



**Administrative Closure**  
Teleretinal Imaging Program Review  
VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, Harlingen, TX  
MCI # 2012-03988-HI-0441

The VA Office of Inspector General Office of Healthcare Inspections received allegations from a complainant at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, Harlingen, TX, (system) that:

- Teleretinal imaging using medication to dilate the pupil is being performed on patients with contraindications to the medication because of inadequate training and the Teleretinal Coordinator pressuring staff to improve clinical reminder completion rates.
- Staff has not received adequate training to perform the teleretinal imaging exams.

We conducted an offsite review in August 2012. We reviewed electronic health records (EHRs) of patients who underwent teleretinal imaging during June 2012 at all four outpatient clinics (OPCs) within the system. We looked at the training requirements and records for the teleretinal imagers and the Telehealth Program Coordinator, clinical reminder data for Teleretinal Screening from fiscal year 2010 through the most recent quarter of 2012, the teleretinal imaging equipment used at OPCs, and relevant system policies.

Of the six patients identified by the system as having glaucoma who had teleretinal imaging performed, one patient had no documentation of being diagnosed with glaucoma in the EHR. One of 328 OPC patients who received teleretinal imaging during June 2012 had glaucoma<sup>1</sup> and received medication to dilate the pupils. Another OPC patient with glaucoma may have received dilation medication, but the template documenting whether the medication was given is incomplete. Neither patient had any documented eye-related complaints since receiving the medication. The remaining three patients either received teleretinal imaging without using the dilation medication or were referred to an eye care professional for further evaluation. All OPCs have comparable imaging cameras capable of taking retinal images without dilating the pupil.

We did not substantiate that staff did not receive adequate training to perform teleretinal imaging exams. There is one primary teleretinal imager at each OPC with one backup imager at the Corpus Christi OPC, two backup imagers at the Laredo and McAllen OPCs, and no backup imager at the Harlingen OPC. All imagers underwent Telehealth Clinical Technician Training and Competencies with Master Preceptor Imager Core Competency Verification by the Telehealth Program Coordinator who is a certified Master Preceptor in Teleretinal Imaging. The documentation of training is incomplete for some of the imagers, but the EHR review showed all imagers were using the same documentation template, made similar appropriate choices for imaging, and referred patients for further evaluation when needed.

I concur with recommendation for administrative closure of this inspection.

Approved by

JOHN D. DAIGH, JR., M.D.  
Assistant Inspector General  
for Healthcare Inspections

10/2/12

<sup>1</sup> The system's Eye Diabetic Retinopathy Surveillance Consult template states that using dilation medication is contraindicated if the patient has a history of glaucoma or suspected glaucoma.