

### **HISTORY:**

GAO report (04-566) concluded that improved screening of health care practitioners would reduce risk to Veterans. Their recommendations included:

- Expand verification requirements for primary source verification (PSV) of all licenses and certifications

VHA concurred with the GAO's findings and convened a Task Force to make recommendations to the Undersecretary for Health for implementation (due by October 2004).

Congressional Hearings were conducted on March 31, 2004. VHA assured the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee that they would credential all licensed, registered, and certified health care professionals including contractors.

The Task Force was convened subsequent to the hearings. Membership consisted of representatives from National Program Offices, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), Veterans' Integrated Service Network (VISN) personnel as well as staff from the Medical Center level.

The Task Force recommended that credentialing elements would include:

- Complete application, including accounting for all gaps greater than 30 days

- Education in accordance with current VA policy
- Primary Source Verification of license, registration, and certification
- Supplemental questions, many of which are on the applications
- One reference
- Last place of employment and ALL VA employment

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**Licensed Independent Provider (LIP)** are licensed to provide independent practice and hold clinical privileges

**Dependent Providers** function under the orders of an LIP (or a collaborative practice agreement) and a scope of practice

**Primary Source Verification (PSV)** is documentation from the original source of a specific credential that verifies the accuracy of a qualification. This can be accomplished through a letter, documented phone contact, secure electronic communication or delegate of the entity (such as the Student Clearing House). PSV is accomplished at time of initial credentialing and at the time of expiration of the credential.

**Implementation** of this credentialing process begins with the publication of the policy entitled, *Credentialing of Health Care Professionals*. It is known that it will take time to enroll and credential all current employees. Full implementation will be accomplished within two years from the date of publication of the policy.

Each facility will determine how to best accomplish the task in their own facility. This could involve credentialing high risk, high visibility staff and supervisors first.

### **WHY USE VETPRO?**

VetPro is a web-enabled system that proved itself in the credentialing of LIP staff and has been used since 2001. It has demonstrated that a practitioner's credentials can be validated and maintained accurately in an easily retrievable manner by those who need to know. Use of VetPro ensures the consistency of the credentialing process for all employees and provides a reliable electronic data bank of health care provider credentials. VetPro is a system that is capable of maintaining all VA/VHA health care practitioners' credentials and is scaleable to grow as needed. VetPro's response time is at or better than current Internet response time.

VetPro employs a three-tiered architecture that monitors the security for those who should not be accessing the system as well as being protected by password protected access. All communication uses secure, encrypted methods. Access levels are assigned and restricted, as needed, to ensure confidentiality.

### **USER LEVELS:**

- 50 – Provider (can access only their own record)
- 100 – Guest access is restricted and used for individuals who may visit and

must review files, such as the IG, JCAHO, etc.

- 200 – Service Chief is restricted to only those individuals in the service and they have the ability to view information in the provider file and enter recommendation for appointment
- 250 – Restricted Coordinator is also a restricted level of access to specific files. These individuals can add data or update, but access is limited to their side of the system with no access to the other side.
- 300 – Credentialing Coordinator access used for the workers who are doing the bulk of the credentialing at the facility level of either the LIP providers or the Dependent providers.
- 400 – Administrator is limited to only three per facility. This level of access is similar to 300, but with access to the entire facility.

**EXPEDITED CREDENTIALING:**

In order to ensure that the staffing needs are met in a timely manner, an expedited credentialing process was also developed. Applicants complete the application process and the facility credentialing staff will obtain verification of education; one current, full, and unrestricted license, registration, and /or certification for the position; most recent employment; and currently required database checks. Once this process is completed, Human Resources Management can move forward with the process of granting an appointment to the facility under the VA

Human Resources policies. Full credentialing must be completed within 60 days.

Information in VetPro is protected by the Privacy Act as documented by 77VA10Q System of Record.

VetPro Help is available through e-mail ([vetprohd@mail.nih.gov](mailto:vetprohd@mail.nih.gov)) as well as by telephone, pager or direct e-mail to any of the VetPro Support Staff. Additional information is posted on the Office of Quality and Performance website (<http://vaww.oqp.med.va.gov>).

**If you need additional assistance, please contact:**

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## Credentialing of Health Care Professionals

