

COORDINATED CARE FOR TRAVELING VETERANS

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for VHA personnel regarding patient-centered coordination of care for traveling Veterans.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES: This VHA Handbook provides updated and detailed procedures for the provision of patient-centered, coordination of care for traveling Veterans. This Handbook:

- a. Replaces the “Referral Case Manager” with the Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC) as the designated point of contact for coordinating care for traveling Veterans.
- b. Mandates that the designated TVC be a Registered Nurse, Physician Assistant, or Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP).
- c. Describes the roles and responsibilities of the TVC.
- d. Clarifies the functions of staff at both the preferred facility and alternate (receiving) facility to ensure the coordination of care for traveling Veterans.
- e. Provides updated guidance and instructions for dispensing temporary supplies of maintenance medications for traveling Veterans.
- f. Provides updated guidance on multi-PACT assignments (previously known as “dual assignments”) for traveling Veterans.
- g. Includes resources and tools for the Traveling Veteran Coordinator, Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT), VA medical facilities, and patients.

3. RELATED ISSUES: VHA Handbooks [1101.02](#) and [1101.10](#).

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Patient Care Services (10P4) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions related to Primary Care may be addressed at 202-461-4158 or at VHA10P4FStaff@va.gov; Pharmacy may be addressed at 202-461-7326, and Prosthetics may be addressed at 202-461-7444.

5. RESCISSION: VHA Directive 2007-016, dated May 9, 2007, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA Handbook is due to be recertified on or before the last working day of April 2020.

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Under Secretary for Health

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COORDINATED CARE POLICY FOR TRAVELING VETERANS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for VHA personnel regarding patient-centered coordination of care for traveling Veterans that addresses how VHA assists Veterans requesting health care during extended travel away from home. It provides guidance to maximize continuity and consistent, appropriate, and safe care for traveling Veterans in coordination with Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) and Specialty Care, including mental health care. It streamlines processes Veterans encounter while seeking outpatient services at alternate facilities and eliminates barriers to timely care. **NOTE:** *This Handbook does not address formal inpatient transfer of patients from one VA medical facility to another. For inter-facility transfers, see [VHA Directive 2007-015, Inter-Facility Transfer Policy](#). This Handbook also does not address foreign travel. For information about medical care during foreign travel, see [VHA Handbook 1601F.05, Hospital Care and Medical Services in Foreign Countries](#). For traveling Veterans seeking care at the VA facility in the Philippines, please refer to [Title 38 U.S.C. Section 1724](#) for eligibility requirements (this Web site is external to VA and may not conform to Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) and [VHA Directive 2012-019, Outpatient Health Care for United States Veterans Residing In or Visiting the Philippines at the Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic in Manila](#), or subsequent policy issue. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 1705-1706, 1710, and 7301(b); 38 CFR 17.35-17.36.*

2. BACKGROUND:

a. Traveling Veterans are expected to receive the same standard of care while traveling even when not assigned to a PACT at the alternate facility. After initial enrollment occurs, Veterans are eligible to receive health care benefits at any facility where Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) services are offered once registered at that facility.

b. PACTs and other health care teams at the preferred facility are instrumental in educating and guiding the traveling Veteran so that both Veterans and their health care teams can anticipate care needs and coordinate care at the alternate facility in conjunction with the Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC).

c. The TVC, formerly known as the Referral Case Manager, works with the PACT or specialty care providers to coordinate care between the preferred and the alternate facility for Veterans on extended travel.

3. DEFINITIONS:

a. **Alternate Facility.** An alternate facility is a VA medical facility at which a Veteran will receive care, as needed, while on extended travel (including community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) associated with the alternate facility). Care at the alternate facility does not constitute the major portion of a Veteran's primary care.

b. **Bridge Supply of Medications.** Bridge supply of medication is a one-time, temporary supply of maintenance medications, generally 10 to 15 days' worth, to ensure

availability of maintenance medications until the patient can receive a renewal or refill prescription from the preferred facility.

c. **Enrollment.** Enrollment occurs once in the VA system, at which time eligibility is verified, a priority group is assigned, and a preferred facility is determined. The enrollment process can occur in-person at the VA medical facility, by telephone, or online.

d. **Extended Travel.** Extended travel is a type of travel in which a Veteran travels away from the preferred facility and requires coordinated care with an alternate facility. This need for coordinated care is typically due to either complex clinical needs and/or a prolonged period of time away from the Veteran's principal residence.

e. **Lead Coordinator.** The Lead Coordinator is a facility designated RN or social worker assigned to Veterans requiring complex care coordination or specialized case management services (e.g., Operation Enduring Freedom-Operation Iraqi Freedom-Operation New Dawn (OEF-OIF-OND), Serious Mental Illness, SCI/D, and Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Continuum of Care, etc.). The Lead Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact these Veterans and their families or caregivers and communicates with the health care team while leading complex care coordination and case management efforts. (See [VA Directive 0007, Interagency Coordination of Complex Care, Benefits, and Services](#) and the [MOU between VA and DoD for Interagency Complex Care Coordination Requirements for Service Members and Veterans, dated July 29, 2014.](#))

f. **Multi-PACT Assignment.** A multi-PACT assignment (previously known as "dual assignment") is a primary care panel assignment status where a patient has been approved for assignment to more than one PACT.

g. **Non-face-to-face Care.** Non face-to-face care is care that is provided in a modality other than face-to-face in a clinical setting (e.g., telephone-based care, telehealth, secure messaging, etc.).

h. **Patient Aligned Care Team.** The Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) is a team of health care professionals that provides comprehensive primary care in partnership with the patient (and the patient's personal support person(s) (i.e., caregiver)) and manages and coordinates comprehensive health care services consistent with agreed upon goals of care. This includes PACTs for special populations (e.g., GeriPACT, Homeless PACT, and Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder (SCI/D) PACT).

i. **Preferred Facility.** A preferred facility is the VA medical facility that a Veteran selects as the principal site for receiving VA care and consequently, where the major portion of the Veteran's primary care is provided (including CBOCs associated with the preferred facility).

j. **Provider.** Providers are physicians, advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), Physician Assistants (PA), clinical pharmacists, and dentists who provide

primary or specialty care to Veterans in accordance with licensure, scope of practice, or functional statement.

k. **Traveling Veteran.** A traveling Veteran who is registered at a VA medical facility and who is preparing to embark on or has embarked upon extended travel (see paragraph 3.d. above) away from his or her primary residence and preferred facility.

l. **Traveling Veteran Coordinator.** A Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC) is a Registered Nurse (RN), PA, or LIP who coordinates necessary or ongoing health care for Veterans on extended travel (see paragraph 3.d. above).

m. **VA Provider File.** A VA Provider File is Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (VistA) file #200 (also known as the New Person file) that includes all identified providers (or mid-level providers) that have been credentialed at the local VA medical facility and authorized to prescribe medications under licensure or scope of practice. This file is not transferrable between VA locations.

n. **VistA's Register Once Messaging.** VistA's Register Once Messaging (ROM) is a computer program that registers Veterans new to a facility by accessing information from other VHA facilities. A Veteran must be registered at each VA medical facility where they are seeking care.

o. **VistAWeb.** VistAWeb is the read-only VHA-wide computerized medical record that displays an extensive collection of clinic notes, radiology images, laboratory results, medication lists, and provider contact information from all VA medical facilities where a patient has sought care.

4. SCOPE: It is VHA policy that Veterans on extended travel will have their anticipated or unexpected medical needs coordinated by their preferred facility and the alternate facility to prevent any disruption in their care. This is a shared responsibility between the preferred and alternate facilities to ensure continuity of care.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Director.** The Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) There is a designated VISN point of contact (POC) for both the TVC and Primary Care Management Module (PCMM) whose name(s) and contact information are included in the VHA Support Service Center (VSSC) National PCMM TVC list.

(2) The VISN Traveling Veteran POC:

(a) Maintains and updates VSSC to keep the list current at:
<http://vssc.med.va.gov/pcmm/>. **NOTE:** This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.

(b) Ensures there is a TVC designated for each VA medical facility in the VISN.

(c) Facilitates TVC interaction with VA medical facilities if network intervention is required.

(3) There is a back-up VISN POC identified in VSSC for each VISN POC.

b. **Medical Facility Director**. The medical facility Director is responsible for ensuring:

(1) The care for traveling Veterans is expedited and delivered in a timely, coordinated, and patient-centered manner.

(2) The VA medical facility uses VistA's Register Once Messaging (ROM) functionality to register patients who have enrolled at other facilities by ensuring that Business Office staff are available to complete this function at all times, including weekends and off-hours.

(3) The Remote Data Access and VistAWeb capabilities in the facility's Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) are activated to facilitate data retrieval between VA facilities and that appropriate staff members have necessary access to these capabilities.

(4) The VA medical facility has a process in place to initiate TVC consults/referrals.

(5) The VA medical facility has at least one designated TVC to serve as the POC for assisting Veterans and medical facility staff in scheduling appointments; transferring non-electronic records; arranging provider-to-provider contact, if necessary; and generally facilitating the care needs of traveling Veterans seeking care at alternate VA medical facilities. **NOTE:** *The roles and responsibilities of the TVC are outlined in paragraphs 5.c., 5.d., and 5.e. The process for the preferred facility's TVC to handle referrals is outlined in Appendix A.*

(6) The designated TVC:

(a) Is an RN, PA or LIP.

(b) Has Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) access. **NOTE:** *Encryption is mandatory for TVCs, to facilitate communication and follow-up.*

(c) TVCs without prescriptive authority, such as RNs, may enter orders for provider signature as permitted by local policy or have a designated provider at their VA medical facility enter orders/consults/etc.

(d) Is identified on the National PCMM/TVC list. The list will be kept current by providing any edits/changes to the VISN TVC POC, who maintains the list for VA medical facilities in that VISN.

(7) A back-up TVC is identified on the VSSC list for each VA medical facility as the emergency/alternate contact to provide coverage, in the absence of the designated facility TVC. **NOTE:** *At a minimum, TVCs will identify who is covering for them during*

times of leave – communication can be via Outlook out of Office Assistant and voicemail message.

(8) The VA medical facility has a policy in place that outlines procedures by which traveling Veterans will receive care coordination and encompasses the elements within this Handbook.

(9) Multi-PACT assignments (previously known as “dual assignments”) to primary care panels in PCMM at preferred and alternate facilities are avoided. Such multiple entries inflate the number of patients present in each provider’s panel, resulting in increased workload for PCMM staff and increased risk for error, particularly when frequent PCMM changes are needed to track the Veteran’s travel status. For that reason, VHA policy states that, in general, patients must have only one PACT within the VA health care system (see [VHA Handbook 1101.02, Primary Care Management Module \(PCMM\)](#)).

(a) Exceptions may be approved under two circumstances:

1. Veterans with SCI&D who are receiving highly-complex dual care (such as in a “hub and spokes” system of care) may be assigned two PACTs at the two facilities of SCI&D care. These Veterans may be assigned to a PACT at both the SCI referral center (Hub) and at their own local VA medical facility (Spoke).

2. If a Veteran receives care between two facilities of residence (i.e., south in winter, north in summer) and requires complex PC management (as assessed by the PC clinical leader, or designee, at the patient’s preferred facility), the Veteran may be assigned an identified PACT at each of the geographically distant residences.

(b) Traveling Veterans who do not meet the criteria for the two exceptions or who require only episodic care while traveling should not be assigned a second PACT.

(c) To determine whether a traveling Veteran needing complex primary care management requires a multi-PACT assignment to a PACT at an alternate facility, clinical approval by the PCP, or designee, and coordination with the TVC at both the preferred and alternate facilities is required. Clinical review/approval of multi-PACT assignments must be documented. Potential scenarios may include:

1. If a traveling Veteran provides advance notice to the PACT at the preferred facility of anticipated or planned travel, the PCP, or designee, will contact the TVC (at the preferred facility) to initiate communication with the alternate facility TVC and PC clinical lead or designee. The PCP, or designee, from the preferred and alternate facilities will reach a consensus on whether the traveling Veteran requires a multi-PACT assignment. If the determination is supported, the preferred facility will make the multi-PACT assignment to the alternate facility PACT in PCMM (see Appendix C).

2. If a traveling Veteran arrives at an alternate facility without advance travel notification, the traveling Veteran is provided with an appointment with the alternate facility PACT for care and clinical determination for multi-PACT assignment. If the

alternate facility PACT feels that the patient may benefit from a multi-PACT assignment, the PCP, or designee, will contact the TVC at the alternate facility. The alternate facility TVC will initiate communication with the preferred facility TVC and PC clinical lead or designee. The PCP, or designee, from the alternate and preferred facilities will reach a consensus on whether the traveling Veteran requires a multi-PACT assignment (consistent with [VHA Handbook 1101.02](#)). If the determination is supported, the alternate facility will make the multi-PACT assignment to the alternate facility PACT in PCMM (see Appendix D).

(d) Patients who are traveling and do not require multi-PACT assignments should primarily be managed by their preferred facility PACT using non-face-to-face care modalities as much as possible. Assignment of traveling Veterans to a local PACT at the alternate facility is not a prerequisite for receiving primary or specialty care at the alternate facility.

(10) Procedures and education are emphasized to ensure that patients and facility staff are aware of elements, policy, and procedures established by this Handbook and implemented at the VA medical facility level. It is of utmost importance that an educational plan be established at the VA medical facility to educate patients about their responsibilities and proper procedures to perform prior to extended travel. This includes, but is not limited to, knowledge on obtaining adequate supplies of medications (as appropriate), understanding how to contact their preferred facility TVC and PACT team when necessary, and providing the preferred facility with a temporary address and local contact information while on extended travel. This education can occur through the PACT (see paragraph 5.i.(1) or via other means [e.g., Specialty Care and others] if the patient is not assigned to a PACT.

(11) The VA medical facility selects one of two options to provide a maintenance medication to the traveling Veteran.

(a) Option 1 allows referral of the traveling Veteran to a VA provider that is designated to prescribe medications.

(b) Option 2 allows the medical facility to develop policy which allows clinical pharmacists (not authorized to prescribe) to dispense a bridge supply of maintenance medications for visiting patients. **NOTE:** *It is highly recommended that VA medical facilities utilize Option 2 because it reduces the need for an unscheduled or urgent visit to a VA provider.* It is important that the facility ensure there is no delay for Veterans to receive prescription medication, when necessary for their care. If Option 2 is selected, the policy must contain the following elements:

1. The clinical pharmacist will view Remote or VistAWeb data to verify that a valid VA prescription for the maintenance medication exists and there are no allergies or drug interactions. For a prescription that is no longer valid or all refills have been exhausted, the clinical pharmacist must verify that the patient has a documented history of chronic treatment with the medication.

2. The policy will allow clinical pharmacists to dispense a bridge supply to the traveling Veteran that will be entered into VistA as a policy order.

3. The policy will identify a designated VA provider to be utilized for all policy orders written by the clinical pharmacist. This VA provider must be a physician and be authorized to prescribe medications at the facility. The clinical pharmacist must notify the designated VA provider that the bridge supply has been dispensed and the policy order has been entered into VistAWeb. **NOTE:** *It is recommended that this designated VA provider be utilized throughout the VA medical facility for all traveling Veterans.*

4. The designated VA provider must review VistAWeb to ensure that continued therapy is monitored and policy orders written by clinical pharmacists are appropriate for the patient. The designated VA provider also must ensure that all policy orders, assessments, treatment recommendations and other related data at the alternate facility are documented clearly in CPRS so they may be viewed on VistAWeb at the preferred facility.

5. The originating facility VA provider (typically the patient's PCP from the preferred facility) shall be listed on each prescription by the clinical pharmacist by placing the provider's name and VA medical facility in the comments section of the prescription order or on the labeled prescription instructions.

6. The policy must exclude the provision of controlled substances schedules II-V. In addition, the policy must also exclude medications whose automatic extension raises medication safety concerns and requires a patient assessment, such as medications requiring close laboratory monitoring. For these categories of refill or renewal requests, the clinical pharmacist must direct the patient to the appropriate provider (as in Option 1 above), medical clinic, or emergency room for evaluation.

7. The policy will define clinical circumstances when referrals to higher levels of care are appropriate.

8. The policy should be approved through the appropriate facility oversight committee to include the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee and the Medical Executive Committee.

(12) When traveling Veterans register at alternate facilities, they are educated by the alternate facility TVC on how to obtain care from that facility. For example: Veterans seeking bridge supplies of medications they are currently receiving are advised to go directly to the appropriate location as determined by the medical facility.

(13) The VA medical facility supports the laboratory monitoring requirements for prescriptions, including anticoagulation International Normalized Ratio (INR) monitoring, substance abuse urine screening requirements, therapeutic drug level screening levels, and other necessary laboratory studies such as Chemistry Panels or Complete Blood Counts (CBC) as requested by the preferred facility. This care will be coordinated by the respective facility TVC. It is the responsibility of the ordering provider, to notify the Veteran of the test results within 14 days.

(14) Care for the traveling Veteran is carefully coordinated to ensure a seamless continuation of services. This may require one or more services provided through a non-VA Medical Care contract or sharing agreement. For example, Veterans who need maternity services or specific specialty care that is not available at the alternate facility must be provided with continuous, coordinated coverage during travel as medically appropriate.

(15) There is an established and uniform system at each VA medical facility to capture the information required of traveling Veterans prior to their departure (i.e., temporary address, phone number, and dates of travel).

c. **Traveling Veteran Coordinator.** The TVC at the alternate facility or preferred facility is responsible for:

(1) Coordinating care between the alternate and preferred facilities for traveling Veterans.

(2) Entering progress notes (even if historical) so that progress can be reviewed from either facility via remote data or VistAWeb.

(a) It is recommended that a TVC note title be added to CPRS for progress note entry.

(b) It is recommended that a TVC Consult and a corresponding Consult note be created at each facility for ease of operation, tracking and workload purpose.

(3) Developing and cultivating a network of support staff at their own facility that can assist in care coordination, particularly of specialty services.

(4) Engaging and collaborating with the facility Lead Coordinator, as needed, when coordinating care for traveling Veterans who require complex care coordination or specialized case management services (e.g., Operation Enduring Freedom-Operation Iraqi Freedom-Operation New Dawn (OEF-OIF-OND), Serious Mental Illness, SCI/D, and Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Continuum of Care). (See [VA Directive 0007, Interagency Coordination of Complex Care, Benefits, and Services](#), the [Memorandum \(MOU\) between VA and Department of Defense \(DoD\) for Interagency Complex Care Coordination Requirements for Service Members and Veterans, dated July 29, 2014](#), (**NOTE:** This Web site is external to VA and may not conform to Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) and [VHA Handbook 1010.01, Care Management of Operating Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) and Operating Iraqi Freedom \(OIF\) Veterans](#)). **NOTE:** Effective July 29, 2014, the MOU between VA and the DoD for Interagency Complex Care Coordination Requirements for Service Members and Veterans provides a common operational model and supporting responsibilities for which VA and DoD have agreed to adhere to concerning complex care coordination processes for care, benefits, and services for Service members and Veterans. This model establishes the role of the Lead Coordinator. For policy and assigned responsibilities with this MOU, see [VA Directive 0007](#).

d. **Traveling Veteran Coordinator at the Preferred Facility.** The TVC at the preferred facility is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that care is coordinated between preferred and alternate medical facilities for traveling Veterans using the preferred facility TVC process (see Appendix A).

(2) Contacting traveling Veterans to discuss care needs and to obtain additional information, as needed.

(3) Coordinating and verifying with the PACT administrative associate or other assigned health administration section (HAS) staff that the Veteran's demographic information (temporary address, phone number, etc.) is updated in the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) system, as referred to in [VHA Directive 1604, Data Entry Requirements for Administrative Data](#).

(4) Using the [Facility Locator Tool](#) to identify which VA medical facility is nearest to where the Veteran will be traveling, based upon the zip code provided with the temporary address. The Veteran must be included in this process, especially when there are multiple facilities in close proximity, to determine the VA medical facility he/she prefers.

(5) Identifying the TVC at the alternate facility, based upon the VSSC national listing.

(6) Communicating with the TVC at the alternate facility to obtain or send information to coordinate care for Traveling Veterans.

(7) Sending the following information to the alternate facility TVC in Outlook via PKI encryption for any traveling Veterans who requires care coordination outside of the preferred facility:

(a) Veteran's full name.

(b) Full Social Security Number.

(c) Date of Birth.

(d) Date Veteran will arrive at and leave from the alternate medical facility locale.

(e) Veteran's temporary address.

(f) Contact phone number for the Veteran while traveling. **NOTE:** *Once the temporary address is entered into the system at the preferred VA medical facility, all of the above information should be copied from VistAWeb and pasted to the encrypted Outlook message for the alternate facility TVC).*

(g) Specific care needed and when care is to be provided. For specialty consults, clinical information regarding the indication for the consult will also be included.

(h) A copy of the lab order, medication order, referral consult, or a copy of the section of the progress note that applies, and identification of the provider name who is requesting the care.

(i) Identification of which VA medical facility is to do the follow-up on the requested service (example: provider at preferred facility will monitor lab results remotely and make medication adjustments).

(j) Any additional pertinent information that alternate facility TVC needs to know.

NOTE: *If care needed is time sensitive, contact alternate facility TVC by phone, in addition to electronic communications.*

(8) Communicating the outcome of the care coordination back to the requesting provider.

e. **Traveling Veteran Coordinator at the Alternate (Receiving) Facility.** The TVC at the alternate facility (receiving) is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that care is coordinated between preferred and alternate facilities for traveling Veterans using the alternate (receiving) facility TVC process (see Appendix B).

(2) Acknowledging receipt of the referral, sending confirmation to the preferred facility TVC, and requesting any additional information that is needed.

(3) Facilitating the registration of the Veteran if the Veteran is not already registered.

(4) Entering orders or facilitating order entry by the designated licensed independent practitioner (LIP). Requested care is arranged by entering orders or having the designated provider enter orders for appropriate tests needed at the request of the PACT at the preferred facility.

(5) Communicating with specialty services, as needed, to facilitate care and coordinate appointments.

(6) Contacting the Veteran, as needed, to clarify any information and to communicate care coordination efforts and appointments. Veterans must be informed of care coordination efforts and appointments (e.g., Anticoagulation monitoring, weekly or monthly injections, infusions, imaging studies, Specialty Clinic Consults for specified clinical indications, chemotherapy/radiation oncology continuation or initiation, dialysis, brachytherapy, or home oxygen, etc.).

(7) Communicating via telephone or through sending encrypted messages to the preferred facility TVC outlining care coordination efforts and appointment information.

(8) Documenting care coordination in CPRS.

(9) Identifying clinical staff that can provide clinical care, if needed, for unexpected but potentially urgent health care needs for Veterans.

(10) Working with the Non-VA Medical Care Program Office to coordinate care for traveling Veterans who require medical services not available at the alternate facility. If the Veteran is eligible, non-VA medical care arrangements must be made in advance of the Veteran's travel to ensure seamless transition of care. For example, women Veterans receiving non-VA maternity care and prenatal care are able to continue such care (including obstetrical services if necessary) at the extended travel location. The Non-VA Medical Care Program Office at the alternate facility must arrange for this care with clinical input provided by the TVCs from both preferred and alternate facilities.

f. **Non-VA Medical Care Program Office.** The Non-VA Medical Care Program Office is responsible for:

(1) Coordinating the non-VA medical care referral review process for traveling Veterans who require health care services that are not available at the alternate facility in accordance with Non-VA Care Coordination (NVCC) Standard Operating Procedures established by the VHA Chief Business Office (CBO) (see NVCC Web site: <http://nonvacare.hac.med.va.gov/nvcc/>). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site not available to the public.*

(2) Performing an administrative eligibility review of the non-VA medical care referral, upon receipt of a non-VA medical care referral in CPRS. The administrative eligibility review involves verifying the administrative eligibility and enrollment status of the traveling Veteran for VHA care.

(3) Performing a clinical review of the non-VA medical care referral, with input from the TVC, upon receipt of a non-VA care referral in CPRS. The clinical review will involve determining the availability of services, applying medical necessity criteria, and obtaining second level approval, if necessary (by local policy).

(4) Alerting appropriate Non-VA Medical Care Program Office team member(s) to enter the authorization and schedule the appointment for the traveling Veteran in the event the non-VA care referral is both administratively and clinically approved. The authorized service(s) must be arranged in a timely manner utilizing established procedures and care will be provided near the Veteran's extended travel location. The subsequent claims for services rendered are the responsibility of the alternate facility.

(5) Informing the TVC of the status, approval, and/or denial of non-VA medical care referrals submitted for traveling Veterans.

g. **Facility Chief of Pharmacy.** The facility Chief of Pharmacy is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) Pharmacy staff complies with the medical facility's selected option for providing prescriptions to traveling Veterans (see paragraph 5.b.(11)).

(2) Prescriptions written are filled by the VA medical facility or the assigned Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP). Urgent prescriptions written by a VA

provider (Option 1) may be filled at a VA medical facility or non-VA pharmacy under contract (such as in CBOCs without a dispensing pharmacy), as appropriate.

(3) Traveling Veterans are instructed to enter a temporary address at their preferred facility and request prescription refills from the preferred facility through use of the automated refill request line, a refill request form, the internet refill request option in My Health_eVet, or by phoning the preferred facility's outpatient pharmacy during normal business hours prior to traveling.

(4) If Option 2 is selected, a templated policy for providing bridge supplies of medications is available (see Appendix E) to help guide clinical pharmacists in responding to medication needs of traveling Veterans. The policy should contain all elements outlined in paragraph 5.b.(11) and circumstances for providing bridge prescriptions to traveling Veterans (see Appendices E and F). If the patient expresses any health-related complaints or the clinical pharmacist's assessment determines the need for immediate evaluation by a higher level of care, then the patient must be directed to a clinic or emergency room to be evaluated by a provider. In addition, the Chief of Pharmacy must ensure quality assurance reviews are conducted, no less than annually, to ensure prescriptions that use the designated VA provider (Option 2) are reviewed, appropriate, and are according to VA medical facility policy.

(5) Every effort is made to ensure that a Veteran requiring a prescription refill while on travel receives the medication without any disruption in therapy.

(a) Access to a clinical pharmacist, even during peak business hours, by walk in, and by telephone needs to be an established standard in local VA medical facility policy.

(b) If the Veteran resides at a temporary address, routine prescription refills and those not required to treat an emergent condition must be processed and sent to the Veteran by the preferred facility, preferably using CMOP. It is the responsibility of all preferred facility staff to inform PC patients that they need to provide a temporary address, phone number, and dates of travel to the preferred facility's eligibility office or other appropriate staff prior to extended travel (see Appendices E and F).

(c) Clinical pharmacists are to assist the Veteran in requesting refills from the preferred facility pharmacy and in notifying appropriate personnel of the temporary address so that it can be entered in VistA if necessary. **NOTE:** *The preferred facility pharmacy should make every effort to expedite prescription delivery when necessary to ensure patient adherence.*

h. **Facility Chief of Prosthetics.** The facility Chief of Prosthetics is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) When needing repair to a VA-issued prosthetic appliance or device, traveling Veterans should seek care at an alternate VA facility. The prosthetic staff at the alternate facility calls the prosthetics staff at the Veteran's preferred facility and confirms that the appliance or device was provided by that facility. The alternate facility will initiate a purchase order and the service will be authorized and provided. Alternatively,

if capabilities exist, the item may be repaired by VA staff according to local policy and procedure. Prosthetics staff at the alternate facility will notify the prosthetics staff at the Veteran's preferred facility to document the repair in the Veteran's Prosthetic Record.

(2) When a traveling Veteran requires a new or replacement item or device to be issued, the Veteran must register at the alternate facility. The Veteran may be referred to urgent care or other clinics for any needed clinical evaluation and to have a consult generated by a clinician at the alternate facility.

(3) When a traveling Veteran is prescribed oxygen for use in the home or ambulatory setting, the Program Clinical Practice Recommendations for the Use of Supplemental Oxygen is to be followed (see http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/Docs/CPR_HomeOxygen.pdf).

(4) A traveling Veteran is responsible for transporting or arranging the delivery or shipment of the prosthetic device issued from the preferred facility to the Veteran's traveling location. During traveling or stay at a temporary residence, a duplicate or replacement of a prior issued device from a preferred facility will not be ordered or provided for the Veteran unless it is determined to be medically urgent by a VA clinician at the alternate facility.

(5) Traveling Veterans will not be eligible for Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grants during traveling or stay at a temporary residence.

(6) Questions or inquiries regarding services and/or equipment covered during foreign travel should be addressed by the Foreign Medical Program (FMP). See [VHA Handbook 1601F.05, Hospital Care and Medical Services in Foreign Countries](#).

i. **Patient Aligned Care Team at the Preferred Facility.** The assigned Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT), Primary Care or Special Population, at the preferred facility is responsible for ensuring that:

NOTE: *If the traveling Veteran is not assigned to a PACT at a preferred facility (i.e. receiving primary care in the community and only receiving specialty care or mental health care at VA), the specialty care or mental health care provider at the preferred facility is responsible for the tasks listed below:*

(1) The Veteran is educated in:

(a) Informing a member of his or her PACT (or their specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) if a period of extended travel is anticipated or planned and to provide a temporary address, telephone number, and dates of travel. (See Appendices G, H and I for samples of educational tools).

(b) Contacting the PACT (or their specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) at the preferred facility for issues that do not require immediate medical attention even after embarking on extended travel. (See Appendices G, H, and I for samples of educational tools).

(2) The Veteran's CPRS record contains current medication and problem lists.

(3) When extended travel is known in advance:

(a) An electronic consult is submitted to the preferred facility TVC communicating the necessary information to coordinate care for traveling Veterans. Such information should include details such as where the traveling Veteran will be residing, including a valid telephone number, arrival and departure dates, specific information about the care needed, and the PACT's (or specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) contact information.

(b) Arrangements are made with alternate VA medical facilities for anticipated treatment or evaluation needs while away (for example, short-term participation in an anticoagulation clinic or laboratory work to monitor high-risk medication). **NOTE:** *Veterans should not be referred to an alternate facility for routine screening needs while traveling (e.g., screening colonoscopy, routine diabetic eye exam).*

(c) Such arrangements are made with the assistance of the TVCs at both the preferred and alternate facilities.

(d) CPRS documentation of these anticipated care needs and arrangements will be available to the alternate facility in the form of a progress note in the Veteran's record. In cases where the care needs are complex, the preferred facility provider will provide a case summary in a CPRS progress note.

(e) When the anticipated care needs are complex (e.g., continuation of chemotherapy, complex medical evaluation in progress), transfer of care between facilities will occur with the assistance of the TVCs, so that care arrangements can be made with a specialist or PACT provider as indicated at the alternate facility. The referring facility provider's name and contact information will be provided to the involved TVCs (and included in a CPRS progress note) so as to facilitate provider-to-provider contact when needed. **NOTE:** *In some circumstances these care arrangements may be initiated by a specialty service at the preferred facility rather than the Veteran's PACT (e.g., anticoagulation clinic, dialysis clinic).*

(4) When extended travel is not known in advance and the Veteran develops unexpected care needs, the PACT (or specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) at the preferred facility coordinates with the TVCs to provide assistance, as appropriate.

(5) Documentation of care provided to traveling Veterans off-site is reviewed through Remote Access and VistAWeb.

(6) The PACT (or specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) at the preferred facility has primary responsibility for renewals of routine medications, including controlled substances. Only under extenuating circumstances, such as uncertain current health status with a need for concurrent evaluation, should the Veteran be directed to seek care through the closest VA medical facility. The PACT

(or specialty care or mental health care provider, if not assigned to a PACT) at the preferred facility should help facilitate that evaluation, as necessary.

j. **Medical Provider at the Alternate Facility.** Whether in primary care or specialty services, the medical provider at the alternate facility is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) Appropriate, coordinated, clinical care is provided during the Veteran's extended travel.

(2) Appropriate notes and data available through Remote Access or VistAWeb are reviewed.

(3) Assessments, treatment recommendations, policy orders and other relevant data are documented clearly in CPRS (so that they may be reviewed on VistAWeb at the preferred facility). Treatment recommendations for specialty medications are to include doses, any precautions, and monitoring requirements.

(4) Care is transitioned appropriately back to the preferred facility PACT or specialist for ongoing care needs when the Veteran returns to the preferred facility. When non-routine follow-up is required at the preferred facility (e.g., post-discharge follow-up, continuation of complex treatment, medical evaluation in progress, new diagnosis or treatment), transfer of care between facilities will occur with the assistance of the TVCs, so that care arrangements can be made with the appropriate specialist or PACT provider at the preferred facility. The referring facility provider's name and contact information will be provided to the involved TVCs (and included in a CPRS progress note) so as to facilitate provider-to-provider contact when needed.

(5) All results from tests (laboratory tests, radiology exams, etc.) ordered (even those recommended by the patients' assigned PCP) are communicated with traveling Veterans in a timely fashion consistent with [VHA Directive 2009-019, Ordering and Reporting Test Results](#), or subsequent policy issue, and appropriate follow-up provided; for example, by providing immediate treatment for critical laboratory values.

6. REFERENCES:

a. [VA Directive 0007, Interagency Coordination of Complex Care, Benefits, and Services](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VA Publications](#) Web site.

b. [VHA Directive 2009-019, Ordering and Reporting Test Results](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.

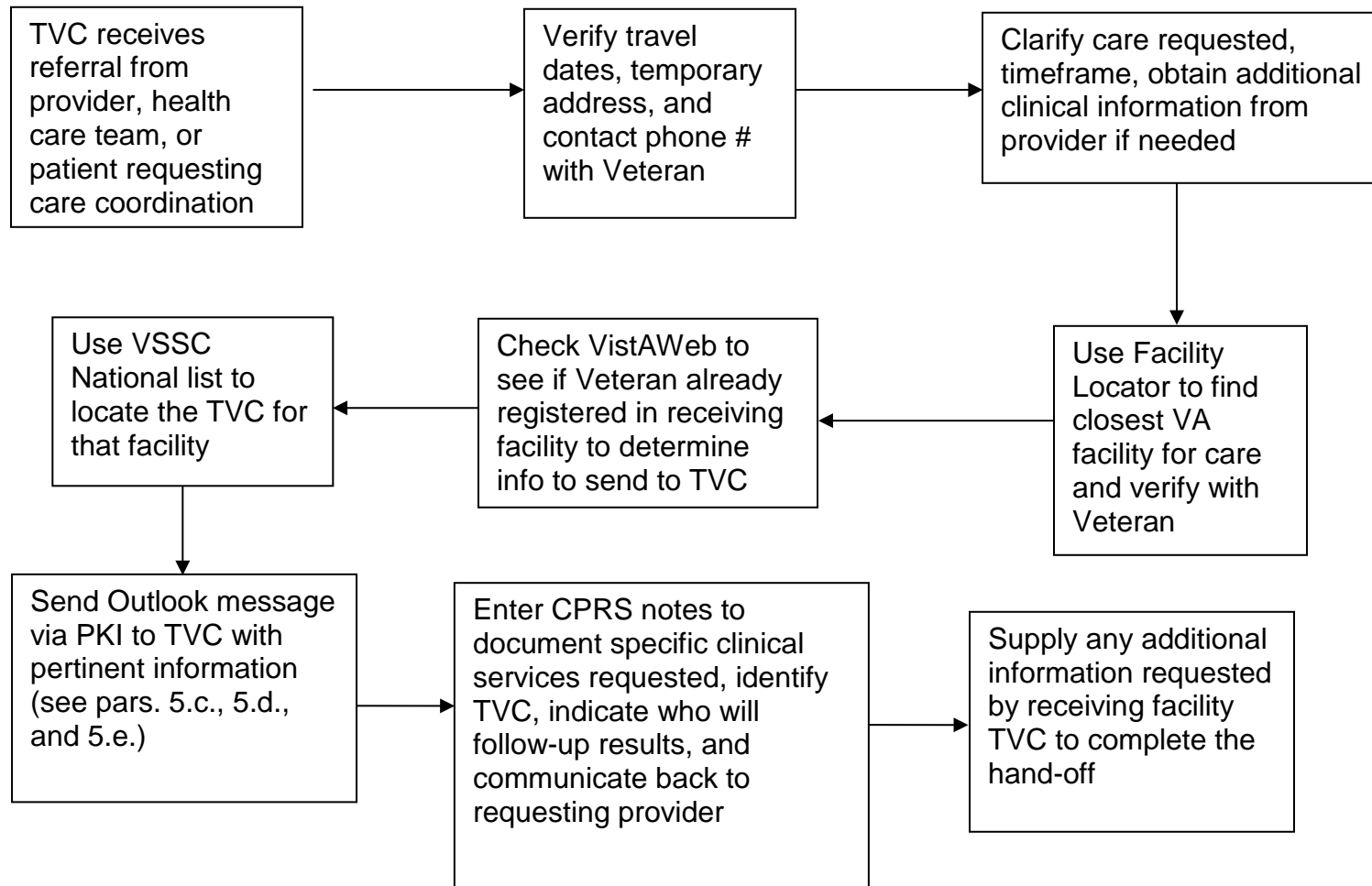
c. [VHA Directive 2010-038, Enrolled Veterans Intake and Registration](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.

d. [VHA Directive 2012-019, Outpatient Health Care for United States Veterans Residing In or Visiting the Philippines at the VA Clinic in Manila](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.

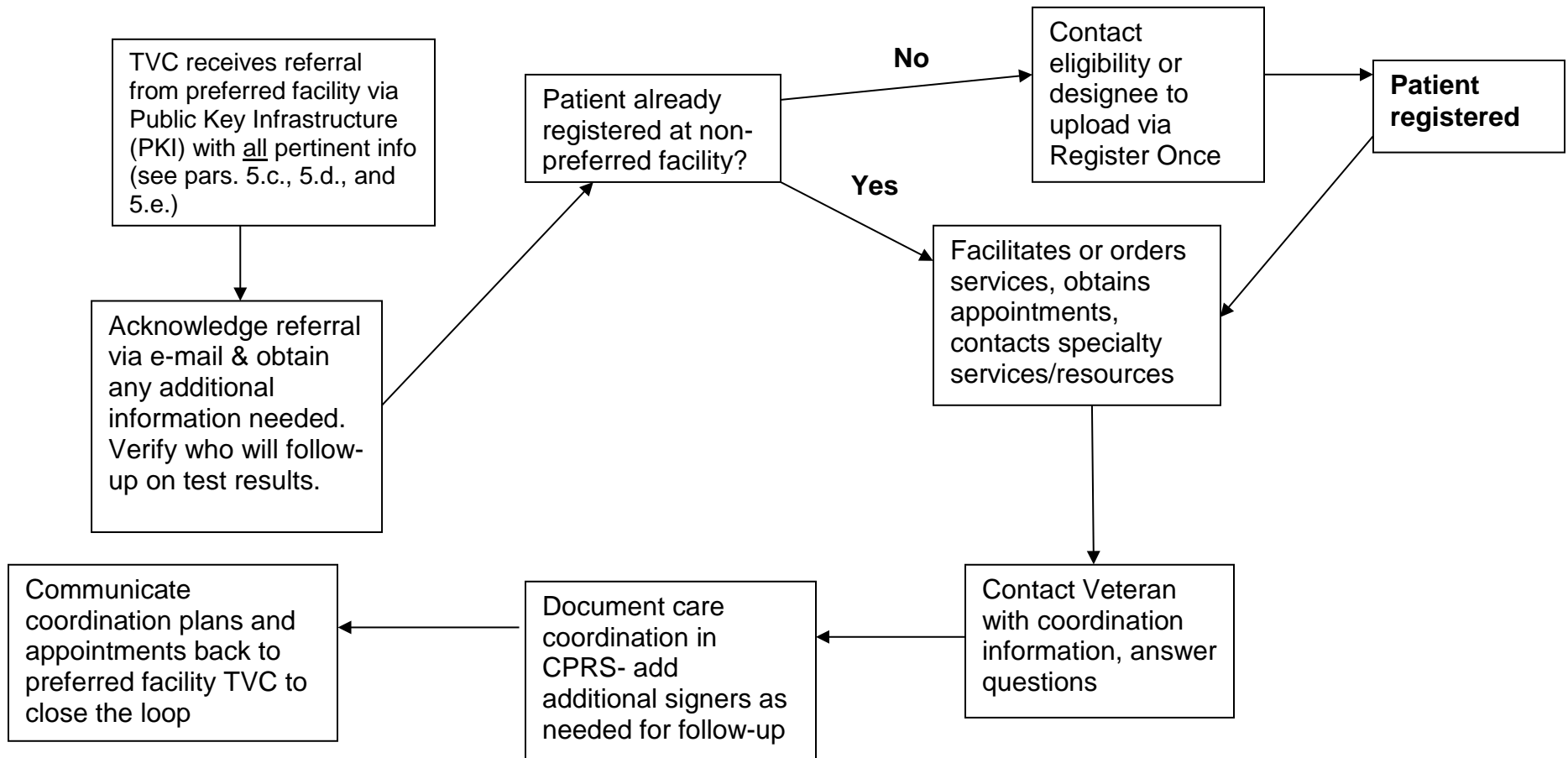
- e. [VHA Directive 1601, Non-VA Medical Care Program](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- f. [VHA Directive 1601F.05, Hospital Care and Medical Services in Foreign Countries](#) or subsequent policy issue. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*
- g. [VHA Directive 1604, Data Entry Requirements for Administrative Data](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- h. [VHA Handbook 1010.01, Care Management of Operation Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) and Operating Iraqi Freedom \(OIF\) Veterans](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- i. [VHA Handbook 1101.02, Primary Care Management Module \(PCMM\)](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- j. [VHA Handbook 1101.10, Patient Aligned Care Team \(PACT\) Handbook](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- k. [VHA Handbook 1108.11, Clinical Pharmacy Services](#), or subsequent policy issue on the [VHA Publications](#) Web site.
- l. VHA Prosthetic Clinical Management Program (PCMP) Clinical Practice Recommendations Home Use of Supplemental Oxygen (http://www.prosthetics.va.gov/Docs/CPR_HomeOxygen.pdf)
- m. Clinical Inventory by Facility (to see if services are available) on VSSC Web site at: http://reports2.vssc.med.va.gov/ReportServer/Pages/ReportViewer.aspx?%2fApps%2fCI%2fProd%2fCI_FacilityServicesv2RevMulitValue&rs:Command=Render. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*
- n. Non VA Care Coordination (NVCC) Standard Operating Procedures established by the VHA Chief Business Office (CBO) (See NVCC Web site: <http://nonvacare.hac.med.va.gov/nvcc>). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*
- o. PCMM Coordinator and Referral Case Manager List (<http://vssc.med.va.gov/pcmm/>). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*
- p. VA Pharmacy Anticoagulation Clinic Point of Contact List (<https://vaww.cmopnatonal.va.gov/cmop/PBM/Lists/Pharmacy%20Phone%20Directory/General.aspx/General.aspx?View={2EB620CD-8CFA-4133-B3A7-87C027D71EAC}&FilterField1=Telephone%5Fx0020%5FNumber&FilterValue1=Anticoagulation%20Clinic%20POC%2C%20Pharmacy>). **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site and is not available to the public.*

q. [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) between Department of Veterans Affairs \(VA\) and Department of Defense \(DoD\) for Interagency Complex Care Coordination Requirements for Service Members and Veterans, dated July 29, 2014.](#) **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web Site and is not available to the public.*

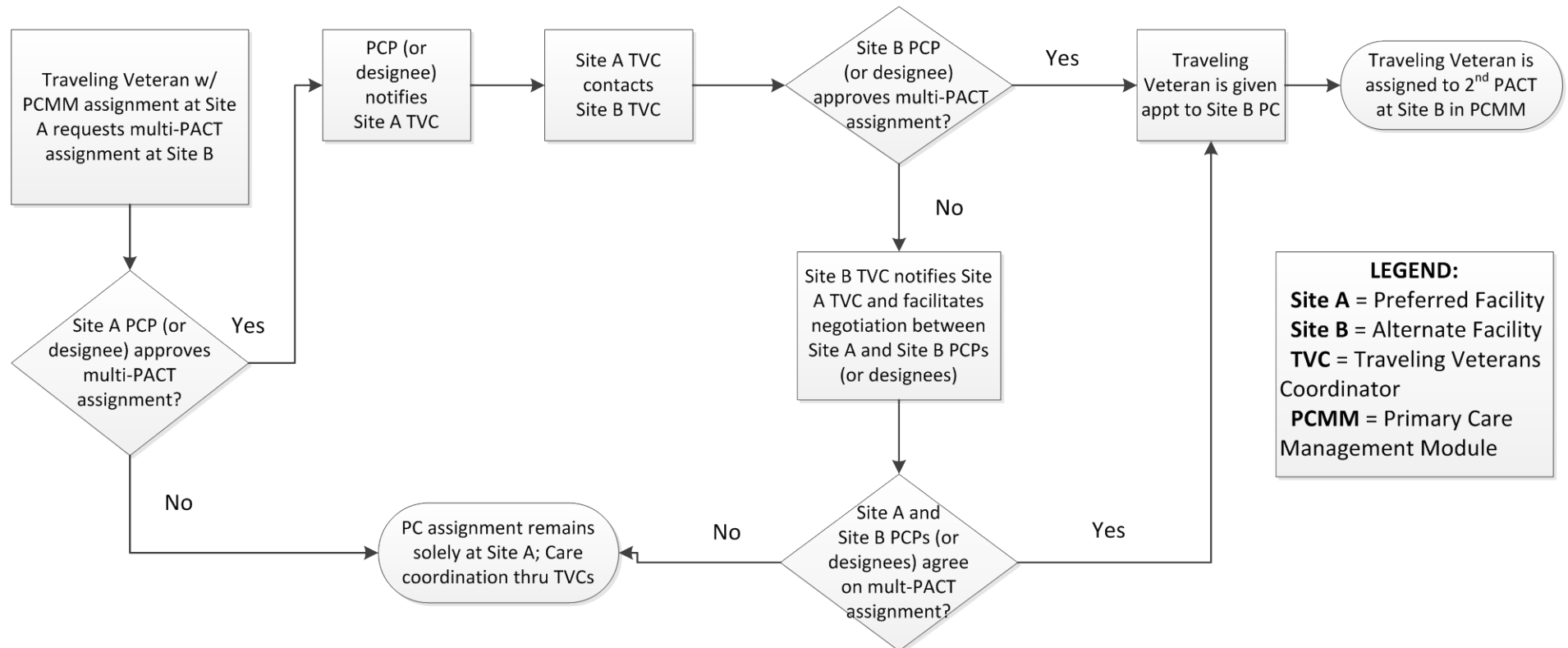
PREFERRED FACILITY TRAVELING VETERAN COORDINATOR (TVC) PROCESS



ALTERNATE (RECEIVING) FACILITY TRAVELING VETERAN COORDINATOR (TVC) PROCESS

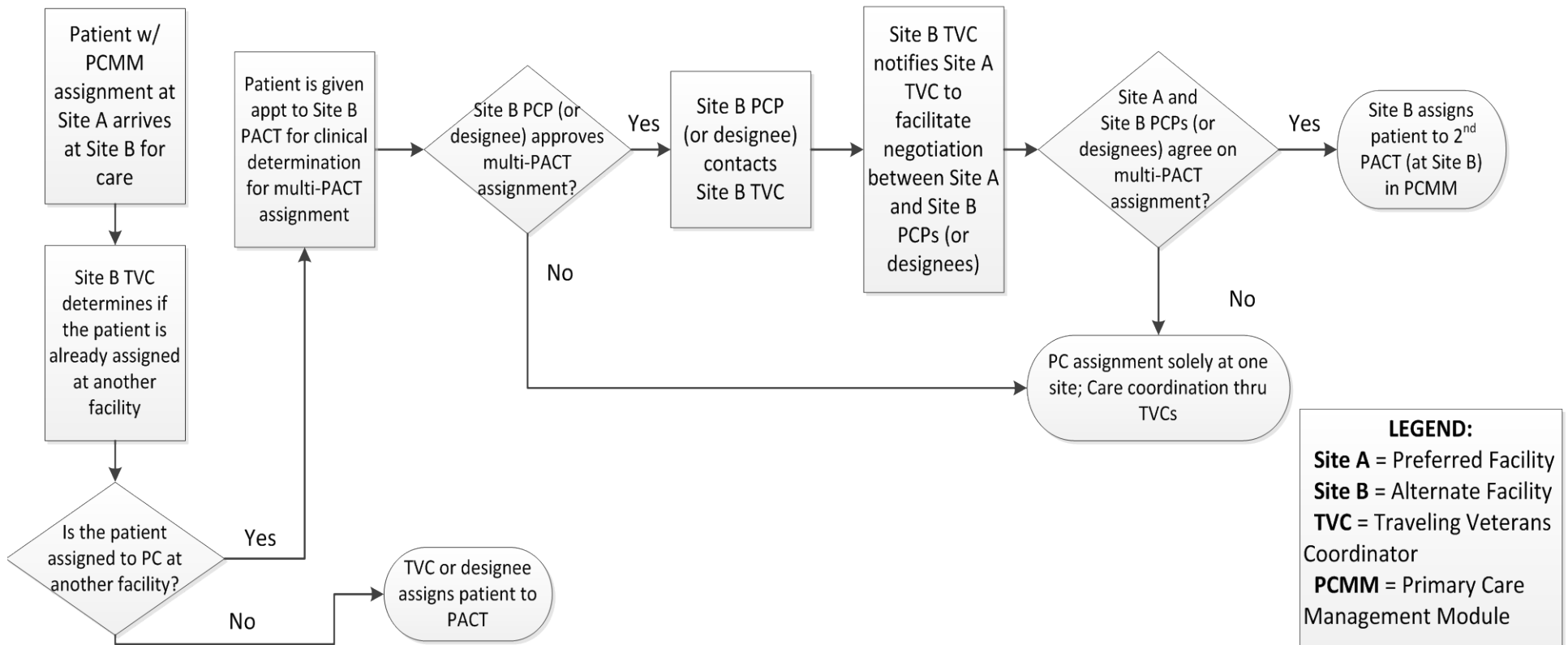


DETERMINATION OF MULTI-PACT ASSIGNMENT STATUS
SCENARIO #1: PATIENT PROVIDES PREFERRED FACILITY WITH ADVANCE NOTICE OF EXTENDED TRAVEL



DETERMINATION MULTI-PACT ASSIGNMENT STATUS

SCENARIO #2: PATIENT ARRIVES AT ALTERNATE (RECEIVING) FACILITY WITHOUT ADVANCE NOTICE OF EXTENDED TRAVEL



**THE PROCEDURE FOR CLINICAL PHARMACISTS TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY
SUPPLIES OF MAINTENANCE MEDICATION AT ALTERNATE FACILITY****(OPTION 2)**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility has two options to provide a temporary supply of a maintenance medication to the traveling Veteran. Option 1 allows referral of the traveling Veteran to a VA provider that is authorized to prescribe medications. Option 2 allows the medical facility to develop policy which allows clinical pharmacists (not authorized to prescribe) to dispense a bridge supply of a maintenance medication to the traveling Veteran. This Appendix outlines procedures by which clinical pharmacists will dispense bridge supplies if Option 2 is selected by the medical facility.

1. The patient registers at the alternate facility with Veterans Integrated System Technology Architecture (VistA)'s Register Once Messaging (ROM).
2. The patient is directed to the pharmacy or a pharmacy-managed refill clinic.
3. The clinical pharmacist evaluates the request for a temporary supply of medication using VistAWeb or remote access capabilities.
 - a. If the medication is not permitted to be dispensed under a VA medical facility policy, or if the patient expresses health concerns or questions, the clinical pharmacist directs the patient to the appropriate medical clinic or emergency room for evaluation.
 - b. If medication is permitted to be dispensed under VA medical facility policy, the clinical pharmacist provides a temporary supply using the following guidelines:

(1) Active Prescriptions with One or More Refills Available. If there is an Active Prescription with one or more refills available, the following are implemented:

- (a) The clinical pharmacist dispenses a bridge supply.
- (b) The clinical pharmacist assists the patient in contacting the patient's home pharmacy to document a temporary address so that additional refills may be sent, if needed. Assistance may take the form of providing the patient the phone number of the home pharmacy, making phone calls on behalf of the patient, or making inter-facility consult requests through Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS).
- (c) The clinical pharmacist documents the order as a policy order within VistA using the designated VA Authorized Provider (who must be a physician who is authorized to prescribe medications at the alternate facility) as the VA provider listed on the prescription label. In addition, the original prescribing VA provider's name from the preferred facility is to be placed in the medication label's patient instruction field or comments section of the prescription.

(2) Active Prescriptions for Maintenance Medications with All Refills Used. If there is an active prescription for maintenance medication with all the refills used, the following is implemented:

(a) The clinical pharmacist dispenses a bridge supply.

(b) The clinical pharmacist assists the patient with contacting the patient's home facility to alert the provider to re-order the medication(s) and to have the medication(s) mailed to a temporary address, if needed.

(c) The clinical pharmacist documents the order as a policy order within VistA using the designated VA Authorized Provider (must be a physician) at the alternate facility as the VA provider listed on the prescription label. In addition, the original prescribing VA provider's name from the preferred facility is to be placed in the medication label's patient instruction field or comments section of the prescription.

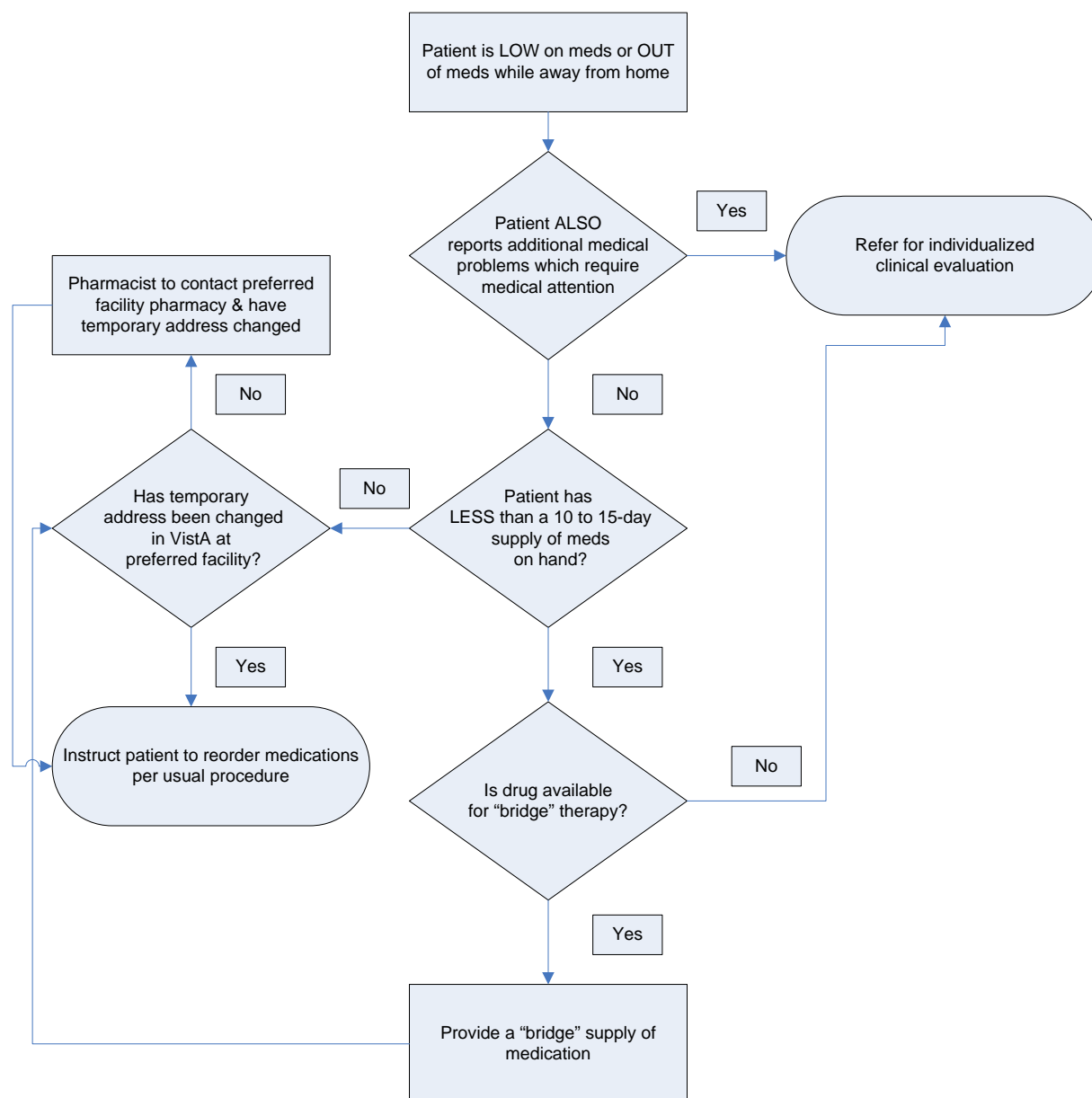
(3) Prescription Expired or no Refills Provided. If the prescription has expired or no refills are permitted, the following is implemented:

(a) The clinical pharmacist uses professional judgment.

(b) If the clinical pharmacist determines the request to be appropriate (for example, maintenance medication that the patient has been taking for a long time), the clinical pharmacist, acting within VA medical facility policy, dispenses a bridge supply as described above and assists the patient to contact the preferred facility to leave a message for the provider to re-order medication and to have it mailed to the temporary address, if needed. The clinical pharmacist documents the order as a policy order within VistA using the designated VA Authorized Provider (must be a physician) at the alternate facility as the VA provider listed on the prescription label. The clinical pharmacist documents the original prescribing clinician's name from the preferred facility and places it in the medication label's patient instruction field or comments section of the prescription.

(c) If the clinical pharmacist determines the patient requires medical assessment or the medication is outside of medical facility policy, the clinical pharmacist directs the patient to the appropriate medical clinic or emergency room to be evaluated.

FLOW CHART OF THE PROCEDURE FOR CLINICAL PHARMACISTS TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY SUPPLIES OF MAINTENANCE MEDICATION AT ALTERNATE FACILITY



Traveling Veteran Coordinator (TVC) Poster

ATTENTION:

Veterans who are **on extended travel and need care coordination during period of travel.**



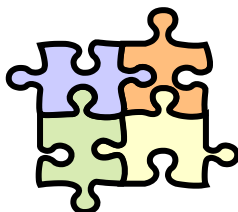
For your continuity of care: If you will require medications, injections, blood tests, or any type of medical follow-up during the time you are away from your Preferred Facility **(enter facility name)**

1. Inform your Primary Care Provider or Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) members of your plans to travel as far in advance as possible.
2. Leave your temporary address and contact phone number with the PACT team along with the dates you will be leaving and returning. This will allow us to send any medications and correspondence to your temporary address while you are gone.
3. Request a copy of your health summary and medication list to take with you.
4. Make sure you have enough supply of medications (or enough refills) to last until you return. It is important to request your medications at least 10-14 days prior to running out.

Your PACT Team or Specialty Provider will consult the Traveling Veteran Coordinator to coordinate your care with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility or clinic closest to where you will be traveling or temporarily residing.

Please contact the Traveling Veteran Coordinator,
(enter TVC name & phone #)
For further assistance

TRAVELING VETERAN COORDINATOR (TVC) INFORMATION FOR PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAMS (PACT)



Do your patients travel seasonally? Do they travel out of state to visit family? Do they need ongoing medical attention while they are away?

Let's put the pieces together to coordinate your patient's care at another Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care Facility when it is medically necessary!

Each VA Health Care Facility has a Traveling Veteran Coordinator who will help to coordinate this care.

The (enter facility name) Traveling Veteran Coordinator is

(Enter TVC name and #)

If your patients will be traveling and need labs drawn, specialty injections, urgent follow-up for a newly diagnosed condition, anticoagulation monitoring, follow-up x-rays, etc. and they do **NOT** have an assigned provider in that state, please contact the Traveling Veteran Coordinator via consult. Provide specific information about the patient's travel dates, where (s)he will be residing (need temporary address and a contact phone #), what care is needed, the date care needs to start, and your contact information. Inform your patient that (s)he will be contacted by the TVC to help coordinate care.

REMEMBER TO:

- Educate your patient that (enter facility name) is the preferred facility and that the Traveling Veteran Coordinator will help coordinate care that is needed at other VA Health Care facilities.
- Complete an electronic consult to the Traveling Veteran Coordinator with DETAILS on where patient will be residing including a valid phone number, inclusive dates patient will be gone, specific information about what care is needed, the date care is required, and your contact information.
- Be sure the patient has enough refills on their prescriptions to last until (s)he returns to your clinic (routine prescriptions should ideally be refilled by the home facility.)

Please help your patients plan ahead to facilitate care while they are gone!

TRAVELING VETERAN COORDINATOR (TVC) PATIENT INFORMATION



Are you planning on traveling seasonally?
Are you planning an extended trip away from (insert location of preferred facility here)?

If so, you may need some coordination of your medical care with another Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility if you do NOT have an assigned physician in that location.

To ensure your care, including medication refills, continues uninterrupted during periods of extended travel, please inform your Primary Care or Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) of such plans in advance of your departure date. This will enable our TVC to arrange for you to receive any needed or continuing VA medical services while you are away.

Be sure to tell us what your temporary address and telephone number will be so that your medication refills can be sent to you there and we can assist with your care.



For questions call: (enter TVC name and #)