

Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General

Office of Healthcare Inspections

Report No. 14-00234-125

Community Based Outpatient Clinic and Primary Care Clinic Reviews at Lebanon VA Medical Center Lebanon, Pennsylvania

April 14, 2014

To Report Suspected Wrongdoing in VA Programs and Operations Telephone: 1-800-488-8244

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(Hotline Information: www.va.gov/oig/hotline)

Glossary

AUD alcohol use disorder

CAP Combined Assessment Program
CBOC community based outpatient clinic
DWHP designated women's health provider

EHR electronic health record EOC environment of care

facility Lebanon VA Medical Center

FY fiscal year MH mental health

MM medication management

NM not met

OIG Office of Inspector General PACT Patient Aligned Care Teams

PCC primary care clinic

PCMM Primary Care Management Module

PCP primary care provider

RN registered nurse

VA Veterans Administration

VHA Veterans Health Administration

VISN Veterans Integrated Service Network

WH women's health

Table of Contents

F	age
Executive Summary	
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	. 1
Objectives	. 1
Scope	
Methodology	
Results and Recommendations	
EOC	. 3
AUD	. 5
MM	. 6
DWHP Proficiency	. 7
Appendixes	
A. CBOC Profiles and Services Provided	. 8
B. PACT Compass Metrics	. 10
C. VISN Director Comments	. 14
D. Facility Director Comments	
E. OIG Contact and Staff Acknowledgments	. 18
F. Report Distribution	. 19
G Endnotes	20

Executive Summary

Review Purpose: The purpose of the review was to evaluate selected patient care activities to determine whether the community based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) and primary care clinics (PCCs) provide safe, consistent, and high-quality health care for our Veterans. We conducted a site visit during the week of February 24, 2014, at the Reading CBOC, Reading, PA, which is under the oversight of the Lebanon VA Medical Center and Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 4.

Review Results: We conducted four focused reviews and had no findings for the Designated Women's Health Providers' Proficiency review. However, we made recommendations in the following three review areas:

Environment of Care. Ensure that:

Fire drills are conducted at least every 12 months at the Reading CBOC.

Alcohol Use Disorder. Ensure that CBOC/PCC staff:

- Consistently complete diagnostic assessments for patients with a positive alcohol screen.
- Consistently document the offer of further treatment to patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence.

Medication Management. Ensure that CBOC/PCC staff:

 Complete medication reconciliation documentation for each episode of care where the newly prescribed fluoroquinolone is administered, prescribed, or modified.

Comments

The VISN and Facility Directors agreed with the CBOC and PCC review findings and recommendations and provided acceptable improvement plans. (See Appendixes C and D, pages 14–17, for the full text of the Directors' comments.) We consider recommendations 1, 2, and 3 closed. We will follow up on the planned actions for the open recommendations until they are completed.

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

John Vaidly M.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Objectives

The CBOC and PCC reviews are an element of the OIG's efforts to ensure that our Nation's Veterans receive high-quality VA health care services. As such, the CBOC and PCC reviews are recurring evaluations of selected primary care operations that focus on patient care quality and the EOC. In general, our objectives are to:

- Determine whether the CBOCs are compliant with EOC requirements.
- Determine whether CBOCs/PCCs are compliant with VHA requirements in the care of patients with AUD.
- Determine compliance with requirements for the clinical oversight and patient education of fluoroquinolones for outpatients.
- Evaluate if processes are in place for DWHPs to maintain proficiency in WH.

Scope

To evaluate for compliance with requirements related to patient care quality and the EOC, we conducted an onsite inspection, reviewed clinical and administrative records, and discussed processes and validated findings with managers and employees. The review covered the following four activities:

- EOC
- AUD
- MM
- DWHP Proficiency

The scope of this review is limited to the established objectives. Issues and concerns that come to our attention that are outside the scope of this standardized inspection will be reviewed and referred accordingly.

Methodology

The onsite EOC inspection was only conducted at a randomly selected CBOC that had not been previously inspected.^a Details of the targeted study populations for the AUD, MM, and DWHP Proficiency focused reviews are noted in Table 1.

^a Includes 93 CBOCs in operation before March 31, 2013.

Table 1. CBOC/PCC Focused Reviews and Study Populations

Review Topic	Study Population
AUD	All CBOC and PCC patients screened within the study period
	of July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013, and who had a positive
	AUDIT-C score ^b and all providers and RN Care Managers
	assigned to PACT prior to October 1, 2012.
MM	All outpatients with an original prescription ordered for one of
	the three selected fluoroquinolones from July 1, 2012, through
	June 30, 2013.
DWHP Proficiencies	All WH PCPs designated as DWHPs as of October 1, 2012,
	and who remained as DWHPs until September 30, 2013.

In this report, we make recommendations for improvement. Recommendations pertain to issues that are significant enough to be monitored by the OIG until corrective actions are implemented.

The review was done in accordance with OIG standard operating procedures for CBOC and PCC reviews.

-

^b The AUDIT-C is a brief alcohol screen that reliably identifies patients who are hazardous drinkers or have active alcohol use disorders. Scores range from 0–12.

Results and Recommendations

EOC

The purpose of this review was to evaluate whether CBOC managers have established and maintained a safe and clean EOC as required.¹

We reviewed relevant documents and conducted a physical inspection of the Reading CBOC. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The areas marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 2. EOC

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings
	The CBOC's location is clearly identifiable	
	from the street as a VA CBOC.	
	The CBOC has interior signage available that	
	clearly identifies the route to and location of	
	the clinic entrance.	
	The CBOC is Americans with Disabilities Act	
	accessible.	
	The furnishings are clean and in good repair.	
	The CBOC is clean.	
	The CBOC maintains a written, current	
	inventory of hazardous materials and waste	
	that it uses, stores, or generates.	
	An alarm system and/or panic buttons are	
	installed and tested in high-risk areas (e.g.,	
	MH clinic).	
	Alcohol hand wash or soap dispenser and	
	sink are available in the examination rooms.	
	Sharps containers are secured.	
	Safety needle devices are available.	
	The CBOC has a separate storage room for	
	storing medical (infectious) waste.	T
X	The CBOC conducts fire drills at least every	There was no evidence of fire drills occurring at
	12 months.	least every 12 months.
	Means of egress from the building are unobstructed.	
	Access to fire alarm pull stations is unobstructed.	
	Access to fire extinguishers is unobstructed.	
	The CBOC has signs identifying the locations	
	of fire extinguishers.	
	Exit signs are visible from any direction.	
	No expired medications were noted during the	
	onsite visit.	
	All medications are secured from	
	unauthorized access.	

NM	Areas Reviewed (continued)	Findings
	Personally identifiable information is protected	_
	on laboratory specimens during transport so	
	that patient privacy is maintained.	
	Adequate privacy is provided to patients in	
	examination rooms.	
	Documents containing patient-identifiable	
	information are not laying around, visible, or	
	unsecured.	
	Window coverings provide privacy.	
	The CBOC has a designated examination	
	room for women veterans.	
	Adequate privacy is provided to women	
	veterans in the examination room.	
	The information technology network	
	room/server closet is locked.	
	All computer screens are locked when not in	
	use.	
	Staff use privacy screens on monitors to	
	prevent unauthorized viewing in high-traffic	
	areas. EOC rounds are conducted semi-annually (at	
	least twice in a 12-month period) and	
	deficiencies are reported to and tracked by the	
	EOC Committee until resolution.	
	The CBOC has an automated external	
	defibrillator.	
	Safety inspections are performed on the	
	CBOC medical equipment in accordance with	
	Joint Commission standards.	
	The parent facility includes the CBOC in	
	required education, training, planning, and	
	participation leading up to the annual disaster	
	exercise.	
	The parent facility's Emergency Management	
	Committee evaluates CBOC emergency	
	preparedness activities, participation in annual	
	disaster exercise, and staff training/education	
	relating to emergency preparedness	
	requirements.	

Recommendation

1. We recommended that fire drills are performed every 12 months at the Reading CBOC.

AUD

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the facility's CBOCs and PCCs complied with selected alcohol use screening and treatment requirements.²

We reviewed relevant documents. We also reviewed 40 EHRs and validated findings with key managers and staff. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The areas marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 3. AUD

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings
	Alcohol use screenings are completed during new patient encounters, and at least annually.	
X	Diagnostic assessments are completed for patients with a positive alcohol screen.	Staff did not complete diagnostic assessments for 4 (10 percent) of 40 patients who had positive alcohol use screens.
	Education and counseling about drinking levels and adverse consequences of heavy drinking are provided for patients with positive alcohol screens and drinking levels above National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism guidelines.	
Х	Documentation reflects the offer of further treatment for patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence.	We did not find documentation of the offer of further treatment for two of seven patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence.
	For patients with AUD who decline referral to specialty care, CBOC/PCC staff monitored them and their alcohol use.	
	Counseling, education, and brief treatments for AUD are provided within 2 weeks of positive screening.	
	CBOC/PCC RN Care Managers have received motivational interviewing training within 12 months of appointment to PACT.	
	CBOC/PCC RN Care Managers have received VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention-approved health coaching training (most likely TEACH for Success) within 12 months of appointment to PACT.	
	The facility complied with any additional elements required by VHA or local policy.	

Recommendations

- **2.** We recommended that CBOC and PCC staff consistently complete diagnostic assessments for patients with a positive alcohol screen.
- **3.** We recommended that CBOC and PCC staff consistently document the offer of further treatment to patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence.

MM

The purpose of this review was to determine whether appropriate clinical oversight and education were provided to outpatients prescribed oral fluoroquinolone antibiotics.³

We reviewed relevant documents. We also reviewed 40 EHRs and validated findings with key managers and staff. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The area marked as NM did not meet applicable requirements and needed improvement.

Table 4. Fluoroquinolones

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings
Х	Clinicians documented the medication	We did not find documentation that medication
	reconciliation process that included the	reconciliation included the newly prescribed
	fluoroquinolone.	fluoroquinolone in 4 of 24 patient EHRs.
	Written information on the patient's prescribed	
	medications was provided at the end of the	
	outpatient encounter.	
	Medication counseling/education for the	
	fluoroquinolone was documented in the	
	patients' EHRs.	
	Clinicians documented the evaluation of each	
	patient's level of understanding for the	
	education provided.	
	The facility complied with local policy.	

Recommendation

4. We recommended that staff document that medication reconciliation was completed at each episode of care where the newly prescribed fluoroquinolone was administered, prescribed, or modified.

DWHP Proficiency

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the facility's CBOCs and PCCs complied with selected DWHP proficiency requirements.⁴

We reviewed the facility self-assessment, VHA and local policies, PCMM data, and supporting documentation for DWHPs' proficiencies. The table below shows the areas reviewed for this topic. The facility generally met requirements. We made no recommendations.

Table 5. DWHP Proficiency

NM	Areas Reviewed	Findings
	CBOC and PCC DWHPs maintained	
	proficiency requirements.	
	CBOC and PCC DWHPs were designated	
	with the WH indicator in the PCMM.	

CBOC Profiles

This review evaluates the quality of care provided to veterans at all of the CBOCs under the parent facility's oversight.^c The table below provides information relative to each of the CBOCs.

					Uniques ^d			Encounters ^d				
Location	State	Station #	Locality ^e	CBOC Size ^f	MH ^g	PC ^h	Other ⁱ	AII	MH ^g	PC ^h	Other ⁱ	All
Camp Hill Outpatient Clinic	PA	595GA	Urban	Large	2,443	7,867	4,630	9,014	12,471	18,344	18,347	49,162
York County	PA	595GE	Urban	Large	1,451	5,906	3,539	6,779	6,801	13,544	12,742	33,087
Lancaster	PA	595GC	Urban	Mid-Size	493	4,025	1,699	4,283	2,695	9,022	6,265	17,982
Reading	PA	595GD	Urban	Mid-Size	584	3,764	1,397	4,008	3,511	7,863	2,892	14,266
Pottsville/Fracksville	PA	595GF	Rural	Mid-Size	239	2,374	1	2,433	1,079	4,733	1	5,813

^c Includes all CBOCs in operation before March 31, 2013.

^d Unique patients and Total Encounters – Source: MedSAS outpatient files; completed outpatient appointments indicated by a valid stop code during the July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013, timeframe at the specified CBOC.

e http://vaww.pssg.med.va.gov/PSSG/DVDC/FY2013_Q1_VAST.xlsx

f Based on the number of unique patients seen as defined by VHA Handbook 1160.01, *Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics*, September 11, 2008, the size of the CBOC facility is categorized as very large (> 10,000), large (5,000-10,000), mid-size (1,500-5,000), or small (< 1,500).

^g Mental Health includes stop codes in the 500 series, excluding 531 and 563, in the primary position.

h Primary Care includes the stop code list in the primary position: 323 – Primary Care; 322 – Women's Clinic; 348 – Primary Care Group; 350 – Geriatric Primary Care; 531 – MH Primary Care Team-Individual; 563 – Mental Health Primary care Team-Group; 170 – Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) Physician.

All other non-Primary Care and non-MH stop codes in the primary position.

CBOC Services Provided

In addition to primary care integrated with WH and MH care, the CBOCs provide various specialty care, ancillary, and tele-health services. The following table lists the services provided at each CBOC.^j

СВОС	Specialty Care Services ^k	Ancillary Services ¹	Tele-Health Services ^m
Camp Hill Outpatient	Podiatry	Pharmacy	Tele Primary Care
Clinic	Optometry	Social Work	
	Endocrinology	Diabetic Retinal Screening	
	Nephrology	MOVE! Program ⁿ	
	Dermatology	Rehabilitation	
		Nutrition	
York County	Anti-Coagulation Clinic	Rehabilitation	Tele Primary Care
	Optometry	Social Work	
	Podiatry	MOVE! Program	
	Endocrinology	Diabetic Retinal Screening	
	Dermatology	Electrocardiography	
Lancaster	Podiatry	Electrocardiography	Tele Primary Care
	Optometry	Social Work	
		MOVE! Program	
Reading		Electrocardiography	Tele Primary Care
		Diabetic Retinal Screening	
		Social Work	
Pottsville/Fracksville			

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^j Source: MedSAS outpatient files; the denoted Specialty Care and Ancillary Services are limited to Primary Clinic Stops with a count \geq 100 encounters during the July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013, timeframe at the specified CBOC.

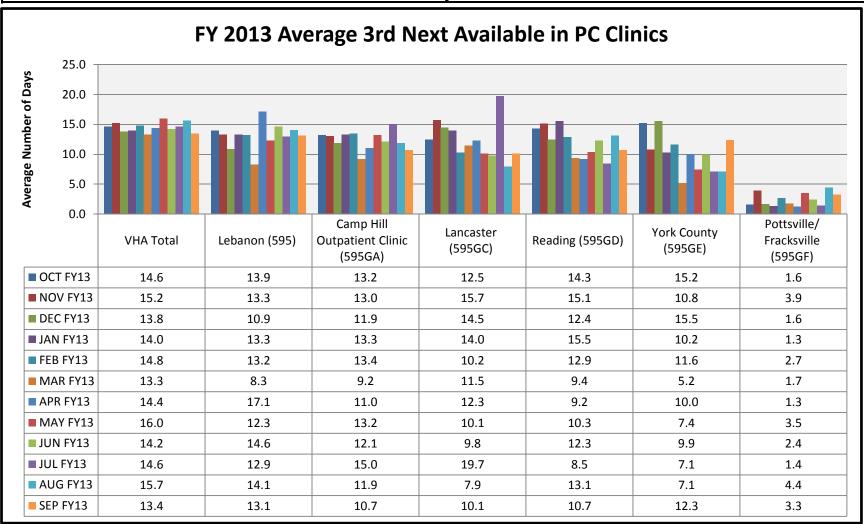
^k Specialty Care Services refer to non-Primary Care and non-Mental Health services provided by a physician.

Ancillary Services refer to non-Primary Care and non-Mental Health services that are not provided by a physician.

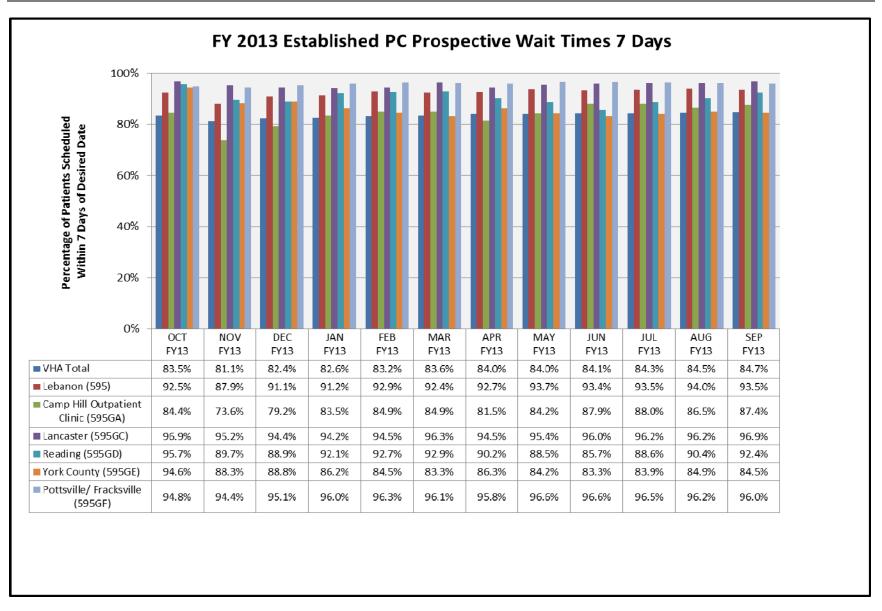
^m Tele-Health Services refer to services provided under the VA Telehealth program (http://www.telehealth.va.gov/)

ⁿ VHA Handbook 1120.01, MOVE! Weight Management Program for Veterans, March 31, 2011.

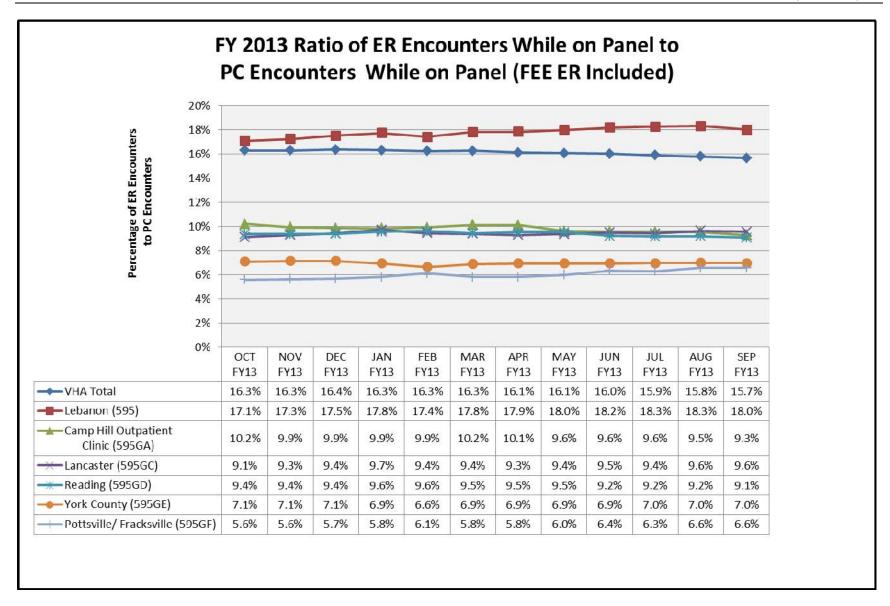
PACT Compass Metrics



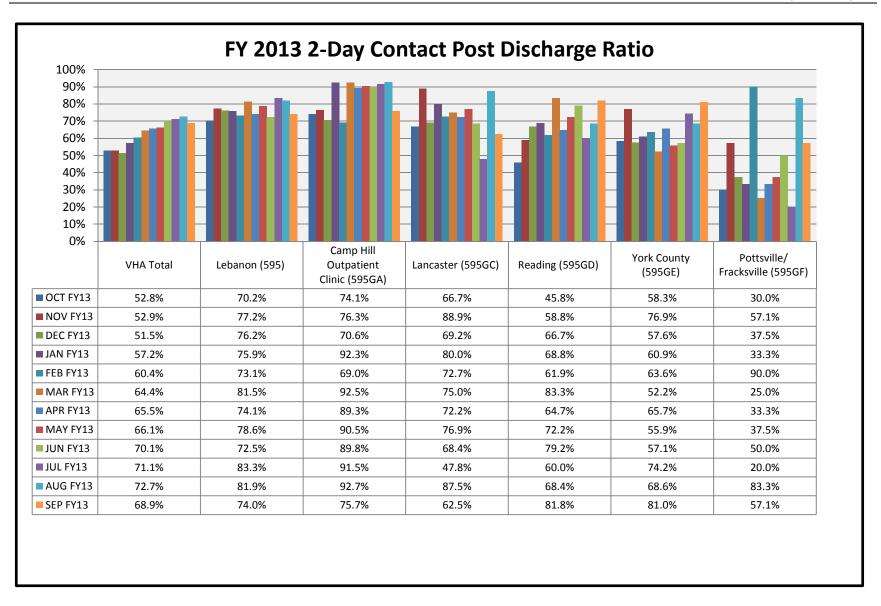
Data Definition.⁵ The average waiting time in days until the next third open appointment slot for completed primary care appointments in stop code 350. Completed appointments in stop code 350 for this metric include completed appointments where a 350 stop code is in the primary position on the appointment or one of the telephone stop codes is in the primary position, and 350 stop code is in the secondary position. The data is averaged from the national to the division level.



Data Definition.⁵ The percent of patients scheduled within 7 days of the desired date. Data source is the Wait Times Prospective Wait Times measures. The total number of scheduled appointments for primary care-assigned patients in primary care clinics 322, 323 and 350. Data is collected twice a month on the 1st and the 1sth. Data reported is for the data pulled on the 1sth of the month. There is no FY to date score for this measure.



Data Definition.⁵ This is a measure of where the patient receives his or her primary care and by whom. A low percentage is better. The formula is the total VHA ER/Urgent Care/FEE ER Encounters WOP (including FEE ER visits) *divided by* the number of primary care encounters WOP with the patient's assigned primary care (or associate) provider plus the total VHA ER/Urgent Care/FEE ER Encounters (including FEE ER visits) WOP plus the number of primary care encounters WOP with a provider other than the patient's PCP/AP.



Data Definition.⁵ Total Discharges Included in 2-day Contact Post Discharge Ratio: The total VHA and FEE Inpatient Discharges for assigned primary care patients for the reporting timeframe. Discharges resulting in death and discharges where a patient is readmitted within 2 days of discharge are excluded from this metric.

VISN Director Comments

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: March 27, 2014

From: Interim Network Director, VISN 4 (10N/4)

Subject: CBOC and PCC Reviews of the Lebanon VA Medical

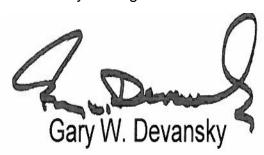
Center, Lebanon, PA

To: Director, Baltimore Office of Healthcare Inspections (54BA)

Director, Management Review Service (VHA 10AR MRS

OIG CAP CBOC)

- 1. The recommendations made during the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Review and Primary Care Survey conducted Wednesday February 26, 2013 at the Berks County/Reading CBOC have been reviewed. Resolution action has been accomplished on 3 of the 4 recommendations. A plan of action has been developed, implemented and will be thoroughly monitored to ensure satisfactory completion on the remaining finding.
- 2. I would like to personally thank the OIG CBOC and PCC Survey Team members for their professionalism and consultative assistance throughout this review. Your review provides an opportunity to further strengthen our processes and the great care provided to our Veterans.
- 3. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the Quality Management Officer at 717-272-6621 ext. 4407.



Facility Director Comments

Department of Veterans Affairs

Memorandum

Date: 3/26/2014

From: Director, Lebanon VA Medical Center (595/00)

Subject: CBOC and PCC Reviews of the Lebanon VA Medical

Center, Lebanon, PA

To: Interim Network Director, VISN 4 (10N/4)

1. The recommendations made during the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Review and Primary Care Survey conducted Wednesday February 26, 2013 at the Berks County/Reading CBOC have been reviewed. Resolution action has been accomplished on 3 of the 4 recommendations. A plan of action has been developed, implemented and will be thoroughly monitored to ensure satisfactory completion on the remaining finding.

- 2. I would like to personally thank the OIG CBOC and PCC Survey Team members for their professionalism and consultative assistance throughout this review. Your review provides an opportunity to further strengthen our processes and the great care provided to our Veterans.
- 3. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact the Quality Management Officer at 717-272-6621 ext. 4407.

Comments to OIG's Report

The following Director's comments are submitted in response to the recommendations in the OIG report:

OIG Recommendations

Recommendation 1. We recommended that fire drills are performed every 12 months at the Reading CBOC.

Concur

Target date for completion: 3/14/2014

Facility response: The Reading CBOC is a leased space. Previous drills were completed by leased facility. The leased space fire drills were completed for the business occupancy building according to requirements; however documentation did not reflect participation by CBOC staff. Fire drills will now be conducted annually by Lebanon VAMC Safety Department staff to ensure ongoing compliance with documentation.

Recommendation 2. We recommended that CBOC and PCC staff consistently complete diagnostic assessments for patients with a positive alcohol screen.

Concur

Target date for completion: 3/26/2014

Facility response: As identified in the survey, CBOC providers completed 90% (36 of 40) diagnostic assessments for patients with positive alcohol screen. The CBOC providers exceeded the VHA target performance measure of 62%. The Electronic Health Record (EHR) must be refreshed after completion of part 1 of the alcohol use screening tool, the Audit C. If it is not refreshed, it will not trigger part 2, counseling for a positive Audit C. Staff has been educated to the importance of refreshing the EHR with each encounter.

Recommendation 3. We recommended that CBOC and PCC staff consistently document the offer of further treatment to patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence.

Concur

Target date for completion: 3/26/2014

Facility response: CBOC providers' documentation offers of further treatment in 71% (5 of 7) of audited records for patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence. The VHA performance goal is 62%. Upon further review to improve systems based

documentation, system modifications were accomplished to the clinical reminder system to document the offer of further treatment when completing the AUDIT C reminder.

Recommendation 4. We recommended that staff document that medication reconciliation was completed at each episode of care where the newly prescribed fluoroquinolone was administered, prescribed, or modified.

Concur

Target date for completion: 6/30/2014

Facility response: As identified in the survey, CBOC providers completed medication reconciliation 83.3% (20 of 24) which included newly prescribed fluoroquinolone. A further data review indicated two providers were not fully completing medication reconciliation. Additional education has been provided and additional tracers will be completed to assure adequate performance.

OIG Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

Contact	For more information about this report, please contact the OIG at (202) 461-4720.
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Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

National Veterans Service Organizations

Government Accountability Office

Office of Management and Budget

U.S. Senate: Robert P. Casey, Jr., Patrick J. Toomey

U.S. House of Representatives: Charles W. Dent, Jim Gerlach, Scott Perry, Joseph R. Pitts

This report is available at www.va.gov/oig.

Endnotes

¹ References used for the EOC review included:

- US Access Board, Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), September 2, 2002.
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, The Privacy Rule, August 14, 2002.
- US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Laws and Regulations.
- US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence*, 2004.
- Joint Commission, Joint Commission Comprehensive Accreditation and Certification Manual, July 1, 2013.
- VA Directive 0324, Test, Training, Exercise, and Evaluation Program, April 5, 2012.
- VA Directive 0059, VA Chemicals Management and Pollution Prevention, May 25, 2012.
- VA Handbook 6500, Risk Management Framework for VA Information System, September 20, 2012.
- VHA Center for Engineering, Occupational Safety, and Health, Emergency Management Program Guidebook, March 2011.
- VHA Center for Engineering, Occupational Safety, and Health, *Online National Fire Protection Association Codes, Standards, Handbooks, and Annotated Editions of Select Codes and Standards*, July 9, 2013.
- VHA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Memorandum: *Environmental Rounds*, March 5, 2007.
- VHA Directive 2011-007, Required Hand Hygiene Practices, February 16, 2011.
- VHA Directive 2012-026, Sexual Assaults & Other Defined Public Safety Incidents in VHA Facilities, September 27, 2012.
- VHA Handbook 1006.1, Planning and Activating Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, May 19, 2004.
- VHA Handbook 1330.01, Health Care Services for Women Veterans, May 21, 2010.
- VHA Handbook 1850.05, Interior Design Operations and Signage, July 1, 2011.
- ² References used for the AUD review included:
- National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP), Veteran Health Education and Information (NVEI) Program, *Patient Education: TEACH for Success*. Retrieved from http://www.prevention.va.gov/Publications/Newsletters/2013/HealthPOWER_Prevention_News_Winter_2012_2_013_FY12_TEACH_MI_Facilitator_Training.asp on January 17, 2014.
- VHA Handbook 1120.02, Health Promotion Disease Prevention (HPDP) Program, July 5, 2012.
- VHA Handbook 1160.01, *Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics*, September 11, 2008.
- ³ References used for the Medication Management review included:
- VHA Directive 2011-012, Medication Reconciliation, March 9, 2011.
- VHA Directive 2012-011, *Primary Care Standards*, April 11, 2012.
- VHA Handbook 1108.05, Outpatient Pharmacy Services, May 30, 2006.
- VHA Handbook 1108.07, Pharmacy General Requirements, April 17, 2008.
- Joint Commission, Joint Commission Comprehensive Accreditation and Certification Manual, July 1, 2013.
- ⁴ References used for the DWHP review included:
- VHA Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management, Memorandum: *Health Care Services for Women Veterans*, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook 1330.01; Women's Health (WH) Primary Care Provider (PCP) Proficiency, July 8, 2013.
- VHA Handbook 1330.01 Health Care Services for Women Veterans, May 21, 2010.
- VHA Handbook 1100.19, Credentialing and Privileging, November 14, 2008.
- ⁵ Reference used for PACT Compass data graphs:
- Department of Veterans' Affairs, Patient Aligned Care Teams Compass Data Definitions, August 29, 2013.