

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION  
VISN 16**

**JACK C. MONTGOMERY VAMC  
MUSKOGEE OK**

**MEDICAL CENTER MEMORANDUM 11-52  
MARCH 13, 2014**

**NO SHOW POLICY FOR PRIMARY AND SPECIALTY CLINICS**

**I. PURPOSE:** To provide guidance to Primary and Specialty clinics regarding the appropriate action to take when a patient fails to keep a scheduled clinic appointment.

**II. POLICY:** The Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center continually strives for excellence in quality patient care. The organization will design its processes to systematically strive towards increasing access to veterans in need of healthcare. A “no-show” patient is one who fails to keep a scheduled clinic appointment. Failure to keep a scheduled appointment is defined as not arriving at all or arriving at the clinic 30 minutes after the scheduled time of the appointment without advance notice to the clinic. If a time slot is available, the clinic will strive to see the patient. If no time slot is available the patient will be rescheduled or placed on Recall. *If a patient fails to keep an appointment and does not call to reschedule, they will not be auto-rescheduled for an appointment. All no-shows will be sent a no-show letter* instructing them to contact their primary care provider to discuss need/desire for another primary care appointment. For specialty care patients who no-show, the consult will be discontinued. This will view alert the sending provider who will be responsible for contacting the patient to determine if the consult for specialty care should be resubmitted. If patients call and cancel appointments two (2) times in a row for a scheduled appointment, that appointment will not be rebooked a third time. For Primary Care that patient will be required to contact their provider and reaffirm the desire/need for the appointment before another primary care appointment is scheduled. For Specialty Care the MSA is to discontinue the consult. The primary care provider will be responsible for contacting the patient to affirm the patient’s commitment to keep the specialty appointment before re-submitting another consult for specialty care. *Note: The TBI clinical team responsible for completing the evaluation documents any appointments that were cancelled by the patient or “no-shows,” and must document all attempts to reschedule the patient for completing the evaluation. If the patient cancels or is a “no-show” for three appointments, the consultation can be discontinued. Any consult discontinued must include a notation sent to the referring provider to resubmit a consultation to the team should the patient be interested in future evaluation services.*

**III. RESPONSIBILITY:**

- a. The Medical Center Director is responsible for developing organizational structures and processes that provide for effective, efficient, and timely, high quality care.
- b. Chief of Staff is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy and ensuring respective services comply with this policy.
- c. Chiefs of Services pertaining to care of patients are responsible for ensuring that policy orders are within the acceptable standard of care and the overall implementation, education, and monitoring for compliance of this program.

**IV. PROCEDURE:**

a. All appointment notification letters will include the following statements: “If you cannot keep an appointment, we request that you call the clinic at least 24 hours in advance to cancel, so we can give that time to another veteran” (Appendix A). Patients will be educated that when they don’t keep their scheduled appointments, and don’t call to cancel their appointments, they are denying other deserving veterans the opportunity for medical services.

b. Patients who fail to keep their clinic appointments will **not** be automatically rescheduled. Those patients who choose not to receive care from the VA will be encouraged to seek continued care in their community or at a more convenient location. They will be informed that private care will be at their own expense. If medications are requested, patients must notify their Primary Care Clinic for a 30-day supply of any medication previously prescribed by their assigned primary care provider. No further medications beyond that 30-day supply will be ordered unless patients are currently being treated by their Primary Care Team Provider. The Emergency Department in Muskogee is available for treatment of urgent/life threatening conditions. However, the Emergency Department provider in Muskogee and the Ernest Childers Outpatient clinic provider at Tulsa will not provide renewals of any medication discontinued by the clinic provider.

c. The Medical Service Assistant (MSA) will review Appointment Management and/or progress notes in Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) to determine if the patient has future/recent appointments. The Primary Care MSA will record “no-show” into Appointment Management and mail a “no-show” letter to the patient advising that he/she must call to schedule an appointment in the future. “No-show” entries and mailing of no-show letters will be accomplished daily (Appendix B). Additional requirements for Veterans being seen in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Clinics are outlined in Appendix C. As stated above, consults for service-connected patients will be discontinued when the patient no-shows the appointment. Primary Care is responsible for contacting the patient either by phone or letter to determine if the consult for specialty care should be resubmitted.

d. When a patient does not report (no-show) for a scheduled appointment, the responsible provider, surrogate, or designated team representative is to review the patient’s medical record, including any consult or procedure request received or associated with the appointment; and determine and initiate appropriate follow-up action.

**V. REFERENCES:** VHA Directive 2006-055 date October 11, 2006

**VI. FOLLOW UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief of Staff is responsible for the contents of this MCM.

**VII. RESCISSION:** Medical Center Memorandum 11-52 - No Show Policy, dated July 12, 2012.

/s/

JAMES R. FLOYD, FACHE  
Medical Center Director

**JCMVAMC No Show Policy for Primary and Specialty Clinics  
Medical Center Memorandum 11-52**

**3-13-14**

Attachment: Appendix A  
Appendix B  
Appendix C

DIST: C

**Example of Pre-Appointment Letter**

INITIAL SECTION OF LETTER:

Thank you for choosing the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center for your health care needs. You are scheduled for the following appointment(s):

The Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center is located at: 1011 Honor Heights Drive  
Muskogee, OK 74401

Public Law 101-508 authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to collect insurance payments from private health insurance carriers, if applicable. Please provide the information indicated below:

NAME OF HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETE ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_ GROUP#: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

(If the policy is not in your name, please provide the following:)

NAME OF POLICY HOLDER: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE SIGN)

If you cannot make an appointment, we request that you call the clinic at least 24 hours in advance to cancel, so we can give that time to another veteran. When you don't keep your scheduled appointments, and don't call us, you are denying other deserving veterans the opportunity for medical services. If you no-show your appointment or cancel your scheduled appointment two times in a row your appointment will not be rescheduled at your request. You will be required to contact your primary care provider to discuss need/desire for either primary care or specialty care appointment. If your provider feels you need to be seen and you commit to keep your appointment another appointment will be scheduled.

For answers to questions about your health care needs, you may call our "HELPLINE". Helpline is available to answer questions regarding the care you are receiving, scheduling, changing appointments, or help with new medical problems. Nursing and clerical staff are available to provide this service. Helpline is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except on Federal Government holidays. The local access number is 918-577-3000, or call toll free at 1-866-397-8387.

**MUSKOGEE NO SHOW**

**INITIAL SECTION OF LETTER:**

Thank you for choosing the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center for your health care needs. Our records indicate that you did not keep the following appointment(s):

Your health is very important to us, we believe that you share our concern and wish to take an active role in your health care by taking your medications as prescribed, keeping your prescriptions up to date, and by communicating with your health care provider.

If you cannot make an appointment, we request that you call the clinic at least 24 hours in advance to cancel, so we can give that time to another veteran. When you don't keep your scheduled appointments, and don't call us, you are denying other deserving veterans the opportunity for medical services.

Please contact your Primary Care Team Provider if you desire a new appointment to this specialty clinic. The local access number is 918-577-3000 or call toll free 1-866-397-8387. We are available for calls Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except on federal government holidays.

Additional Requirements for Veterans being seen in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Clinics

1. Veterans not flagged as high risk:

If the Veteran is a no show, MSA will attempt to contact the Veteran by telephone x 3 and document the activity in CPRS. If unable to reach, a “No Show” letter will be mailed out.

2. Veterans flagged as high risk for suicide:

If the Veteran is a no show, MSA will notify the provider with whom patient was scheduled. The clinical provider will call the Veteran and talk on phone to assess clinical situation and reschedule. The provider may assign a nurse case manager or suicide prevention case manager to make the phone call. At least three attempts should be made to reach the Veteran and should be documented in CPRS. If unable to reach, suicide prevention team should be contacted who will mail a certified letter requesting Veteran to contact clinic and reschedule. Provider and suicide prevention team may review the “Safety Plan” to look for alternate phone contacts. Based on recent clinical presentation, provider may look at all options, including contacting VA police, who in turn can contact local law enforcement officials for a welfare check at Veteran’s home.

3. At the end of every day, the MSA will review the appointment list, and every patient will be appropriately accounted for, to avoid missing any necessary action and to follow up on any scheduling issues, such as:

- a. Enter no shows in VISTA
- b. Identify HR patients who were no shows and notify providers (this should be done as soon as patient cancels/no shows but no later than end of day).
- c. Make No Show Calls to NON-HR appointments
- d. Mark as Cancelled by Patient, if appropriate
- e. Make Appointments or place on TWL (recall list)

4. All BMS clinical staff will be oriented to suicide prevention management protocol as part of new employee BMS orientation checklist.

5. All MSAs working in BMS clinics at all locations will be oriented regarding above requirements.

6. Suicide prevention management protocol adherence will be tracked as part of OPPE (ongoing professional practice evaluation) by random chart auditing. This will be done by supervisors and reported quarterly on OPPE form and feedback provided to clinical staff.