



Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General

Healthcare Inspection

Alleged Radiology and Cardiology Quality of Care Issues Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Gainesville, Florida

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this review was to determine the validity of allegations regarding timeliness of care, quality of care and staff certification at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Gainesville, FL. The complaint alleged:

- Biopsies in the radiology department are not provided on time.
- Cardiac catheterization wait time is 6 months.
- Patients needing radiology biopsy are not provided sedation.
- Patients needing radiology biopsies are not provided 2–3 hours recovery after the procedure is completed.
- Radiology biopsies are performed by non-Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support certified staff.

We did not substantiate the excessive wait time allegation for radiology biopsies, nor was there a 6 month wait time allegation for cardiac catheterizations. Malcom Randall VA Medical Center had processes in place to ensure that radiology biopsies and cardiac catheterizations were performed within a reasonable timeframe.

We did not substantiate the allegation that radiology biopsy patients were not provided sedation and adequate recovery time. The facility had an appropriate moderate sedation policy and patients who required sedation were appropriately observed and discharged.

We did not substantiate the allegation that radiology biopsies were performed by non-Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support certified staff. We found that radiology biopsy staff had appropriate Basic Life Support and Advanced Cardiac Life Support certifications. The Veterans Integrated Service Network and Malcom Randall VA Medical Center Directors concurred with the inspection results. Therefore, we made no recommendations.



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Inspector General
Washington, DC 20420

TO: Director, VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (10N8)

SUBJECT: Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Radiology and Cardiology Quality of Care Issues, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, FL

Purpose

The VA Office of Inspector General (OIG), Office of Healthcare Inspections received allegations regarding quality of care issues at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, FL (the medical center). The purpose of the review was to determine whether the allegations had merit.

Background

The medical center is part of the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, and is located in Gainesville, FL. It is a tertiary care facility with an extensive array of specialty services, 222 authorized/operating beds and 34 authorized/operating Community Living Center beds. The medical center is part of Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 8.

In August 2009, an anonymous complainant alleged that outpatient biopsies were poorly managed and patients experienced excessive wait times for biopsies and cardiac catheterizations. Specifically the complainant alleged:

- Biopsies in the radiology department are not provided on time.
- Cardiac catheterization wait time is 6 months.
- Patients needing radiology biopsy are not provided sedation.
- Patients needing radiology biopsies are not provided 2–3 hours recovery after the procedure is completed.
- Radiology biopsies are performed by non-Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certified staff.

Scope and Methodology

During a site visit on January 4–7, 2010, we interviewed staff, service managers, and system leaders. We conducted a detailed review of medical records for patients who had received radiology biopsies, and cardiac catheterizations from February through August 2009; relevant policies; procedures; and other related documents.

We conducted the inspection in accordance with *Quality Standards for Inspections* published by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

Inspection Results

Issue 1: Timeliness of Care

Biopsy Wait Times

We did not substantiate the allegation that wait times for radiology biopsies were excessive.

VHA Directives^{1,2} define the timeliness of referring patients to clinical specialty areas. Patients referred to a specialist must be scheduled for an appointment within 30 days of referral.

During the period February 1 – August 31, 2009, 211 patients were referred for radiology biopsies. Of the 211 cases, 110 were for biopsies of the lung, liver, and abdomen which were referred to in the complaint. We reviewed the most recent 51 records. For those records reviewed, the median time from initial request to actual procedure was 14 days. The time from request to procedure was less than 30 days, with one consult exception at 55 days.

Cardiac Catheterization Wait Times

We did not substantiate the allegation that there was a 6 month wait for cardiac catheterizations.

The medical center reported there was no wait list for cardiac catheterization procedures. Patients are referred to cardiology service for determination of the need for cardiac catheterization. Once seen by the cardiology provider, any patient assessed as needing a cardiac catheterization is scheduled during the appointment. We reviewed the performance data for new patients to the cardiac outpatient clinic. The medical center reported 1641 (98 percent) of 1659 new patient consults from February 1 through August 31, 2009, were seen within 30 days. According to the logbook for cardiac catheterizations, the median time from initial assessment to completion of cardiac catheterization was 14 days.

¹ VHA Directive 2008-056, *VHA Consult Policy*, September 16, 2008.

² VHA Directive 2006-041, *Veterans Health Care Service Standards*, June 27, 2006.

Issue 2: Quality of Care

We did not substantiate the allegations that radiology biopsy patients were not provided sedation and adequate recovery time.

We reviewed the medical center sedation policy, the internal clinic processes for radiology biopsies, and medical records. Medical records revealed that only 2 (4 percent) of the 51 records reviewed required sedation for the biopsy procedure. We found that in both cases the medical documentation showed appropriate observation and post procedure discharge.

Issue 3: Staff Certification

We did not substantiate the allegation that radiology biopsies were performed by non-BLS and ACLS certified staff.

We reviewed the medical center policy for BLS and ACLS certification requirements, and training records for radiology biopsy staff. We found that all staff had current BLS or ACLS certification as required.

Conclusions

We did not substantiate the allegations. The medical center had processes in place to ensure that radiology biopsies and cardiac catheterizations were performed within a reasonable timeframe. The facility had an appropriate moderate sedation policy and patients who required sedation were appropriately observed and discharged. In addition, we found that radiology biopsy staff had appropriate BLS and ACLS certification. We made no recommendations.

Comments

The VISN and Medical Center Directors concurred with the inspection results (see Appendixes A and B, pages 4-5 for the full text of their comments).

(original signed by:)

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

VISN Director Comments

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: April 7, 2010

From: Director, VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (10N8)

Subject: Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Quality of Care Issues, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, Florida

To: Director, Dallas Office of Healthcare Inspections (54DA)

Thru: Director, Management Review Service (10B5)

1. I have reviewed and concur with the conclusions presented by the Office of the Inspector General in the Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Quality of Care Issues, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, Florida.



Nevin M. Weaver, FACHE

Medical Center Director Comments

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: April 5, 2010

From: Director (573/00)

Subject: Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Quality of Care Issues, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, Florida

To: Director, VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (10N8)

1. We have reviewed the findings from the Healthcare Inspection – Alleged Quality of Care Issues, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, Florida. We concur with the VA's Office of Inspector General that:

- a. Findings for all allegations were "Not Substantiated".
- b. Processes are in place to ensure cardiac catheterizations and radiology biopsies are performed within reasonable timeframes.
- c. There is an appropriate moderate sedation policy and patients who require sedation are appropriately observed and discharged.
- d. Radiology biopsy staff have appropriate BLS and ACLS Certification.

2. These findings were discussed by the Director and Chief of Staff with providers.

THOMAS A. CAPPELLO, MPH, FACHE

OIG Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

OIG Contact	Linda G. Delong, Director Dallas Office of Healthcare Inspections (214) 253-3331
Acknowledgments	Warren Porter, Team Leader Cheryl Walker Jerome Herbers, MD Laura Dulcie, PSA Misti Kincaid, PSA

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