

## **Health Care Navigation Tools Overview**

### **Overview**

This suite of tools has been designed to support the implementation of the SSVF Health Care Navigation services. The use of these tools is voluntary. Grantees are welcome to use them as is or to customize them to fit their health navigation design and to best meet the needs of the Veterans they are working with.

### **HCN Screening Tool**

The Health Care Navigation Screening Tool is designed to screen all SSVF participants for appropriate referrals to a Health Care Navigator. This screen could be conducted by either the HCN or by another SSVF staff member depending on the design of their health care navigation services. The screen identifies those Veterans that do not have access to health care whether through VHA or community resources, have unmet health needs or have health care goals that they need additional support with. Those Veterans are appropriate for a referral to a Health Care Navigator. The completed Screening Tool should be provided to the Health Care Navigator with the referral, if the HCN did not conduct the screening, because it contains important information that is not collected on the other tools.

### **Assessments**

Once a Veteran has been referred to a Health Care Navigator, there are two assessment options that have been developed to gather information on the Veteran's health status, access to medical care, and health needs. This information should inform the development of a comprehensive health care navigation plan. While the assessments collect information on the same health domains, the assessments collect a different level of specific information. Grantees should review the two assessments and determine whether one of them fits into their health care navigation design.

**Abridged Assessment:** This assessment collects higher level information on the Veteran's health symptoms and use of substances.

**Detailed Assessment:** This assessment collects very detailed information on the Veteran's health symptoms and use of substances.

### **Navigation Plan**

The information collected from the Screening Tool and Assessment, along with extensive conversation with the Veteran, should be used to develop a Navigation Plan. The plan has health goals identified by the Veteran and actions identified as priorities by the Veteran. The form has places to identify who is responsible for carrying out the action, which could be the Veteran, the HCN or another person, as well as a timeline, status updates and referrals.

### **How to use these tools**

In alignment with the commitment of the SSVF program to honor Veteran choice and client centered services, the planning for Health Care Navigation should be led by the Veteran. Even if the Screening Tool indicates they are a good candidate for participation in Health Care Navigation, they must opt into the services. Throughout the assessment and the development of their Navigation Plan, the Veteran should be leading the process. They should always feel comfortable declining to answer questions. The purpose of the Assessment tool is to highlight suggestions for the Health Care Navigator to present to

the Veteran, or their care team. However, the goals and priorities for engaging with VHA or community health services should be determined by the Veteran, even if those goals and actions don't address the Veteran's most severe health needs. The use of motivational interviewing and trauma informed care principles can be very useful in supporting the Veteran to identify their health needs and their engagement in health services.

While these tools are designed as forms with sequential questions and check boxes, the information is best collected as part of rapport building and conversations with the Veterans on the Health Care Navigator's case load. This information may not be collected during a single appointment, particularly if the HCN is conducting both the Screening and the Assessment. It also may be clear that not all questions are appropriate to ask in all situations. The best way to use the tools are at the discretion of the Health Care Navigators as a part of the grantee's health care navigation services.