

D.28 CLINIC CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING POLICY (CM 11-17, MARCH 2, 2017)

VA WESTERN NEW YORK HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

March 2, 2017

CENTER MEMORANDUM NO. 11-17

CLINIC CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING POLICY

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish policy and procedures for timely cancellation and rescheduling of clinic sessions. To provide accommodations and minimize adverse impact on scheduled patients when a clinic is cancelled. To maintain maximum patient and/or customer satisfaction when a clinic appointment is rescheduled.
2. **POLICY:** Clinic cancellations and rescheduling are disruptive to patients, their families, support personnel, and often create additional work for the provider and clerical staff. However, if after all alternatives have been explored and a clinic must be cancelled, the provider will review the patients scheduled, ensure that all medical problems are addressed in a timely fashion, and patients will be contacted to coordinate the rescheduling of their appointments. All patient appointments will be rescheduled in a timely fashion to ensure that the appointment occurs within 30 days of the original clinically indicated date. Appointments may be rescheduled to an earlier date as clinically indicated.
3. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**
 - A. Service Chiefs, Care/Service Line Managers will ensure that healthcare providers with outpatient clinics are aware of this policy and comply with the guidelines established in the policy. Service Chiefs, Care/Service Line Managers or their designees will monitor compliance with the procedures and develop plans for improvement as necessary.
 - B. Providers will ensure that scheduled leave is requested in advance. A 60 day notice is required. This will ensure that patients receive sufficient notification of appointment changes.
 - C. In the case that a healthcare provider submits a request for planned leave, and if applicable, a cancellation of patient care activities with less than 60 days in advance notice, the healthcare provider must submit the request(s) to the leave approving official who will forward to the Chief of Staff (COS) through the Service Chief/CLM. The COS is responsible for reviewing, taking into consideration all appropriate circumstances and making a decision regarding the request(s) within a timeframe established by appropriate collective bargaining agreements or Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) or local policy.
4. **PROCEDURES:**
 - A. Clinic Cancellation Procedures:
 1. When a patient calls or sends advance notice to a VA employee that they cannot appear for a scheduled appointment, it is the responsibility of that VA employee to immediately notify the appropriate administrative support staff to ensure the appointment is correctly coded as canceled by patient.
 2. Prior to electively canceling any clinic, all alternatives must be considered; an effort made to secure alternate provider coverage, and documented actions taken to manage the affected patients. These alternatives may include securing coverage from another provider or use of Consultants or Attending Physicians. **Under no circumstance will all providers in a discipline be on leave or scheduled off station during the administrative tour at the same time (e.g. all providers in a specialty on scheduled leave and/or travel the same day).**

3. If, after all alternatives have been considered, a clinic must be canceled, the responsible provider, surrogate, or designated team representative is to review the records of the scheduled patients, ensure that urgent medical problems are addressed in a timely fashion, ensure that provisions are made for necessary medication renewals, and ensure that patients are rescheduled to be seen on a clinically appropriate basis, and document in the patients' medical records accordingly.
4. Procedures must be in place for clinic cancellations due to unforeseeable circumstances such as provider illness or unplanned emergency leave, weather emergencies, etc., including procedures for patient notification, coverage when possible and appropriate, and/or timely rescheduling.
5. Clinic cancellations for planned leave less than 60 days are to be requested through the respective Service Chief or Care/Service Line Manager for approval. Requests will include justification and provisions made to ensure effective implementation of a patient notification and rescheduling plan. Upon approval, Service Chief, Care/Service Line Manager will forward request to the Chief of Staff for review and consideration.
6. Health Administration Medical Support Assistants will contact each patient affected by the cancellation by telephone and coordinate the scheduling of a new appointment at the patient's convenience. When an appointment is cancelled and rescheduled by the clinic, the scheduler must enter the original clinically indicated date as the clinically indicated date for the new appointment.
7. If appointments cannot be rescheduled within 30 days of the original clinically indicated date, a make-up clinic session will be established or the Veteran will be provided information regarding the Choice Program and placed on the Veterans Choice List.

B. Clinic Rescheduling Process:

1. The rescheduling of a clinic will be coordinated through the provider's supervisor as soon as known.
 2. Scheduling staff will contact patients to reschedule appointments.
5. **REFERENCE:** 10N Memorandum, Revised Cancellation of Patient Care Activities dated May 8, 2016.
6. **RESCISSION:** Center Memorandum 11-17 dated October 8, 2014
7. **AUTOMATIC REVIEW DATE:** March 1, 2020
8. **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Chief of Staff (11)

//s//

BRIAN G. STILLER

Medical Center Director

DISTRIBUTION: 1 copy each (00, 00QM, Service Chiefs, Care Line Managers, All Providers, Clinic Managers, Health Administration Staff)