Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: November 1, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Patient Care Services/Chief Nursing Officer (12)

Subj: Review of VA Facility Emergency Contact Information for Video Telehealth (VIEWS 8615338)

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-10N23)
Medical Center Executive Leadership Teams (ELT)

1. The purpose of this Memorandum is to ensure that telehealth health care professionals have the emergency contact information* needed to execute telehealth emergency handoffs, if needed, when delivering video telehealth care to a VA facility or clinic space.

2. In follow up to the Memorandum titled "Standard Telehealth Emergency Handoff Procedures for Patient Emergencies During Synchronous Video Telehealth Visits" (June 30, 2022), VA facilities will review for accuracy, and correct where necessary, their emergency contact information within Virtual Care Manager (VCM).

3. **Within 30 days of the release of this Memorandum,** each VISN will send an email response to Leonie Heyworth, MD, MPH at Leonie.Heyworth@va.gov confirming (a) to (c) below:

    a. Each medical center has reviewed the emergency contact information populated in VCM, for its respective facilities and clinics that are listed within VCM (e.g., Community Based Outpatient Clinics);
    b. Each of the emergency contacts populated in VCM, for a given facility or clinic, can physically enter a patient exam room STAT or is on-site to initiate a local emergency response during a patient clinic emergency at that facility or clinic (see example in Table 2 of the Emergency and Facility Urgent Contact List Information Worksheet);
    c. There are *no* emergency contacts populated in VCM for a given facility or clinic, who *cannot* physically enter a patient exam room STAT or is *not* on-site to initiate a local emergency response, during a patient clinical emergency at that facility or clinic.

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Examples of inappropriate emergency contacts for a given VA facility or clinic include 1) the Veteran's Crisis Line, 2) a Facility Telehealth Coordinator (FTC) who does not work onsite at the given facility or clinic, 3) the Facility's Emergency Department (ED) phone number if the ED is not co-located with the given facility or clinic, and 4) the E911/Contingency Emergency Call Relay Center number.

> ***NOTE:** 1) Emergency contact information in Virtual Care Manager enables telehealth healthcare professionals to quickly contact the correct staff member(s) at a VA facility or clinic who can physically enter a patient exam room STAT during the video visit, or is on-site at the patient's location, to initiate a local emergency response during a patient clinical emergency at that facility or clinic. 2) If a VISN Telehealth Program Manager or FTC does not have access to the Configuration tab needed to complete this action in VCM, a ticket can be placed through the Office of Connected Care Help Desk (OCCHD) at 866-651-3180 or through the OCCHD Portal at https://status.occhdsupport.ironbow.com/. 3) Additional resources to learn about the standard video telehealth emergency procedures can be found in the* Emergency Procedures Community.

4.   For questions regarding this Memorandum, please contact Deputy Director for Clinical Services for Telehealth Services Leonie Heyworth, MD, MPH, at Leonie.Heyworth@va.gov or 858-245-7651.

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