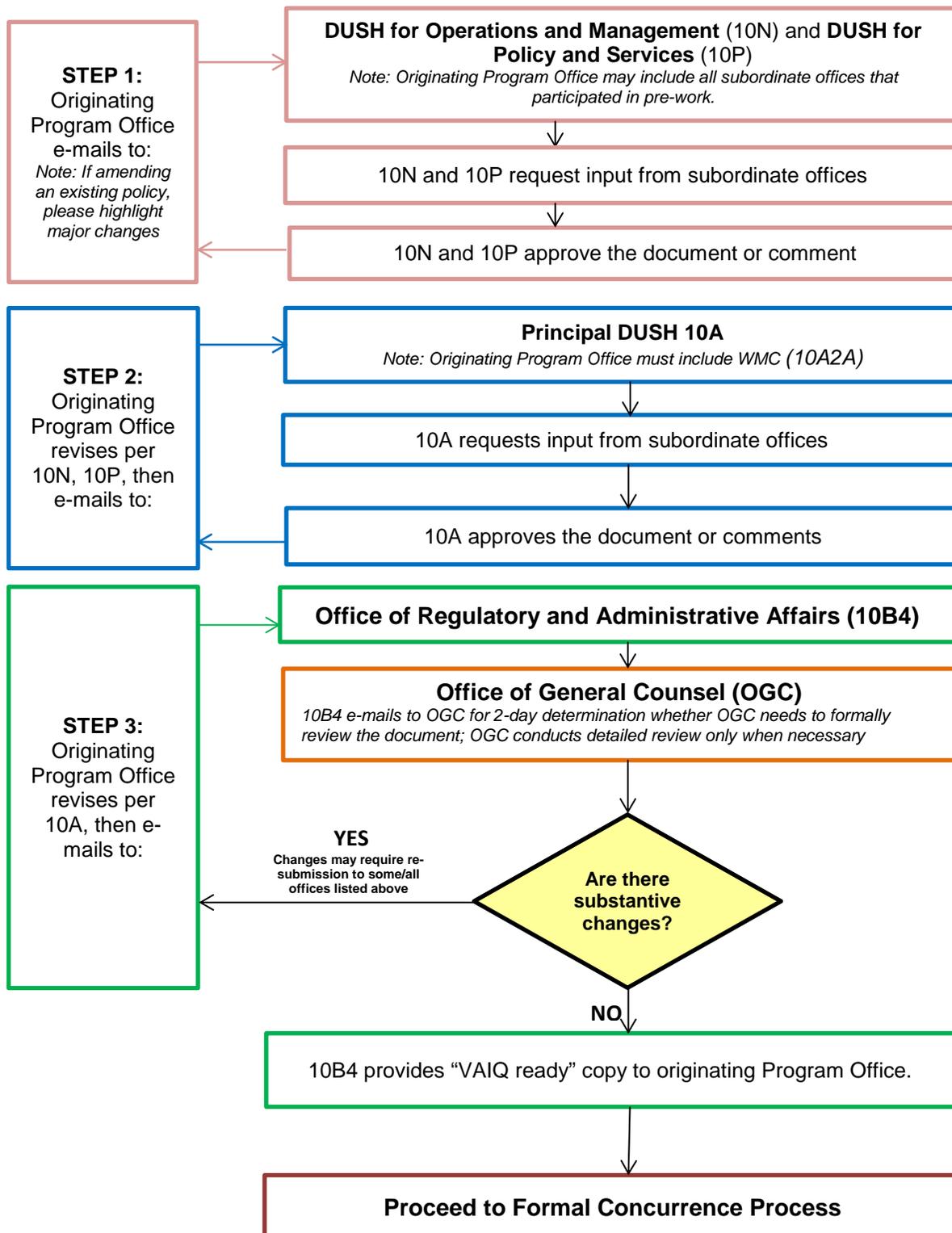
- VHA 10A Actions
- VHA 10A2A Action WMC

STEP 3:

After revising based on input from 10A, the originating program office e-mails the document to VHA CO 10B4 Actions. After reviewing the document, 10B4 will ask OGC whether they need to formally review the document (this request will take 2-days).

- If OGC states that legal review is required, they will advise 10B4 and will begin such review. The originating program office, 10B4, and OGC will work through any resulting edits or comments. Depending on the changes required by OGC, the originating program office may need to request fresh concurrences from 10N, 10P, and/or 10A.
- If OGC does not request formal review, or does not make significant revisions, 10B4 will send a VAIQ-ready version of the document to the originating program office to put into formal concurrence.

**FLOW PROCESS DIAGRAM FOR
INFORMAL REVIEW PROCESS**



2. GUIDE TO THE FORMAL CONCURRENCE PROCESS

A. OVERVIEW: This is a guide to the formal concurrence process recommended in the February 2013 Policy Task Force Report. It should be used only after the policy document has been through the informal review process.

The formal concurrence process must be conducted in the e-concurrence system (i.e., VAIQ).

General Note: *If significant changes are made during formal concurrence from the “VAIQ ready” version prepared by 10B4 during the informal review process, the originating program office should advise 10B4 as soon as possible to minimize or avoid unnecessary delay in obtaining any re-concurrences that may be required.*

STEP 1 (Days 1-10):

- Originating program office assigns the document concurrently to 10N and 10P.
- 10N and 10P assign to affected subordinate offices, as needed. **Note:** *Originating program office may make individual assignments to subordinate offices, but only 10N and 10P concurrences are mandatory.*
- 10N and 10P upload signed concurrence to VAIQ within 10 days after receipt of assignment.*

STEP 2 (Days 11-20):

- Originating program office assigns the document to 10A.
- 10A assigns to affected subordinate offices, as needed. **Note:** *Originating program office may make individual assignments to subordinate offices, but only 10A concurrence is mandatory.*
- 10A uploads signed concurrence to VAIQ within 10 days after receipt of assignment.*

***Note to Steps 1 and 2:** *10A, 10N, and 10P must consolidate their respective subordinate office concurrences on one VA Form 10-2479 and ensure Program Office and subordinate offices concurrences are uploaded to VAIQ within 10 days after receipt of assignment.*

STEP 3 (Days 21-30):

- Originating program office obtains formal concurrence from OGC (if requested by OGC during informal process).
- OGC uploads signed concurrence to VAIQ within 10 days after receipt of assignment.

STEP 4 (Days 31-45):

- Originating program office assigns the document to 10B4.
- 10B4 reviews document, concurs, e-mails “green sheet” (final, formatted version) to originating program office for their approval.

- Originating program office approves green sheet.
- 10B4 assigns to LMR; LMR either:

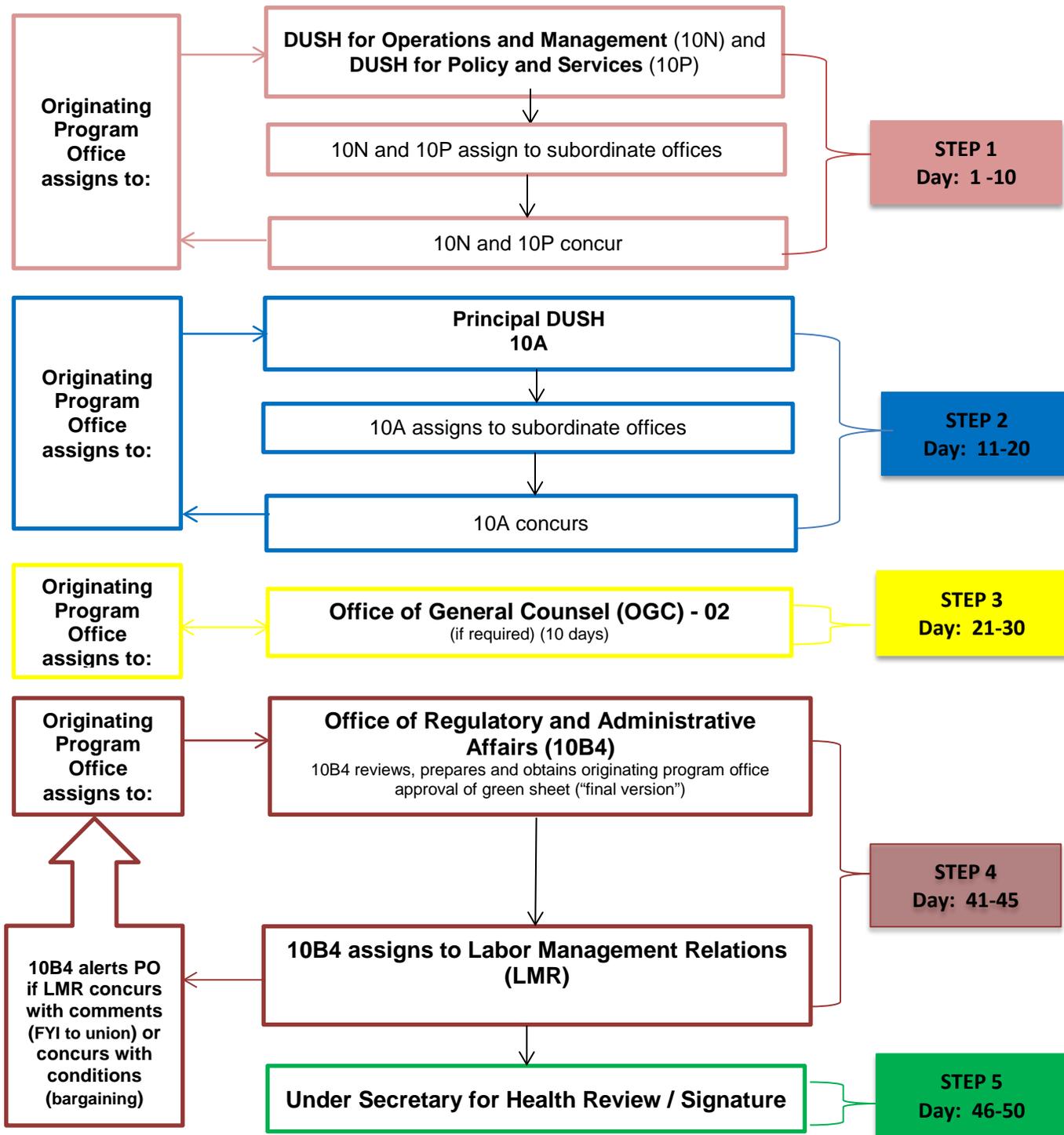
(1) Concur.

(2) Concur with comments. **NOTE:** After USH signs, originating Program Office must send 10 copies of the signed policy to LMR.

(3) Concur with conditions. **NOTE:** Document will not be signed at mail call; USH will approve the document and it will be returned to originating Program Office, who will provide 10 copies of the unsigned document to LMR, who will engage in bargaining.

STEP 5 (Days 46-50): 10B4 presents document to Under Secretary for Health for review and/or signature (dependent on LMR concurrence). **Note:** If document is subject to bargaining, 10B4 will return assignment to originating program office, which will reassign to 10B4 after bargaining is complete.

FLOW PROCESS DIAGRAM FOR FORMAL CONCURRENCE PROCESS



3. ACCELERATED CONCURRENCE PROCESS FOR EXISTING POLICIES DUE FOR RECERTIFICATION OR REQUIRING MINOR AMENDMENT

A. OVERVIEW: This is a guide to the accelerated concurrence process recommended in the February 2013 Policy Task Force Report. It should be used only for existing policies that need to be recertified or amended with minor or merely technical changes.

STEP 1:

- Originating Program Office e-mails a “tracked changes” version of an existing policy document that requires only minor or technical changes to the VHA CO 10B4 Actions.
- 10B4 reviews legal authority to determine whether more significant changes are required.
- If 10B4 agrees significant revision is not required, 10B4 e-mails to the Office of General Counsel for 2-day waiver review.
- If OGC agrees to waive review, proceed to STEP 2.
- If OGC or 10B4 believe significant changes are required, document is ineligible for accelerated concurrence and must go through regular processes.

STEP 2:

- 10B4 e-mails document concurrently to 10N, 10P, and 10A (*10 day review*).
- 10N, 10P, and 10A coordinate with their own affected subordinate offices and respond within 10 days after request via e-mail to VHA CO 10B4 Actions:
 - (1) Approval or approval with minor edits (go to STEP 3); or
 - (2) Disapproval, with reason(s) why accelerated concurrence is not appropriate (document is ineligible for accelerated concurrence and must go regular processes).

STEP 3: Originating program office assigns in VAIQ to 10N, 10P, 10A for 5 days (include approval e-mails from Step 2 in the VAIQ folder)

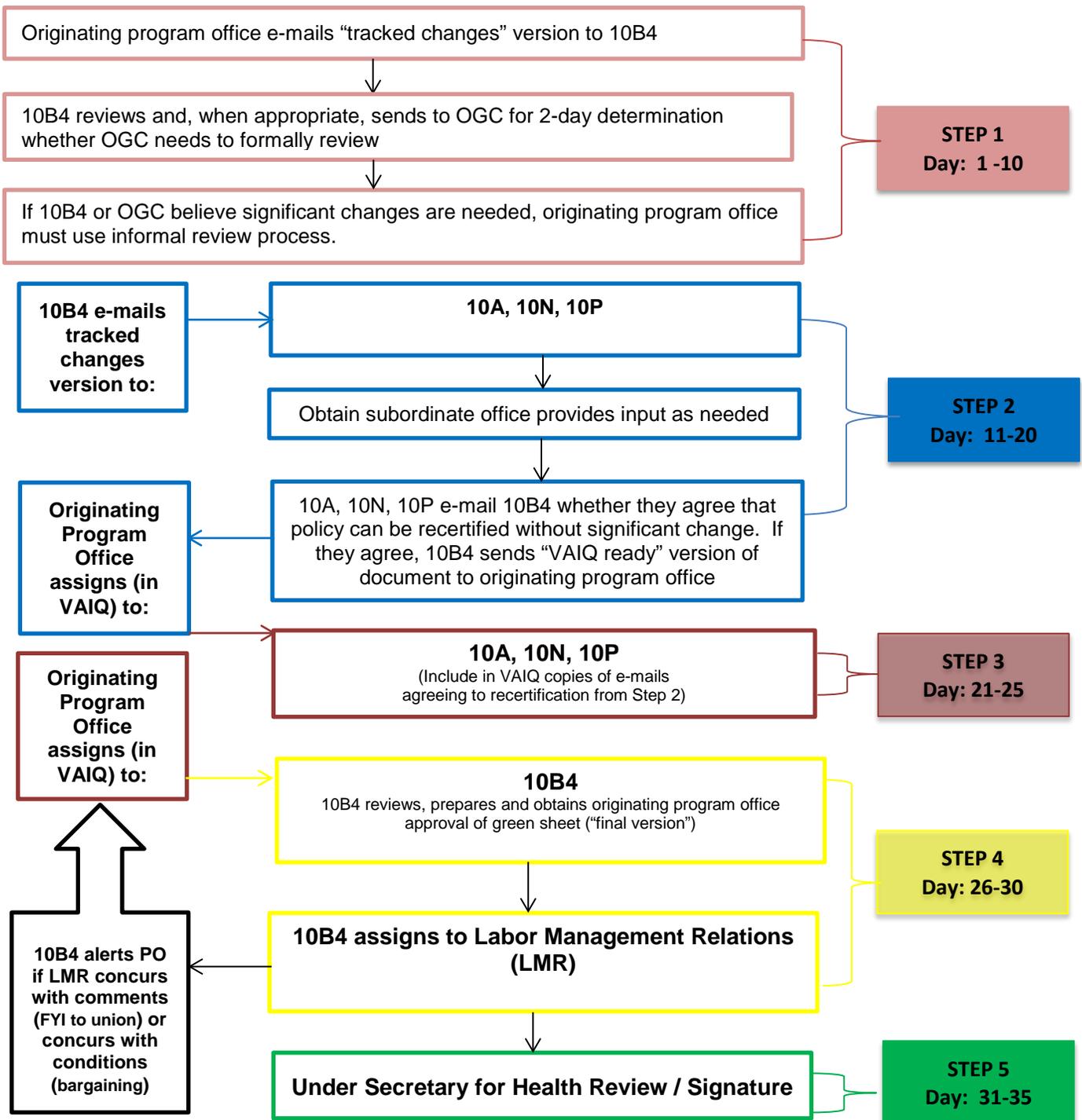
STEP 4:

- Originating program office assigns the document to 10B4.
- 10B4 reviews, concurs, e-mails “green sheet” (final, formatted version) to originating program office for their approval.
- Originating program office approves green sheet.
- 10B4 assigns to LMR; LMR either:
 - (1) Concurs.
 - (2) Concurs with comments. **NOTE:** After USH signs, originating Program Office must send 10 copies of the signed policy to LMR.

(3) Concurs with conditions. **NOTE:** *Document will not be signed at mail call; USH will approve the document and it will be returned to originating Program Office, who will provide 10 copies of the unsigned document to LMR, who will engage in bargaining.*

STEP 5: 10B4 presents to Under Secretary for Health for review and/or signature (dependent on LMR concurrence). **Note:** *If document is subject to bargaining, 10B4 returns assignment to originating program office, which will reassign to 10B4 after bargaining is complete.*

**FLOW PROCESS DIAGRAM FOR
“ACCELERATED” CONCURRENCE PROCESS FOR EXISTING POLICIES
DUE FOR RECERTIFICATION OR REQUIRING MINOR AMENDMENT**



4. Ensuring Appropriate LMR Review of VHA Policy Documents:

A. Issue: Refine concurrence process to ensure that VHA policies with potential impact on bargaining unit employees are flagged for review by LMR and the VHA Labor Relations (10A2A1A) section of the Workforce Management & Consulting (WMC) Office (10A2A). The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (5 U.S.C. Chapter 71) and Collective Bargaining Agreements with our unions require that in certain circumstances VA submit formal notice to the unions and allow the unions an opportunity to bargain prior to initiating new policies or changing existing policies. The Office of Labor Management Relations (LMR) is responsible for ensuring that timely notice of proposed changes is provided to the unions.

2. Key points:

- Program offices may not correctly identify policies with potential and significant impact to Bargaining Unit (BU) employees.
- WMC will assist program offices by identifying those policies that likely meet the requirement for review by labor representatives, but the final decision rests with LMR.
- LMR and WMC should be included in the concurrence process for new and changed policies. A policy that requires union review will be sent to the unions once all the concurrences are final and the policy is in final version, but before USH signature and final implementation.
- Executive Order 13522, *Creating Labor-Management Forums to Improve Delivery of Government Services*, requires VA management officials to include the unions pre-decisionally in “all workplace matters to the fullest extent practicable.” The term “pre-decisional involvement” typically involves inviting the unions to participate in task forces or work groups developing policy prior to any change being initiated. At the national level, LMR would send such invitations to the union national officials via the National Partnership Council.
 - Pre-Decisional involvement can be achieved by inviting the unions to participate in task forces or work groups developing policy during the “informal pre-concurrence review” (see Step One below). LMR would send such invitations to the unions, via the National Partnership Council.

3. Process:

a. To formalize the inclusion of LMR, program offices must make an assignment to LMR for concurrence on all documents. When revisions have been made to update or replace an existing VHA policy, the changes between the preceding policy and the updated policy must be adequately identified by the VHA program office. The changes should be easily identifiable for LMR and union review, using “tracked changes” (including strikethroughs for deletions of existing language and underlining insertions or

new language). The assignment to LMR should be made after OGC has concurred in the document to ensure that the document meets legal standards. The chart below defines what possible concurrence responses LMR may make and what actions must be taken depending on the nature of LMR’s concurrence.

	<i>If</i>	<i>Then</i>	<i>And</i>	<i>Handling</i>
1.	LMR concurs (without comment or condition)	No union notice required	Note in COS Briefing Sheet that USH can sign without delay	Normal document processing
2.	LMR concurs with COMMENT that the unions must be given copies “FYI”	Union notice is required only for information; no delay in implementation	Note in COS Briefing Sheet that USH can sign without delay	Normal document processing but 10 copies of signed document must be provided to LMR after the USH signs; LMR provides to unions “FYI”
3.	LMR provides a CONDITIONAL concurrence that unions must be given time to review and make demand for bargaining	Policy may not be implemented until time expires without demand to bargain OR demand to bargain is made but time for bargaining expires without union proposals OR demand is made and negotiations conclude	Note in COS Briefing Sheet that USH may NOT sign until time expires without demand OR demand is made and negotiations conclude	10 copies of final document signature must be provided to LMR before the USH signs; LMR will advise when document may be signed.

b. Processing of document continues as normal until USHs Mail Call:

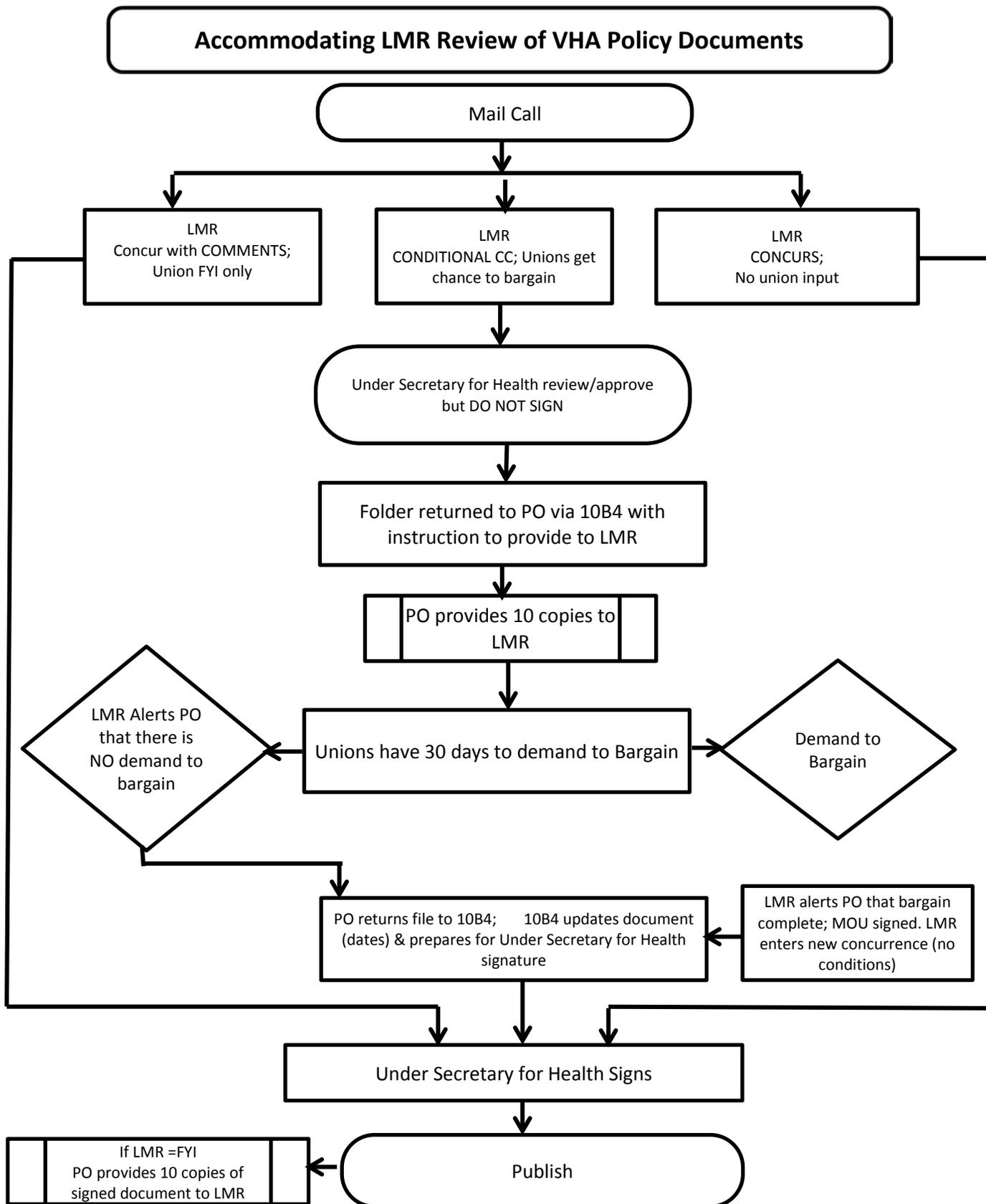
(1) If LMR concurrence is either 1 or 2 in chart above, USH can sign as normal. After final document is prepared, program office must send 10 copies of final, signed document to LMR to be provided “FYI” to unions.

(2) If LMR concurrence is 3 in chart above, labor has between 20 and 30 business days, depending on labor contract, to demand to bargain on the content of the policy that impacts the employees the union represents. LMR will track the timeframe for a response from labor representatives. During this time, the policy concurrence folder is sent back to the program office, which will provide LMR with 10 copies of the unsigned

“final” version of the document. If the unions do not make a demand to bargain within the allotted time, LMR will notify the program office that the policy may be signed by USH. Policy office will return file to Executive Correspondence for final processing.

(3) If the unions demand to bargain, USH signature and implementation must await the outcome of the negotiation. Negotiation can be a lengthy process. LMR will track the timeframe for a response from labor representatives. The program office will continue to hold the concurrence folder until the negotiations are complete. Once bargaining is complete, LMR will notify the VHA program office that bargaining is complete and will update the LMR concurrence in VAIQ.

(4) The program office will forward the document to the Office of Regulatory and Administrative Affairs 10B4 (ORAA; formerly Forms and Publications) to update the [COS Briefing Note](#) to reflect that LMR’s conditional concurrence is cleared and present the folder to VHA COS for the USH signature.



Justification for Proposed VHA Issue (VA Form 10-2479) is accessible via ORAA's web site: <http://vaww.va.gov/VHAREGS/index.asp> and VA Forms web site: <http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms/>.

 Department of Veterans Affairs		JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED VHA ISSUE <i>Original to 10B4. Copy for Originator.</i>							
INSTRUCTIONS: Complete this form when issuing a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) numbered administrative issue before routing to the final VHA approving official. After Program Office signed concurrences have been obtained, uploaded to the VA document tracking system, i.e. VAHQ. Use VA Form 10-4265, Concurrence and Summary Sheet to obtain concurrences for VA Department-wide policy issue requiring VA Secretary's signature.									
SECTION I: DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION									
1. Type of Issue (Directive, Handbook, Notice, etc.)			2. Title						
3. Purpose (If rescinding a previous document briefly describe the changes.)									
4. List Publications/Forms Rescinded by this Issue (Circular, Directive, Manual, etc.). <u>Attach All Rescinded Documents as Background Material.</u>									
5. Name of Person to Contact				6. Originating Office Mail Symbol		7. Telephone Number			
8. Signature of Originating Office Official			Date	9. Signature of Chief Officer			Date		
SECTION II: CONCURRENCES									
INSTRUCTIONS: Complete this section by using the drop down box next to each signature and date box. If the Non-concur or Concur w/comments selection is chosen you must provide an explanation on the following Concurrences comments page.									
Symbol	Signature	Date	Concurrence		Symbol	Signature	Date	Concurrence	
			Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Non-concur <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Concur w/comments <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SECTION III: FINAL APPROVAL PROCESS									
(02) Office of General Counsel		Date		10B4		Office of Regulatory and Administrative Affairs		Date	
(10A) Signature of Deputy Under Secretary for Health		Date		(10)		Signature of Under Secretary for Health		Date	
VAHQ #									

VHA Chief of Staff Briefing is accessible via ORAA's web site:
<http://vaww.va.gov/VHAREGS/index.asp> and: VHA Forms and Publication website:
<http://vaww.va.gov/vaforms>.

VHA Chief of Staff Briefing Note
 VHA Directives, Handbooks, Notices, and Information Letters

Subject:			
VAIQ #:		Informal Review Completed:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <small>(Insert 10B4 staff initials here)</small>
Originating Office POC:		Phone No.:	
Office	List all sub-office concurrences by mail code		
<input type="checkbox"/> 10A:			
<input type="checkbox"/> 10N:			
<input type="checkbox"/> 10P:			
<input type="checkbox"/> 02:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:			
<input type="checkbox"/> LMR	<input type="checkbox"/> Concur <input type="checkbox"/> Concur with Comments (FYI to unions) <input type="checkbox"/> Concur with Conditions (Bargaining) <input type="checkbox"/> Condition Cleared on <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/> by <input style="width: 100px;" type="text"/> <small style="margin-left: 100px;">Date</small> <small style="margin-left: 100px;">(10B4 staff initials here)</small> <i>10B4 staff to check box after bargaining ONLY; list date cleared and initials of 10B4 staff.</i>		
QUESTION		RESPONSE	
1. Is this a VHA or VA Directive, Handbook, Notice, Information Letter? (Select the appropriate option).			
2. If this is an information letter and you require longer than the automatic 6 months rescission, state the date of rescission you need and justification for the extension.			
3. Is this a NEW Directive/Handbook, or is this an UPDATE to an existing Directive/Handbook? (Select the appropriate option)			
4. Why is the Directive/Handbook being published (i.e., cite new legislation, regulations, policy decisions)?			

**VHA Numbered Administrative Issue Documents
 Chief of Staff Communications Plan**

The communications plan indicates how the program is going to disperse the information in the document to VA medical facilities and Veterans. **For example:** In addition to publishing the VHA Numbered Administrative Issue Document, the information or guidance will be dispersed during weekly conference calls or staff meetings.

Actions for Announcement

Time	Action	Responsible Party

VHA Numbered Administrative Issue Documents Chief of Staff Communication Plan is accessible via ORAA's web site:
<http://vaww.va.gov/VHAREGS/index.asp>.

**SAMPLE VHA Chief of Staff Communications Plan for
Updated Directive - VHA Directive Treatment of Active Duty and Reserve
Component Service Members in VA Health Care Facilities**

Since the mid 1990s, the Department of Veterans Affairs has been an active partner with the Department of Defense as a Network Provider in their Managed Care TRICARE Program based on available capacity. In 2004, to ensure VA's ability to meet its responsibility to provide timely healthcare to all returning Service Members, VA medical facilities became TRICARE Network providers.

VHA recently published an update to VHA Directive 2005 – 045. This revised directive now provides information on the inclusion of Reserve Component Service Members to receive care with the appropriate referral and authorizations required under the VA /DoD TRICARE program, or other National VA / DoD Sharing Agreements under 38 USC § 8111; updates the contact information for the VHA TRICARE Regional Office West Liaison; and provides appropriate reference links for additional resources and training materials.

In order to successfully implement these changes, VHA has completed a comprehensive communications plan to ensure VHA Medical Center Leadership, DoD partners, and other key stakeholders are informed.

- ⇒ **DoD Partners** –VHA TRICARE Regional Office (TRO) Liaisons will be asked to provide a copy of the directive to their respective TMA /TRO Leadership, and other key parties upon publication of the Directive.
- ⇒ **VHA Medical Center Leadership** - Will be notified of this update to the Directive during the weekly 10N conference calls with a copy of the Directive attached to the minutes, and posted on the CBO intranet.
- ⇒ **VHA Field Staff** - The Chief Business Office will provide the directive to all key mailgroups. In addition, training will be conducted via a table topics conference call on January 12th, 2011, to review the directive and address any questions. The directive will be sent out in advance of the call to allow staff ample time to review.

Actions for Announcement

Time	Action	Responsible Party
<u>November 18, 2010</u>	VACO 10 Mail Call: Directive 2010 – 000 (to replace 2005-045) was presented and was approved, pending a written communication plan and draft announcement.	CBO/Felicia
<u>November/December 2010</u>	VHA Conference Call: Upon publication of directive, CBO will make an announcement on the weekly VHA Thursday and Friday conference calls regarding the updated Directive, as well as informing them of the methods to disseminate the information, to include the upcoming CBO Table Topic Call (January 12, 2011).	CBO Leadership
<u>November/December 2010</u>	CBO Action: Upon publication of directive, email to be sent to the following Mail groups: Business Implementation Managers Revenue Coordinators, VISN Sharing Coordinators (will ask Program office to distribute; and request this be added to the next Conference Call Agenda); and will provide to DoD Partners appropriate via the most efficient method.	CBO/Kristin/Felicia
<u>December 21, 2010</u>	CBO National Conference Call: CBO will add this update as an Agenda Item to the National conference call to inform, and provide field staff with an opportunity to discuss as needed.	Kristin Cunningham
<u>January 12, 2011</u>	CBO Table Topic Conference Call: CBO will conduct a Table Topics training conference call to review the new Directive and provide field staff with information and to respond to any questions.	CBO/Business Operations/Felicia