

18 April 2018 Veterans Service Alliance of Central Texas/Central Texas Veterans Health Care System Collaborative Meeting Notes

****VSACT Meetings Typically Take Place the 3rd Wednesday of Every Month at the Belton Goodwill Job Connection (2601 Commerce St., Belton, TX 76513)****

- Welcome: Christopher R. Sandles, Director, CTVHCS
- **Prosthetics/Sensory Aid Clinic**
 - Chad Martin
Prosthetics/Sensory Aids
chad.martin@va.gov
254-743-2161
 - VA Prosthetics established in 1945; problem identified was trying to get custom fittings. Another issue was procurement and issues with contracts
 - In 2000, Special Purpose Funding was established—nobody can subsequently touch funding from this particular department (it will never be de-funded)
 - VHA is for prosthetics as well as sensory aids
 - It goes way more than prosthetic limbs, etc.
 - All items are medically indicated and determined and prescribed by doctors
 - What do they do?
 - Anything that's on or around the body for 30 days is what they assist with
 - Wheelchairs
 - Blind dominoes, blind cards
 - iPads
 - Home and car modifications, etc.
 - Exoskeletons
 - Clothing allowances, etc.
 - Even has service dog benefits, vans, prosthetic hands that are so detailed they include hair and tattoos
 - Service Area:
 - Based out of Fort Hood region, although Veterans are driving hours from all over the state—and even Louisiana—to obtain their services
 - The issue is the fact that the Veterans have to make these trips with the VA subsequently paying travel pay
 - Issue: why can't this clinic be mobile?
 - How can you help this clinic?
 - As the VA, we cannot allow these Veterans to continue driving all the way to Temple nor can they allow Veterans to pay out-of-pocket for some of the items this department could provide for upwards of 400% cheaper
 - **How can we partner together for these services to be allowed throughout the service area?**
 - **Which organizations would be willing to allow this mobile clinic to be at their location?**

- Telehealth
 - Lisa Heck
 - Lisa.Heck@va.gov
 - 254-709-3619
 - Patients have the ability to see physicians from all over the United States
 - Telehealth allows Veterans to have the ability to obtain medical care without having to drive all over
 - VA Veteran Connect
 - If Veterans have a Smart Phone or computer, they're able to contact physicians from the comfort of their own home
 - They'll get an invite via email, and then can open it up; video chat is completely secure as it goes through extensive Fire Walls to protect all HIPAA regulations
 - Veterans can utilize pretty much any device that has a web cam, microphone and speaker
 - Can also utilize Android, iPhone, and tablets
 - Apple products have an app called "VA Video Connect"
 - One of the concerns/challenges that this program has is that there are still Veterans that do not have access to these items—particularly in rural areas
 - **Telehealth is subsequently looking for places to place items in the community; a place where there is a secure room with a computer and internet connection**
 - They could even have mobile carts where providers could obtain statistics, etc. electronically
 - **Where can Telehealth go to make this happen? Who in the community is able to partner?**
- Mid-South Consolidated Patient Account Center
 - Michelle Roberson
 - michelle.roberson1@va.gov
 - 254-742-4611
 - Congress decided that there were too many versions of billing with the VA; what they did is consolidate billing so that there is one specific channel
 - 7 of them throughout the nation; Mid-South is responsible for 20 facilities with their own group of employees. Ms. Roberson subsequently works for CPAC.
 - What CPAC Does:
 - Works based off of the means test
 - This is where the Veteran comes in and provides their financial information to eligibility. Veterans were sent out a letter stating they no longer have to complete a means test every year. However, the only way to determine eligibility to see if they have to pay a co-pay, is by completing the means test. This is subsequently very mis-leading

- This Means Test is good for one-year, is good from the date you do it, **and it is not retroactive**. If a Means Test is not done on the date it expires, this goes back to “Means Test Required” phase and co-pays will once again be implemented
 - If the Veteran wants to be financially exempt, they **must** complete a Means Test on a yearly-basis at the Eligibility area in the Welcome Center
- Means tests are **not** required for Veterans who are over 50% Service Connection
- If other insurance options are present, CPAC will bill them with co-pays being a possibility. If insurance pays at least \$50, the Veteran will not have to pay a co-pay. The VA also holds co-pay amounts for 90 days to allow the Veteran to pay
 - Providing third-party insurance information to the VA is subsequently *very* helpful as it could reduce the number of co-pays
 - Upon intake, the Veteran should be asked if they have third-party insurance information with all applicable information entered. However, this doesn’t always happen
 - Last year CPAC collected \$32M that went directly to the CTVHC for patient care
 - CPAC does not bill Tricare nor Medicaid as they are other federal entities—it would be almost as if the money is switching between federal entities
- If you are unable to pay your bills, you should discuss this with the CPAC office
 - If they just lost their job, are having a hardship, etc.—there’s options to either complete a Hardship Waiver, a Repayment Plan, or for fees to be waived
 - **The repayment plan can be as low as \$25/month, but never less**
 - However, they can only put the bills they currently have on the re-payment plan. For Veterans continuously receiving services, they have to go in every 3 months or so for the repayment plan paperwork
 - Hardship Waivers are completed through Eligibility near the Welcome Center
 - The Eligibility Supervisor will then make the determination based upon the paperwork
 - Only lasts one year; would have to be completed yearly with Eligibility
 - Any bill that is more than 180 days is not even eligible to be considered for a waiver. No one will even look at it and the waiver will be denied
 - Treasury Cross-Servicing

- After a debt is more than 180-days, this debt is subject to treasury collections. CPAC nor Eligibility can't literally do a thing to them
 - It could move to the point where funds are taken from compensation checks, taxes, etc., as it is a federal debt owed