

§ 17.510

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(5) Participation by VA will enhance related VA healthcare program activities; and

(6) Access to the record by the requester is required for VA to participate in a healthcare program with the requester.

(g) Protected quality assurance records or documents, including records pertaining to a specific individual, will for purposes authorized under law be disclosed to a civil or criminal law enforcement governmental agency or instrumentality charged under applicable law with the protection of public health or safety, including state licensing and disciplinary agencies, if a written request for such records or documents is received from an official of such an organization. The request must state the purpose authorized by law for which the records will be used. The Under Secretary for Health, Regional Director, medical facility Director, or their designees will determine the extent to which the information is disclosable.

(h) Federal agencies charged with protecting the public health and welfare, federal and private agencies which engage in various monitoring and quality control activities, agencies responsible for licensure of individual health care facilities or programs, and similar organizations will be provided confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents if a written request for such records or documents is received from an official of such an organization. The request must state the purpose for which the records will be used. The Under Secretary for Health, Regional Director, medical facility Director, or their designees will determine the extent to which the information is disclosable.

(i) JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) survey teams and similar national accreditation agencies or boards and other organizations requested by VA to assess the effectiveness of quality assurance program activities or to consult regarding these programs are entitled to disclosure of confidential and privileged quality assurance documents with the following qualifications:

(1) Accreditation agencies which are charged with assessing all aspects of medical facility patient care, e.g., JCAHO, may have access to all confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents.

(2) Accreditation agencies charged with more narrowly focused review (e.g., College of American Pathologists, American Association of Blood Banks, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, etc.) may have access only to such confidential and privileged records and documents as are relevant to their respective focus.

(j) Confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents shall be released to the General Accounting Office if such records or documents pertain to any matter within its jurisdiction.

(k) Confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents shall be released to both VA and non-VA healthcare personnel upon request to the extent necessary to meet a medical emergency affecting the health or safety of any individual.

(l) For any disclosure made under paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section, the name of and other identifying information regarding any individual VA patient, employee, or other individual associated with VA shall be deleted from any confidential and privileged quality assurance record or document before any disclosure under these quality assurance regulations in §§17.500 through 17.511 is made, if disclosure of such name and identifying information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(m) Disclosure of the confidential and privileged quality assurance records and documents identified in §17.501 will not be made to any individual or agency until that individual or agency has been informed of the penalties for unauthorized disclosure or redisclosure.

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

§ 17.510 Redisclosure.

No person or entity to whom a quality assurance record or document has been disclosed under §17.508 or §17.509 shall make further disclosure of such record or document except as provided

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for in 38 U.S.C. 5705 and the regulations in §§ 17.500 through 17.511.

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

§ 17.511 Penalties for violations.

Any person who knows that a document or record is a confidential and privileged quality assurance document or record described in §§ 17.500 through 17.511 and willfully discloses such confidential and privileged quality assurance record or document or information contained therein, except as authorized by 38 U.S.C. 5705 or the regulations in §§ 17.500 through 17.511, shall be fined not more than \$5,000 in the case of a first offense and not more than \$20,000 in the case of each subsequent offense.

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

VA HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

AUTHORITY: 38 U.S.C. 7601-7619, 7633, 7634, and 7636.

§ 17.600 Purpose.

The purpose of §§ 17.600 through 17.612 is to establish the requirements for the award of scholarships under the VA Health Professional Scholarship Program (HPSP) to students pursuing a course of study leading to a degree in certain health care occupations, listed in 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and (3), to assist in providing an adequate supply of such personnel for VA. The HPSP allows VA to provide scholarship awards to facilitate recruitment and retention of employees in several hard-to-fill health care occupations.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7601(b))

[78 FR 51069, Aug. 20, 2013]

§ 17.601 Definitions.

The following definitions apply to §§ 17.600 through 17.636:

Acceptable level of academic standing means the level at which a participant may continue to attend school under the standards and practices of the school at which a participant is enrolled in a course of study for which an HPSP or VIOMPSP scholarship was awarded.

Acceptance agreement means a signed legal document between VA and a par-

ticipant of the HPSP or VIOMPSP that specifies the obligations of VA and the participant upon acceptance to the HPSP or VIOMPSP. An acceptance agreement must incorporate by reference, and cannot be inconsistent with, §§ 17.600 through 17.612 (for HPSP agreements) or §§ 17.626 through 17.636 (for VIOMPSP agreements), and must include:

- (1) A mobility agreement.
- (2) Agreement to accept payment of the scholarship.
- (3) Agreement to perform obligated service.
- (4) Agreement to maintain enrollment and attendance in the course of study for which the scholarship was awarded, and to maintain an acceptable level of academic standing.

Affiliation agreement means a legal document that enables the clinical education of trainees at a VA or non-VA medical facility. An affiliation agreement is required for all education or training that involves direct patient contact, or contact with patient information, by trainees from a non-VA institution.

Citizen of the United States means any person born, or lawfully naturalized, in the United States, subject to its jurisdiction and protection, and owing allegiance thereto.

Credential means the licensure, registration, certification, required education, relevant training and experience, and current competence necessary to meet VA's qualification standards for employment in certain health care occupations.

Degree represents the successful completion of the course of study for which a scholarship was awarded.

(1) *HPSP*. For the purposes of the HPSP, VA recognizes the following degrees: a doctor of medicine; doctor of osteopathy; doctor of dentistry; doctor of optometry; doctor of podiatry; or an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate degree in another health care discipline needed by VA.

(2) *VIOMPSP*. For the purposes of the VIOMPSP, VA recognizes a bachelor's, master's, education specialist or doctorate that meets the core curriculum and supervised practice requirements in visual impairment and blindness.