

February 24, 2009

PROVISION OF MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION (ID) BRACELETS AND PENDANTS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy regarding the provision of medical identification (ID) bracelets or pendants containing pertinent medical information (allergies or diagnoses) that would be valuable to emergency health care providers.

2. BACKGROUND: Symptoms of common ailments can be misdiagnosed by responders to an emergent situation involving a person who is unable to communicate. Prompt and accurate diagnosis is essential to effective treatment. The use of an ID bracelet or pendant is a standard way to provide this information to health care providers in a situation where the individual cannot communicate.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that ID bracelets and pendants must be available, upon appropriate request by Department of Veterans Affairs clinicians through Prosthetics Service, for veteran patients whose pertinent medical information would be valuable to emergency medical care providers.

4. ACTION

a. **Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for ensuring that all facilities within the VISN are issuing ID bracelets or pendants, as appropriate.

b. **Facility Director.** The Facility Director is responsible for ensuring that local systems are in place to provide enrolled and otherwise eligible Veterans with appropriate ID bracelets or pendants in accordance with this Directive.

c. **Facility Chief of Staff.** The Facility Chief of Staff is responsible for ensuring that electronic consults to Prosthetics Service are in place for use by clinicians to request ID bracelets or pendants when such devices are indicated, and that clinicians are educated about their availability and appropriate use. The consult must:

(1) Specify the information to be engraved on the device. This can include, but is not limited to: food and drug allergies, diabetes, seizure disorder, and metal fragments in the body.

(2) Specify if an ID bracelet or pendant is required.

d. **Chief, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service.** The Chief, Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service, is responsible for ensuring that:

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES FEBRUARY 28, 2014

VHA DIRECTIVE 2009-007
February 24, 2009

(1) The ID bracelet or pendant is purchased in a timely manner according to all pertinent regulations and policies.

(2) In addition to the medical condition, the Veteran has the option as to what personal information is to be included.

5. REFERENCES: VHA Handbook 1173.2, Furnishing Prosthetic Appliances and Services.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Consultant, Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (113), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-461-1800.

7. RESCISSION: None. This VHA Directive expires February 28, 2014.

Michael J. Kussman, MD, MS, MACP
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 2/25/09
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 E-mailed 2/25/09