

**DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Memorandum

Date: August 22, 2022

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations (15)

Subj: Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Bookable Hour and Appointment Length Standards

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network Directors (10N1-23)
Medical Center Directors (00)
VHA Senior Leaders

1. VHA has established enterprise-wide bookable hour and appointment length standards to improve access to care and workload equity among providers. By November 30, 2022, facilities must adhere to the following:

a. Ensure a minimum of 80% of a provider's total outpatient clinically mapped time worked is bookable for in-person, telephone, or telehealth care. Some providers or service types are [exempt from the bookable hours standard](#). Bookable hours do not need to be reduced if providers are already at or above the standard.

b. Decisions about provider-specific modifications to the bookable hours standard will be made at the facility level and will be approved by the Facility Chief of Staff using the [VHA Bookable Hours Provider Exceptions LEAF Form](#). Provide one point of contact for the LEAF form for each facility through the [VHA Provider Exception LEAF Form Point of Contact list](#) by September 9, 2022.

c. Apply [standardized appointment length ranges](#) for high-volume stop codes. The appointment length ranges are maximums; clinics that are operating effectively with appointment lengths below the given range may elect to continue providing care in this manner.

d. Confirm that the bookable hour and appointment length standards are being met through the Fiscal Year (FY) 22 Annual Clinic Review process. The due date for the FY22 Annual Clinic Review has been extended from September 30, 2022, to November 30, 2022.

2. Successful implementation of these standards is predicated on accurate provider labor mapping and Account Level Budget Cost Center (ALBCC) assignments. Provider labor mapping and ALBCCs must be reviewed for each provider to ensure labor mapping and ALBCCs reflect current outpatient schedules and assignments.

3. The bookable hour and appointment length standards were set by Clinical Services and the Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC) with input from field representatives including Chiefs of Staff, Service Chiefs, and Group Practice Managers.

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4. Facilities should follow guidance in this memorandum while directives are being updated. Facilities adopting Cerner Millennium Electronic Health Record are exempt from the bookable hour and appointment length standards for 8 weeks prior to the facility go-live date and 6 months post-implementation.

5. Resources to support implementation are available on the [Bookable Hours and Appointment Lengths Standards](#) SharePoint site. In addition to the posted implementation resources, asynchronous and synchronous forums will be offered to answer questions regarding standards implementation.

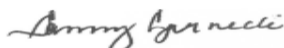
a. A [Q&A Database](#) is available to submit a question or view a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

b. A Microsoft Teams [resource room](#) will be open August 15-26, 2022 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET daily to support implementation and answer questions live.

c. A five-week office hours series with subject matter experts will begin on August 31, 2022, to answer your questions related to these standards. Office hours will be held on [Microsoft Teams](#) during the following dates and times:

- August 31, 2022 at 3pm ET;
- September 7, 2022 at 12pm ET;
- September 14, 2022 at 3pm ET;
- September 21, 2022, at 12pm ET;
- September 28 at 3pm ET.

6. All bargaining obligations have been met with all National unions. Bargaining related to implementation of these standards will not occur at the local level.



for
RimaAnn O. Nelson

Bookable Hours and Appointment Length Standards Attestation

VA Medical Center

Station Number

This memorandum certifies that the VA medical center (VAMC) named above has established local processes to implement, deploy and operationalize the national requirements outlined in the “[Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\) Bookable Hour and Appointment Length Standards Memorandum released on August 22, 2022](#).” These expectations include:

- A. Ensure a minimum of 80% of a provider’s total outpatient clinically mapped time worked is bookable in-person, telephone or telehealth care.
- B. Ensure appropriate bookable hour exceptions are submitted and approved by the facility chief of staff using a site-specific [LEAF](#) request.
- C. Apply [standardized appointment length ranges](#) for high-volume stop codes.

Additionally, a core team has been identified to ensure applicable guidance related to this initiative has been implemented and monitor continued compliance at the facility.

This memorandum certifies that appropriate reviews and assessments of providers’ bookable time, along with actions as outlined above, have taken place for impacted providers and corresponding clinics. All parties recognize that proper implementation will require ongoing maintenance and adjustments.

For questions related to this memo, please contact:

Point of Contact Name

Email Address

VA Medical Center Director

Signature

*This document is to be uploaded by Tuesday, January 31, 2023
to the [IVC Facility Attestation Dashboard](#).*