

Date: August 11, 2021

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Clinical Services/Chief Medical Officer (11)

Subj: Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Approach (VIEWS 5592562)

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)
VISN Chief Medical Officers (10N1-23)
VISN Chief Nurse Officers (10N1-23)
Medical Center Director (00)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to communicate the importance and expectation of adopting a TIC (Trauma-Informed Care) approach to care for all Veterans. As trauma affects the lives and health of many Veterans before, during, and after military service, it is essential that Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) providers understand how experiences of trauma can affect health, health care needs, and interactions with the health care system. Although all Veterans are screened for certain types of trauma, it is not possible to screen for every traumatic experience or to know definitively if a Veteran has or has not experienced a traumatic event. Therefore, clinicians should proactively adopt a trauma-informed approach with all Veterans in anticipation that any Veteran might have experienced trauma.

2. Key principles of TIC are establishing a safe environment, conveying trustworthiness, and promoting choice, collaboration, and empowerment. TIC requires attention to the physical environment, patient preferences, and a willingness to anticipate, identify, and address specific facilitators and barriers to an individual's care.

3. To promote infusion of these principles throughout clinical care, facilities are expected to implement the following:

a. It is strongly recommended that prior to performing an exam, all Veterans are asked: "Is there anything about what this exam involves that might be physically or emotionally difficult for you that you want to share? Is there anything we can do to help make the exam more comfortable for you?" If the Veteran responds "yes," appropriate follow-up discussion and/or referral should be offered (e.g., referral to Primary Care-Mental Health Integration). Facilities should consider including this language on any local job aides or other training materials and take other steps to promote providers routinely asking this question.

b. Any clinical provider or chaperone who performs or is present during a sensitive exam must be assigned and complete the TMS training VA 27681 titled "Providing Trauma-Sensitive Medical Care to Women Veterans" no later than

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September 30, 2021. Although VA 27681 focuses on women Veterans specifically, the content in the training is applicable to TIC with any Veteran and will be useful to providers working with Veterans of all genders. VHA will be developing a more general course on TIC that will be used in future training efforts. Completion of this training will be tracked at the facility level.

c. Additional resources about trauma-informed care are available here: [Trauma-Informed Care SharePoint](#).

4. Should you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Thomas O'Toole MD, Senior Medical Advisor at thomas.otoole@va.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KLM', is positioned above the name of the sender.

Kameron Leigh Matthews, M.D., J.D., FAAFP

Attachment

0602	MEDICAL OFFICER SERIES (aka Physicians) 33,991	Select 0602
0603	PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT SERIES 2,733	Select 0603
0604	CHIROPRACTOR SERIES 0	Select 0604
0605	NURSE ANESTHETIST SERIES 1,186	Select 0605
0610	NURSE SERIES 81,207	Select 0610
0620	NURSE (PRACTICAL) SERIES (LPN) 15,853	Select 0620
0621	NURSING ASSISTANT SERIES 14,941	Select 0621
0631	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST SERIES 1,660	Select 0631
0633	PHYSICAL THERAPIST SERIES 2,659	Select 0633
0635	CORRECTIVE THERAPIST SERIES 298	Select 0635
0636	REHABILITATION THERAPY ASSISTANT SERIES 850	Select 0636
0638	RECREATION/CREATIVE ARTS THERAPIST SERIES 1,005	Select 0638
0640	HEALTH AID AND TECHNICIAN SERIES 9,192	Select 0640
0642	NUCLEAR MED TECHNICIAN SERIES 0	Select 0642
0644	MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST SERIES 4,681	Select 0644
0645	MEDICAL TECHNICIAN SERIES 1,806	Select 0645
0647	DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST SERIES 4,668	Select 0647
0648	THERAPEUTIC RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST SERIES 316	Select 0648
0651	RESPIRATORY THERAPIST SERIES 42	Select 0651
0662	OPTOMETRIST SERIES 1,320	Select 0662
0665	SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY SERIES 2,210	Select 0665
0667	ORTHOTIST AND PROSTHETIST SERIES 372	Select 0667
0668	PODIATRIST SERIES 862	Select 0668
0680	DENTAL OFFICER SERIES 1,642	Select 0680
0681	DENTAL ASSISTANT SERIES 1768	Select 0681
0682	DENTAL HYGIENE SERIES 506	Select 0682
0683	DENTAL LABORATORY AID AND TECHNICIAN SERIES 287	Select 0683
0699	MEDICAL AND HEALTH STUDENT TRAINEE SERIES 835	