

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

# Memorandum

Date: June 9, 2022

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Suspension of Certain Discharges, Reductions, and Reassessments in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) (VIEWS 7379173)

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to notify Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors that certain discharges, reductions, and reassessments for individuals participating in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) are suspended indefinitely.

2. As announced on March 22, 2022, the Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is reviewing and examining the current PCAFC eligibility criteria listed in 38 C.F.R. § 71.20(a)(1)-(4) and the stipend level criteria listed in 38 C.F.R. § 71.40(c)(4)(i)(A) (hereinafter "eligibility and stipend level criteria"). During this review and examination period, certain Veterans and Family Caregivers will not be discharged from PCAFC or experience a reduction in any support provided through PCAFC because of a change based on eligibility or stipend level criteria. Reassessments will be conducted by VA as set forth in this memorandum. The review and examination period referred to in this memorandum will begin on June 9, 2022, and end on the date this memorandum is revoked.

3. Transitional assessments for legacy cohort. VA facilities and VISN Centralized Eligibility and Appeals Teams (CEATs) should follow the instructions below for individuals who were approved for, or who applied to PCAFC, prior to October 1, 2020, and their Family Caregivers. These individuals are considered Legacy Participants, Legacy Applicants, and their Family Caregivers (hereinafter "legacy cohort"; see 38 C.F.R. § 71.15 for definitions):

- a. Facility CSP staff and VISN CEATs will continue to complete transitional assessments of the legacy cohort, as required by 38 C.F.R. § 71.30(e).
- b. If a member of the legacy cohort does not wish to participate in a transitional assessment, they may notify CSP in writing or verbally. Facility CSP staff will document this in the electronic health record and will not proceed with scheduling a transitional assessment while this memorandum is in effect unless contacted by the Veteran or Family

Subj: Suspension of Certain Discharges, Reductions, and Reassessments in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) (VIEWS Caregiver to request a transitional assessment. A member of the legacy cohort will not be discharged from PCAFC or experience a reduction in any support provided through PCAFC based on eligibility and stipend level criteria applied during a transitional assessment or because that individual does not participate in a transitional assessment.

- c. VISN CEATs will determine whether an increase in personal care services is warranted based on a transitional assessment, and the facility CSP staff will process an increase in the monthly stipend payment if warranted in accordance with 38 C.F.R. § 71.40(c)(4)(ii)(C)(2)(i).
4. Applications for post-expansion cohort. VA facilities and VISN CEATs should follow the instructions below for individuals who applied to or have been approved for PCAFC on or after October 1, 2020. These individuals are considered post-expansion Veterans and their Family Caregivers (hereinafter “post-expansion cohort”).
    - a. Facility CSP staff will continue to accept and process new PCAFC applications as received. VISN CEATs will continue to make application determinations.
    - b. Both facility CSP staff and VISN CEATs will apply current eligibility and stipend level criteria in processing new PCAFC applications.
  5. Reassessments based on eligibility and stipend level criteria for legacy and post-expansion cohorts.
    - a. Annual Reassessments: VA has determined that annual reassessments are unnecessary for legacy cohort and post-expansion cohort Veterans and their Family Caregivers while VA is reviewing and examining eligibility and stipend level criteria as described in paragraph 2 above. 38 C.F.R. § 71.30(c).
    - b. Requested Reassessments: Facility CSP staff will continue to initiate a reassessment based on a request for a reassessment made by a legacy cohort or post-expansion cohort Veteran or Family Caregiver (e.g., one made because the individual believes an increase in the stipend level may be warranted) or if evidence of an increased need for personal care services is otherwise discovered.
      - I. VISN CEATs will determine whether an increase in personal care services is warranted based on such reassessment, and the facility CSP staff will process an increase in the monthly stipend payment if warranted in accordance with 38 C.F.R. § 71.40(c)(4)(ii)(C)(1)(i) or (2)(i).
      - II. No reduction in stipend level or discharge based on eligibility and stipend level criteria will occur for either the legacy or post-expansion cohort based on such a reassessment.

Subj: Suspension of Certain Discharges, Reductions, and Reassessments in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) (VIEWS

6. CSP actions unrelated to eligibility and stipend level criteria. This memorandum does not alter CSP operations for Veterans and Family Caregivers with respect to PCAFC requirements other than the eligibility and stipend level criteria as outlined above.

- a. Facility CSP staff will continue to provide all support services to eligible Veterans and their Family Caregivers.
- b. Facility CSP staff will continue to conduct wellness contacts for eligible Veterans and their Family Caregivers. 38 C.F.R. § 71.40(b)(2) and (c)(1).
- c. Adjustments to stipend payments for the reasons set forth in 38 C.F.R. § 71.40(c)(4)(ii)(A) and (B) are unaffected by this memorandum.
- d. Facility CSP staff and VISN CEATs may take actions necessary to identify, assess, and determine whether revocation or discharge is appropriate for reasons other than eligibility and stipend level criteria. These actions may include reassessments when required. 38 C.F.R. § 71.30(b). Potential reasons for additional action not related to eligibility and stipend level criteria include:
  - I. Discharge at the request of the Veteran or Family Caregiver, including by the Family Caregiver due to Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence perpetrated by the eligible Veteran against the Family Caregiver. 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(b)(3) or (4).
  - II. Discharge due to death or institutionalization of a Veteran or Family Caregiver. 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(b)(1)(i)(B), (b)(2)(i).
  - III. Instances in which revocation for cause may be warranted. 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(a)(1)(i).
  - IV. Instances in which revocation due to non-compliance may be warranted, except as specified in paragraph 6.c.IV.1. 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(a)(1)(ii).
    1. A Veteran or Family Caregiver choosing not to participate in a transitional assessment as described in paragraph 3.b will not constitute non-compliance under 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(a)(1)(ii)(C).
    2. Failure to participate in a wellness contact or other CSP action necessary to identify, assess, and determine whether revocation or discharge is appropriate for reasons other than eligibility and stipend level criteria, will constitute non-compliance under 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(a)(1)(ii)(C) or (D), respectively.
  - V. Instances in which revocation due to VA error may be warranted. 38 C.F.R. § 71.45(a)(1)(iii).
- e. The process for disputing a PCAFC determination, including in the case of discharge or revocation for the reasons outlined above, is not changed by this memorandum.

Page 4.

Subj: Suspension of Certain Discharges, Reductions, and Reassessments in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) (VIEWS

7. Should you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Dr. Colleen Richardson, Executive Director, Caregiver Support Program, at [Colleen.Richardson2@va.gov](mailto:Colleen.Richardson2@va.gov).

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steven Lieberman".

Steven L. Lieberman, M.D.