

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 17.501

advance written notice of intent to stop payments.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 1732)

[33 FR 5301, Apr. 3, 1968, as amended at 47 FR 58251, Dec. 30, 1982]

CONFIDENTIALITY OF HEALTHCARE QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW RECORDS

AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 5705.

SOURCE: 59 FR 53355, Oct. 24, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

§ 17.500 General.

(a) Section 5705, title 38, United States Code was enacted to protect the integrity of the VA's medical quality assurance program by making confidential and privileged certain records and documents generated by this program and information contained therein. Disclosure of quality assurance records and documents made confidential and privileged by 38 U.S.C. 5705 and the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 may only be made in accordance with the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5705 and those regulations.

(b) The purpose of the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 is to specify and provide for the limited disclosure of those quality assurance documents which are confidential under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 5705.

(c) For purposes of the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511, the VA's medical quality assurance program consists of systematic healthcare reviews carried out by or for VA for the purpose of improving the quality of medical care or improving the utilization of healthcare resources in VA medical facilities. These review activities may involve continuous or periodic data collection and may relate to either the structure, process, or outcome of health care provided in the VA.

(d) Nothing in the regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 shall be construed as authority to withhold any record or document from a committee or subcommittee of either House of Congress or any joint committee or subcommittee of Congress, if such record or document pertains to any matter within the jurisdiction of such committee or joint committee.

(e) The regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 do not waive the sovereign immunity of the United States, and do not waive the confidentiality provisions and disclosure restrictions of 38 U.S.C. 5705.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5705)

§ 17.501 Confidential and privileged documents.

(a) Documents and parts of documents are considered confidential and privileged if they were produced by or for the VA in the process of conducting systematic healthcare reviews for the purpose of improving the quality of health care or improving the utilization of healthcare resources in VA healthcare facilities and meet the criteria in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section. The four classes of healthcare quality assurance reviews with examples are:

(1) Monitoring and evaluation reviews conducted by a facility:

(i) Medical records reviews,

(ii) Drug usage evaluations,

(iii) Blood usage reviews,

(iv) Surgical case/invasive procedure reviews,

(v) Service and program monitoring including monitoring performed by individual services or programs, several services or programs working together, or individuals from several services or programs working together as a team,

(vi) Mortality and morbidity reviews,

(vii) Infection control review and surveillance,

(viii) Occurrence screening,

(ix) Tort claims peer reviews (except reviews performed to satisfy the requirements of a governmental body or a professional health care organization which is licensing practitioners or monitoring their professional performance),

(x) Admission and continued stay reviews,

(xi) Diagnostic studies utilization reviews,

(xii) Reports of special incidents (VA Form 10-2633 or similar forms) and follow-up documents unless developed during or as a result of a Board of Investigation;

(2) Focused reviews which address specific issues or incidents and which are designated by the reviewing office