

April VDC Operations Office Hour

Spending Plan Development, Initiating Services, and Hiring Workers

April 2023

Menti Poll – Icebreaker

Go to www.menti.com and enter code: **9597 6270**

How many Veterans are you currently serving through VDC?



Please enter the code

Submit



Victoria Wright, Program
Officer for Veteran Directed
Care and Inclusive
Transportation Programs

Agenda

- Welcome and Announcements from the Administration for Community Living (ACL)**
- FAQs from the March Office Hour**
- Focused Topic Discussion:**
 - Spending Plan Development**
 - Monthly Service Reports**
 - Initiating Services**
 - Hiring Workers**
- Open Question and Answer (Q&A)**
- Closing**

VDC Operations Manual Template Overview

- Informed by the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs VDC requirements and VDC program best practices
- Purpose:
 - ▶ To inform the development of a VDC provider's VDC operations manual
 - ▶ To support program consistency, access, and efficiency
- Organized by key operational areas
 - ▶ Program Background
 - ▶ Referral and Intake
 - ▶ Assessment and **Spending Plan**
 - ▶ **Initiating Services and Hiring Workers**
 - ▶ **Ongoing Monitoring**
 - ▶ Billing and Invoicing
 - ▶ Quality

Questions from the March Office Hour




FAQ: Forms Library

Question: Can we get a place for all the various forms people use to live as samples that we can all access?

Response:

- ▶ We are developing a “forms library” on the [TA Community website](#)
- ▶ If you would like to share your existing VDC form templates with peers, please forward them to VeteranDirected@acl.hhs.gov

FAQ: Traveling Veterans

 **Question:** We received a referral of a Veteran that spends part of his time in Maryland and another part of his time in another state. How can we assist this Veteran while he is not in state?

Response:

- It is possible in certain situations and under certain conditions for the current VDC program to continue providing VDC program coverage for a traveling Veteran. The conditions include:
 - The time-period of the relocation cannot exceed 120 days.
 - The Veteran's employee(s) travel with the Veteran and will continue to be employee(s) at the alternate site.
 - Video or, at a minimum, telephonic communication can be established and maintained between the Veteran and the Person-Centered Counselor to ensure ongoing communications and care management.
 - The VDC coordinator and the VDC provider agree that the VDC coverage is feasible and that the Veteran will be able to manage employer responsibilities while at the temporary residence.
 - Care **MUST** be provided within the United States or a US Territory.

FAQ: Overspending

Question: If the Veteran is overspending their global budget monthly, is that a reason for disenrollment?

Response:

- ▶ It is the responsibility of the Veteran, with support of the VDC provider, to develop a VDC spending plan that is below the authorized amount, track and monitor VDC spending, and make any necessary changes to the VDC spending plan to ensure spending does not exceed the authorized budget.
- ▶ It is important to review the remediation training and termination policy.
- ▶ The VDC provider is responsible for applying the policy by developing a plan with the Veteran.
- ▶ The VDC provider must alert the VAMC VDC coordinator of continuous Veteran overspending.

FAQ: Disenrollment

Question: Is Veteran disenrollment determined only by the VAMC?

Response:

- ▶ Veterans may voluntarily dis-enroll at any time.
- ▶ Veterans who demonstrate the inability to self-direct services must select an authorized representative to assist them with the responsibilities of self-direction.
- ▶ There are circumstances where Veterans are required to dis-enroll from the program and are outlined in the VDC Operations Manual Template. The VDC provider and VAMC VDC Program Coordinator will then help the Veteran locate suitable alternative services.

Menti Poll

Go to **www.menti.com** and enter code: **9597 6270**

Do you have a process in place for sharing and reviewing monthly service reports (between the ADNA and VAMC) for Veterans enrolled in your VDC program?



Please enter the code

Submit

Focused Topic Discussion

**Spending
Plan
Development**

**Monthly
Service
Reports**

**Initiating
Services and
Hiring
Workers**

Spending Plan Development

Monthly Spending Plan

- VDC providers may use the [VDC Monthly Spending Plan template](#) to help map how Veterans intend to use their VDC budget and estimate spending during their authorization period
- A Veteran's spending plan delineates the amount the Veteran is estimated to spend each month, by including information on:
 - ▶ The workers hired by the Veteran
 - ▶ Goods and services the Veteran plans to purchase
- The VDC provider compares the spending plan amount against the total budget available to the Veteran for the authorization period

Monthly Spending Plan

The PCC submits the spending plan to the VAMC VDC Program Coordinator **within five days of completion** on a form approved during the VDC provider's Readiness Review process and addresses:

The service(s), support(s), or good(s) that will help the Veteran live in the community

How and why this service, support, or good will help the Veteran

Who will help provide the service, support, or good

Start date/end date of the plan

Frequency, hours, and amount

Cost of services, supports, or goods

Monthly Spending Plan Approval

- After the PCC submits the plan – and any supporting documents – to the VAMC, the VDC Program Coordinator reviews it to ensure no duplication of services and that all items relate to a need on the assessment summary
- Once approved, copies of the authorized plan are distributed to the Veteran, VDC provider, PCC, and FMS

The VAMC is required to approve the spending plan prior to the Veteran using their VDC monthly budget and reflect any spending the Veteran incurs while enrolled in VDC.

Updates to the Monthly Spending Plan

- Emergency back-up plan
 - ▶ The spending plan includes an individualized emergency back-up plan that assures services are delivered
 - ▶ The emergency back-up plan is reviewed at least quarterly to confirm the availability/non-availability of the persons listed
- The PCC updates the spending plan throughout the year to reflect changes in need or circumstance
 - ▶ Veterans may initiate changes or changes may occur under the guidance of a PCC and communicated to VA staff through the VDC provider

Only items included in the approved VDC spending plan will be approved for payment.

Monthly Service Reports

Monthly Service Report

- VDC providers keep a detailed record of their Veterans' monthly expenses and share it with their VAMC partners
- At a minimum, the Monthly Service Report includes the following:
 - ▶ Average Veteran monthly budget
 - ▶ Monthly administrative fees
 - ▶ Amount spent on goods and services in the month
 - ▶ Amount spent on emergency back-up care and planned purchases
 - ▶ Amount of total Veteran budget for authorizations spent and remaining to date

Monthly Service Report

Only items included in the approved VDC spending plan will be approved for payment.

If the VAMC VDC Program Coordinator sees a discrepancy between the spending plan and what was spent, they will direct the VDC provider to review the spending plan with the Veteran and, when appropriate, adjust to reflect the care needs of the Veteran.



Initiating Services and Hiring Workers

Initiating Services

After the VAMC VDC Program Coordinator approves the VDC spending plan, the Veteran is responsible for:

- ▶ Organizing the services, supports, and goods needed
- ▶ Recruiting and interviewing staff, with support from the PCC as desired

Hiring requirements are dictated by VAMCs and VDC providers, in accordance with state policy.



Background Checks

- All VDC workers must complete a background check before employment, with procedures specified by the VDC provider in accordance with state policies.
- Background check results are reported to the VDC Program Coordinator
 - ▶ If the worker does not pass, the VDC Program Coordinator will inform the Veteran and authorized representative
 - ▶ If the results show other events that are not disqualifying but present a concern for Veteran health and safety, the PCC discusses them with the Veteran and authorized representative

Worker Payroll

The FMS develops policies for payroll and timesheets to include:

- ▶ Frequency of payroll
- ▶ Process for completing and submitting timesheets
- ▶ Process for paying workers (e.g., check by mail, direct deposit)
- ▶ Payment for over-time, if needed, in accordance with federal and state law

The VDC provider must stress the importance of the accuracy and timely submission of time sheets



FAQ: Wages of VDC Workers

Question: If the Veteran manages their workers, are they able to determine the wages for their workers within the guideline of their budget? Does the wage have to meet legal guidelines?

Response:

- ▶ Veterans determine and establish hourly rates with the funds available in their budget. Wage rates should be documented in their spending plan.
- ▶ VDC workers hired by the Veteran will not be paid an hourly rate that exceeds the hourly rate allowed by the state program for agency services.

FAQ: Employee Benefits

Question: Any consideration to offering sick/vacation time to workers with the program expansion?

Response:

- ▶ Veterans must comply with state and local policy requirements as it pertains to employee benefits.
- ▶ If a Veteran opts to include more paid time off than required by state and local policy, this must be documented in the Veteran spending plan and may impact the hours of direct care services a Veteran is able to allocate in their budget.

Questions? Comments?



FAQ: Mid-Authorization Adjustments

Question: How should options counselors readjust budgets mid-authorization to those overspending? Is there a standard to editing the budget template for this?

Response:

- ▶ It is the responsibility of the Veteran, with support of the VDC provider, to develop and maintain a VDC spending plan that is below the authorized amount, track and monitor VDC spending, and make any necessary changes to the VDC spending plan to ensure spending does not exceed the authorized budget.
- ▶ VDC providers must track VDC spending over the course of the authorization. Particularly in the final months of an authorization, it's critical that VDC providers work with Veterans so that they understand their responsibility to manage their budget.
- ▶ VAMCs are not required to reimburse for any VDC spending that exceeds the Veteran's authorized budget.

Mid-Authorization Adjustments: Veteran Example

- Veteran Example: A Veteran's case-mix changes half-way through their authorization
 - ▶ If the VAMC issues a new authorization, the VDC provider can develop a new VDC Spending Plan based on the new authorization.
 - ▶ If the VAMC updates the authorization, the VDC provider can create a new VDC Spending Plan following the guidance below.
 - ❑ The VDC provider and Veteran can preferably base their new VDC Spending Plan off the new case mix rate and remaining months in the authorization.
 - ❑ If the Veteran had any one-time purchases from the previous case mix and VDC spending plan which the Veteran still requires, the VDC Provider will need to:
 - Add this amount to cell 'C19' in the Veteran Spending Plan tab, and
 - Note if this additional spending will cause the average monthly spending to exceed the new case mix rate (cell 'C23').

Mid-Authorization Adjustments: Veteran Example

- If the Veteran did not have any one-time goods or emergency backup from the previous case mix....

Estimated Totals for Authorization Period	
VDC Budget during Authorization:	\$15,175.00
Total # of Months Veteran will use their VDC Budget:	5
VDC Monthly Case Mix Rate (from Case Mix Rate Calculator):	\$3,035.00
Average Monthly Spending	\$2,908.91
Estimated Average Monthly Spending Within Case Mix Rate?	Yes
Total Spending During Authorization (Estimate):	\$14,544.54
VDC Budget Remaining (Estimate):	\$630.46

Mid-Authorization Adjustments: Veteran Example

- In this example, the Veteran had previously planned for \$400 in emergency back-up care due to a planned vacation for the primary caregiver.
- The Veteran still requires this back-up care in addition to \$300 additional back-up care.

Estimated Totals for Authorization Period	
VDC Budget during Authorization:	
Total # of Months Veteran will use their VDC Budget:	
VDC Monthly Case Mix Rate (from Case Mix Rate Calculator):	\$3,035.00
Average Monthly Spending	\$3,069.71
Estimated Average Monthly Spending Within Case Mix Rate?	
Total Spending During Authorization (Estimate):	
VDC Budget Remaining (Estimate):	

This “global budget” includes the case-mix rate for the total months (\$3,035 * 5) plus the \$400

The previously planned for emergency back-up care causes the average monthly spending to exceed the case mix rate but is still within the “global budget”

Questions? Comments?



Menti Poll

Go to **www.menti.com** and enter code: **9597 6270**

What is one thing you will consider doing differently as a result of what you learned from this office hour session?



Please enter the code

Submit

Closing

- **VDC Operations Office Hour series:** Join us in May 2023
 - ▶ Dates and topics will be released in the May VDC Newsletter
- **Post-event survey:** Please share your feedback through the [post-event survey](#). Additionally, you may enter questions that you would like to be addressed during the office hour series.
- **ACL Technical Assistance (TA)-Community:** Continue the conversation using the discussion board located in the VDC Community on the [ACL TA Community website](#). Please email veterandirected@acl.hhs.gov for access.
- **VDC Monthly Reporting Tool Data:** Report your Veteran census data every month with the [VDC monthly reporting tool](#)
- **Technical Assistance:** Please email the VDC Technical Assistance Team with any questions: veterandirected@acl.hhs.gov

Appendix

Section I: VDC Program Background, Guidelines for Participation, Contracts, Preparing to Deliver VDC, and Roles and Responsibilities

- Veteran Directed Care Program Background
- Veteran Eligibility
- Preparing to Deliver Veteran Directed Care: Steps to Consider
- VAMC, VDC Providers, and Participant Roles and Responsibilities

Section II: Referral and Intake

- Referral Process: Use of HSRM
- Intake Process

Section III: Assessment and Spending Plan Development

- Assessment Process
- Goods and Services
- Monthly Service Report
- VAMC Approval

Section IV: Initiating Services and Hiring Workers

- Initiating Services
- Hiring Workers
- Homecare Agency Services
- Non-employee Goods and Services

Section V: Ongoing Monitoring

- Ongoing Monitoring
- Managing Spending
- Disenrollment

Section VI: Billing and Invoicing

- Monthly Responsibilities
- Monthly Service Report
- VDC Invoices
- Emergency Back-up Care and Planned Purchases

Section VII: Quality

- File Review
- Satisfaction Survey
- Complaints
- Monitoring Quality of Service Delivery and Subcontractors