

Conference Call Highlights
Grant and Per Diem Program Operational Call

September 12, 2011

1. Roger Casey provided an update on last month's topics.
 - a. Daniel Eke and Associates is conducting fiscal reviews of GPD projects. They are contractors that have been engaged by VA to review GPD program costs and accountability of funds. Every program will be reviewed. They will be looking at expenditures for the prior fiscal year. If you are contacted, please respond.
 - b. VA OIG is conducting a national review the GPD Program. They will be visiting selected sites. If your agency is selected for a site visit your Liaison will notify you. They will be reviewing items such as: relationship between the medical center and the provider; whether or not the services annotated in the grant application are being provided; does the project adequately address the safety, security, and privacy needs of Veterans; and the overall facility condition, including cleanliness, nutritional adequacy, and satisfaction of residents. Although GPD facilities have scheduled inspections once a year; it is expected that all facilities will provide the scope of services as outlined in their grant application and ensure Veteran safety and compliance with all program requirements all throughout the year.
2. Ms. Watson talked about the new electronic invoicing system that all grantees will be required to use beginning in October 2011. The GPD Program has been coordinating with VA's Financial Services Center (FSC) in Austin, TX to implement an electronic invoicing system. FSC has customized their Vendor Inquiry System (VIS) to electronically capture the information that has historically been submitted through the Per Diem Payment Voucher Form. All grantees with operational projects were sent letters, broadcast fax announcements, and emails (if available) informing them of the scheduled trainings which began September 12, 2011. Training was scheduled by VISN. She reminded participants that the training time was changed to 12:00 EST. If you have registered in the system, please start the electronic voucher process in October for the September billing. A website has been develop where you may access the PowerPoint presentation, Frequently Asked Questions (included below), and the schedule for the training. For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/vis.asp>.
3. Mr. Quarles reminded the participants that if they did not get a copy of the last inspection from your liaison, please contact our office. Annual inspections are done between January and March; although we do allow liaisons to perform the inspections as early as October.
4. There will not be a GPD Provider Operational Call in October due to the holiday. The next Operational Call is scheduled for November 14, 2011 at 3:00p.m. EST. Call in number is 1-800-767-1750; access code 17663.

Attachment

VA's Grant and Per Diem Program

Frequently Asked Questions Conversion to Electronic Invoicing

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Is my agency required to use VA's Financial Services Center (FSC) Vendor Inquiry System (VIS)?

Yes. Effective October 1, 2011 all operational Grant and Per Diem (GPD) providers will be submitting monthly per diem invoices through the VIS system.

NOTE: Do **NOT** continue to mail or fax your voucher forms to FSC in Austin, TX once you begin using the VIS system or this will create duplicate invoices for your organization. Vouchers **will** need to be submitted to your GPD Liaison.

2. Why is VA changing the way per diem payments are invoiced?

Electronic invoicing presents many advantages to GPD providers and VA.

Advantages include:

- faster processing of monthly per diem invoices because there will no longer be lag time to mail vouchers and have them scanned in to VA's payment approval system (OLCS);
- fewer mathematical errors because the VIS system will automatically calculate the amount to be paid once the provider inputs the correct bed days of care and per diem rate;
- ability to track payment status once a request is submitted to VA;
- uniform system to process all per diem payment requests nationwide;
- monitoring of program occupancy rate; and
- ability to accurately report on funding disbursements as required by the Federal transparency initiative.

3. What is the process to request per diem reimbursements through my local VA medical center?

- a. GPD Provider: Within the first 10 days of the month, submit the per diem payment request through the VIS system.
- b. GPD Provider: Fax/deliver the *Per Diem Payment Voucher Form* and *detailed daily census* to your GPD Liaison.
- c. VA Liaison: Review the detailed daily census to confirm all information is correct and corresponds to the information on the Voucher Form and what was requested in OLCS.
 - i. If all information is correct, the payment can be approved in OLCS. Voucher Form should then be signed and faxed to the National GPD Program office at (toll-free) 1-877-332-0335 or (toll) 813-979-3569.
 - ii. If all information is **not** correct, the provider should be immediately notified as to the corrections required. If the payment was submitted incorrectly in OLCS it should be rejected and the provider should be instructed to resubmit.
- d. VA Liaison: A copy of the detailed daily census and Voucher Form must be retained by the medical center in accordance with record retention requirements

as the source documents for the payments made to community providers. This information is frequently requested when the VA undergoes external reviews (i.e. OIG).

4. What number to I call for VIS Customer Support?

Toll-free 1-877-353-9791

PROVIDER-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

5. Do I still need to submit the monthly voucher form and detailed daily census to my GPD Liaison?

Yes. The *Per Diem Payment Voucher Form* will continue to be submitted to your GPD Liaison each month until further notice. Eventually, VA expects that this form can be phased out but, not until the new system is fully implemented nationwide.

The detailed daily census will always be required to be submitted each month at the same time the per diem payment request is put in the VIS system as this is the source document which justifies the payment request to VA.

NOTE: *VA's control point officials will not approve your per diem payment request without first reviewing and verifying the information provided on the detailed daily census.*

6. How do I get registered to use the VIS system?

Go to <https://www.vis.fsc.va.gov/>; on the bottom left side of the page is a link indicating 'click here to create a new account'.

7. Can my agency have multiple VIS users?

Yes. Each user will have to register separately in the VIS system. Staff should not share user login access information.

8. Who in my agency should be registered with VIS and allowed to submit for per diem reimbursements?

The community provider representative who submits for per diem reimbursement requests through the VIS system should be someone within the organization with the authority to speak for the agency and is knowledgeable regarding the validity of the invoice submissions.

9. My agency has multiple GPD projects that were awarded under different Tax ID numbers. Will I be able to establish my VIS account to show more than one Tax ID?

Yes. When you register with VIS you will be asked for your Tax ID number. You will only be able to input one number. Once your registration is set-up with VIS you can contact Austin FSC and request that additional Tax ID numbers be added to your user profile.

10. Will all of my project numbers be listed under my user name when submitting a payment request?

Yes. The GPD Program office has provided FSC with a list of project numbers and corresponding Tax ID (Vendor ID) numbers. When a particular Vendor ID is selected the corresponding project numbers will be available in a dropdown box.

11. What is a Purchase Order (PO) number, Ordering Station, and Order Number?

Your PO number consists of 9 characters. It is a combination of the Ordering Station Number and the Order Number (i.e. 539C12345). The first three characters are your medical center Ordering Station number (i.e. 539 – Cincinnati OH VAMC). The last six characters are the Order Number (i.e. C12345).

12. Where do I get my Purchase Order (PO) number?

You can request this number from your GPD Liaison. In some cases your liaison may refer you to VA Fiscal Service for this number. The PO number identifies which VA medical center and control point official to electronically route your payment request to for approval.

***NOTE:** Some medical centers keep the same PO for the entire fiscal year (October-September); others may change the PO number quarterly or monthly. It is at the discretion of the medical center's Chief of Fiscal to determine how often the PO Numbers change.*

13. What is my Vendor ID?

This is your agency's Tax ID (Vendor ID) number that was used when the grant application was originally approved for funding. Some organizations have more than one Tax ID; it is very important to only bill under the Tax ID associated with a particular project which was identified in the original grant application.

14. What is my Project Code?

This is the unique project number (i.e. 99-25-TX) assigned to your grant award. Organizations with more than one operational project will need to bill separately for each project number.

15. How do I bill if I have a service center and a transitional housing project under the same project number?

The VIS system is structured so that you can 'Add Line' to a payment request. For projects that have a service center and transitional housing under the same project number you will have two lines for your invoice which will be automatically totaled for your request to VA.

16. What if I make an error on my electronic invoice submission, such as providing the wrong number of bed days of care or the wrong per diem rate?

Immediately notify your GPD Liaison so that your payment request can be rejected in VA's On-Line Certification System. Once this is done you may resubmit through VIS. **NOTE:** you will need to re-submit your request using a different Invoice Number.

If your payment has already been approved by VA, then a supplemental payment will need to be made if you under-billed or a deduction will have to occur if you over-billed VA.

17. Once an invoice request is submitted through VIS, how long does it take for my medical center to see the request in their system to approve?

Invoices are batch processed each night; therefore, an invoice request submitted on Tuesday is sent to the medical center approving official on Wednesday. The VIS system allows users to check the status of invoices:

- a. OPEN – indicates that the invoice has not been submitted by the grantee yet.

- b. PENDING – indicates that the invoice has been submitted but, has not been sent to the VA medical center approving official yet.
- c. SUBMITTED – can mean one of two things: the invoice has been submitted to the approving official at the medical center and is pending their approval or the payment has been approved and is scheduled for release.
***NOTE:** to determine if a payment has been approved and is scheduled for release you can use the Inquires tab at the top of the VIS webpage and select Scheduled Payments for Vendor.*

VA-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

18. I am a VA employee; do I have to register to use VIS?

No. Only GPD Providers who will be submitting requests for monthly per diem payment reimbursements need to establish a VIS account.

19. Will I still approve per diem invoices through the On-Line Certification System (OLCS)?

Yes. VA approvals will continue to occur through OLCS. The invoice will no longer be a scanned image of the voucher form but, a digital report of the same information (bed days, per diem rate, and amount requested).

20. What if a provider submits a request for the wrong number of bed days or wrong per diem rate?

The payment request should be rejected in OLCS. The provider should be notified of the error and instructed to resubmit through VIS.

NOTE: the provider will need to re-submit their request using a different Invoice Number.

If the payment has already been approved by VA, then a supplemental payment will need to be requested by the provider if they under-billed or a deduction will have to occur if they over-billed VA.