

CARE COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

1. SUMMARY OF CONTENT: This directive establishes roles and responsibilities in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) for coordination of health care and services for Veterans who are Medal of Honor (MOH) recipients. This includes:

a. Incorporating guidelines for communication with MOH recipients and establishing a consistent process for initial outreach to MOH recipients by telephone (see paragraph 2).

b. Establishing a VHA-wide reporting process for updates related to outreach to MOH recipients (see paragraph 2).

c. Defining the requirement for MOH Executive Champions (a collateral duty) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility clinical points of contact to conduct outreach on a quarterly basis (see paragraph 2).

2. RELATED ISSUES: None.

3. POLICY OWNER: The Executive Director, Care Management and Social Work Services (12CMSW), Office of Patient Care Services, is responsible for the content of this directive. Questions can be addressed to the National Director of Social Work at VHA12CMSWSW@va.gov.

4. LOCAL DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS: There are no local document requirements in this directive.

5. RESCISSIONS: None.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of December 2029. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

7. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE: This directive is effective upon publication.

December 27, 2024

VHA DIRECTIVE 1649

**BY DIRECTION OF THE OFFICE OF THE
UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:**

/s/ M. Christopher Saslo
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Assistant Under Secretary for Health
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NOTE: *All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.*

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CARE COORDINATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

1. POLICY

It is Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy that all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities caring for Medal of Honor (MOH) recipients establish an MOH Program including a Care Coordination Team (CCT) for MOH recipients to ensure that MOH recipients receive quality care and benefit services. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. § 7301(b).

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health is responsible for reviewing and taking appropriate action on recommendations from the Office of Client Relations and Care Management and Social Work Services (CMSW) related to ensuring that health care is coordinated across the VHA in all clinical areas for MOH recipients.

c. **Chief Operating Officer.** The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for:

(1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN).

(2) Assisting VISN Directors to resolve implementation and compliance challenges in all VA medical facilities within that VISN.

(3) Overseeing VISNs to ensure the effectiveness of and compliance with this directive.

d. **Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer.** The Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) is responsible for:

(1) Supporting CMSW with the implementation and oversight of this directive.

(2) Supporting the development of mitigation or corrective actions to address noncompliance with this directive.

e. **Executive Director, Care Management and Social Work Services.** The Executive Director, CMSW is responsible for:

(1) Overseeing the development and implementation of this directive and ensuring that corrective action is taken when noncompliance is identified.

(2) Making recommendations to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health related to ensuring that health care is coordinated across the VHA in all clinical areas for MOH recipients.

f. **National Director, Social Work, Fisher House and Family Hospitality and Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Programs, Care Management, and Social Work.** The National Director, Social Work, Fisher House and Family Hospitality and Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Programs, Care Management, and Social Work is responsible for:

(1) Establishing the MOH Program and overseeing the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team.

(2) Ensuring that the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team maintains oversight of the MOH Program (see paragraph 2.g.).

g. **Medal Of Honor Program Site Support Team Member.** *NOTE: This position is collateral and is appropriate for a detail.* The MOH Program Site Support Team member is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring the VISN MOH Point of Contact (POC)/Lead, VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion, and the VA medical facility clinical POC maintain close coordination with the National Social Work Program (NSWP) to facilitate care and benefits coordination for MOH recipients.

(2) Notifying VISN Directors, VISN MOH POC/Leads, VA medical facility Directors, VA medical facility Social Work Chiefs, VA medical facility MOH Executive Champions, and VA medical facility clinical POCs of upcoming MOH recipients travel to initiate an appropriate welcome at all VA medical facilities.

(3) Maintaining an updated MOH Program Directory for internal access and use by the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team, listing the VISN MOH POC/Lead, VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion, VA medical facility Social Work Chief, VA medical facility clinical POC, and NSWP staff members to ensure MOH recipients receive coordinated care and benefits.

(4) Updating the MOH SharePoint site on an ongoing basis. The site is available at: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/SitePages/Medal-of-Honor.aspx>. *NOTE: This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

(5) Evaluating the impact of the MOH Program based on feedback related to the Veteran's experience received by the Office of Client Relations; MOH recipients, their family members, and caregivers; and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

(6) Reviewing Outreach Heads Up forms received by the VA medical facility MOH CCT within 72 hours and routing them to the Office of Client Relations to support MOH Program updates to VA and VHA leadership. See the MOH SharePoint site for the Outreach Heads Up forms at:

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/MOH%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fvhaswp%2FMOH%20Program%2FSOP%20and%20supporting%20documents&viewid=d1a00872%2Dbff2%2D483f%2D96fd%2Deda95b16ccdf>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

h. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that all VA medical facilities within the VISN comply with this directive and informing the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/CNO and the Chief Operating Officer when barriers to compliance are identified.

(2) Ensuring all VA medical facilities caring for MOH recipients have a VA medical facility MOH CCT and that all VA medical facilities not caring for MOH recipients identify clinicians to serve as members of the VA medical facility CCT, once established, to provide care for MOH recipients that may enroll.

(3) Assigning a VISN MOH POC/Lead to collaborate with VA medical facilities within the VISN on issues related to MOH recipients. **NOTE:** This may be a collateral duty.

i. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Medal of Honor Point of Contact/Lead.** The VISN MOH POC/Lead is responsible for collaborating with and assisting VA medical facilities within the VISN resolve care coordination issues related to MOH recipients escalated by the VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion.

j. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring overall VA medical facility compliance with this directive and taking corrective action if non-compliance is identified.

(2) Appointing a VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion.

k. **VA Medical Facility Medal Of Honor Executive Champion.** The VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion must be from the executive leadership team level (e.g., Associate Director, Associate Director of Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer, Chief of Staff). **NOTE:** This may be a collateral duty. The VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion is responsible for:

(1) Managing the MOH Program, including program administration such as outreach, contact with MOH recipients, and VA medical facility events and celebrations including National Medal of Honor Day (March 25).

(2) Establishing, appointing, and overseeing the VA medical facility MOH CCT to provide outreach to MOH recipients. The CCT may consist of the following team members:

(a) Social Work Chief/Executive.

- (b) VA medical facility MOH Clinical POC.
- (c) Traveling Veteran Coordinator.
- (d) Emergency Department or On-Call Social Work Supervisor.
- (e) Administrator on Duty.

(3) Ensuring that the VA medical facility MOH CCT reports outreach efforts by submitting an Outreach Heads Up form to the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team. See the MOH SharePoint site for the Outreach Heads Up forms at: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/MOH%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fvhaswp%2FMOH%20Program%2FSOP%20and%20supporting%20documents&viewid=d1a00872%2Dbff2%2D483f%2D96fd%2Deda95b16ccdf>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(4) Evaluating the impact of the VA medical facility's MOH Program using the MOH standard operating procedure located at: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/MOH%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fvhaswp%2FMOH%20Program%2FSOP%20and%20supporting%20documents&viewid=d1a00872%2Dbff2%2D483f%2D96fd%2Deda95b16ccdf>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.

(5) Serving as a VA medical facility liaison for VA and community service providers for the MOH recipient and their families.

(6) Escalating critical MOH Program care coordination issues that require VISN-level resolution to the VISN MOH POC/Lead.

l. VA Medical Facility Clinical Point of Contact. **NOTE:** This may be a collateral duty. The VA medical facility clinical POC is responsible for:

(1) Informing MOH recipients about resources and benefits available, advocating for the MOH recipient by acting as a liaison with VA medical facility staff, coordinating health care services within VA, and supporting access to community care as appropriate.

(2) Completing verification of service connection to ensure the information matches VBA records, and if the information does not match, updating the VA medical facility record.

m. VA Medical Facility Medal of Honor Care Coordination Team Member. The VA medical facility MOH CCT is a core team established by the VA medical facility MOH Executive Champion to assist with coordinating and continuum of care for MOH recipients. It is comprised of clinical staff that collaborates with the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team to provide priority care and services to MOH recipients (see paragraph 2.g.(6)). The VA medical facility MOH CCT team member is responsible for:

(1) Conducting outreach to MOH recipients in the VA medical facility's catchment area to assist with unmet need on a regular basis. Each CCT is required on a quarterly basis to review health care and service concerns and provide education about VHA and VBA benefits and services.

(2) Completing Outreach Heads Up forms following MOH recipient outreach and submitting forms to the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team.

3. OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

a. **Internal Controls.** The internal control in this directive is evaluation of the quarterly outreach conducted to MOH recipients by the National Director of Social Work, Fisher House and Family Hospitality and Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Program to ensure objectives outlined in this directive are achieved.

b. **Metrics.** The metrics in this directive that assess the policy or program effectiveness are:

(1) VA medical facility Executive Champions in all VA medical facilities that have MOH recipients in their catchment areas must conduct outreach each quarter. Outreach efforts include the following communications with MOH recipients: phone calls, mailings, and in-person meetings.

(2) VA medical facility MOH CCTs report outreach efforts by submitting an Outreach Heads Up to the CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team.

(3) The CMSW MOH Program Site Support Team reviews and processes Outreach Heads Up information within 72 hours and forwards to the Office of Client Relations.

4. TRAINING

There are no formal training requirements associated with this directive.

5. BACKGROUND

In May 2023, VA implemented the MOH Pilot Program. The pilot ensured MOH recipients are assigned to a care team to assist with coordination of services and health care needs. The initial outreach began with VISN 1 VA Connecticut Healthcare System. On June 21, 2023, the formal MOH Pilot Program was launched with the first in-home outreach visit conducted by the VISN 15 Eastern Kansas Health Care System. On September 8, 2023, the MOH Pilot Program was expanded to 39 additional sites with MOH recipients.

6. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (for example, paper, electronic, electronic systems) created by this directive must be managed as required by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) approved records schedules found in VHA Records

Control Schedule 10-1. Questions regarding any aspect of records management can be addressed to the appropriate Records Officer.

7. REFERENCES

a. 38 U.S.C. § 7301(b).

b. MOH Outreach Heads Up forms.

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/MOH%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fvhaswp%2FMOH%20Program%2FSOP%20and%20supporting%20documents&viewid=d1a00872%2Dbff2%2D483f%2D96fd%2Deda95b16ccdf>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*

c. MOH standard operating procedure.

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/MOH%20Program/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fvhaswp%2FMOH%20Program%2FSOP%20and%20supporting%20documents&viewid=d1a00872%2Dbff2%2D483f%2D96fd%2Deda95b16ccdf>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public*

d. VHA MOH SharePoint.

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhaswp/SitePages/Medal-of-Honor.aspx>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA website that is not available to the public.*