DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

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UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

ACCESS TO MEDICATIONS FOR TRANSITIONING SERVICEMEMBERS

1. This information letter is intended to reiterate Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) long-standing practice of promoting continuity of care for Department of Defense (DoD) active duty and recently discharged Servicemembers as they begin the process of accessing VA healthcare services.

2. The VA provides a high-quality evidence-based prescription benefit enabling VA health care providers to meet the medication needs of our Nation's Veterans. VA's drug formulary management process has been validated to be both clinically and economically sound in a number of reviews conducted by various groups including the Government Accountability Office, the Institute of Medicine, and the VA Office of the Inspector General and has received positive reviews in several peer-reviewed medical journal articles. It is my expectation that this same level of access to medications is consistently extended to recently discharged Veterans who choose VA health care.

3. The VA/DoD Joint Executive Council and Health Executive Committee have made the smooth transition of Servicemembers from DoD to VA a high priority. Collaborations between VA and DoD related to medication therapy include the award of an all-time high number of joint pharmaceutical contracts, the development of VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines, the sharing of mail order prescription fulfillment services and lastly, Medication Reconciliation education programming and tools.

4. VA has a long-standing practice of providing active duty Servicemembers access to pharmaceuticals prescribed by their DoD providers when they are receiving care in a VA medical facility. The medication therapy needs of recently discharged Veterans who choose VA for their medical care should also be carefully evaluated by VA health care providers and unless medical conditions warrant a change, existing medication therapies should be continued.

5. Pharmacy benefits management collaborations between VA and DoD and the commitment of every VA health care provider is essential to the continued success of meeting the medication needs of all Veterans served by VA. I greatly appreciate your continued support in this area.

6. Questions about this Information Letter may be directed to Michael Valentino, Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management Services at (202) 461-7360.

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Interim Under Secretary for Health