

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 2900-0770)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Assessment of Veteran Satisfaction for the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Choice Program

PURPOSE:

Passage of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 provided for the implementation of a temporary program to improve Veteran’s access to care and services among several other benefits, the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). VCP support is required by VA PDUSH to design and obtain primary research related to the successes and challenges encountered with the rollout of the Veterans Choice Card, which started in November 2014.

While the rollout of the cards to Veterans will continue through January, 2015, anecdotal feedback received directly from informal conversations with Veterans, who have received Veterans Choice Cards, revealed a lack of awareness about the VCP, logistics challenges involved with receiving the card, and other themes. These initial findings suggest additional feedback should be routinely collected to assess customer feedback from a more representative sampling of the population of Veterans. Furthermore, this additional information on service delivery is needed to ensure the intent of the law is being met.

The objective of the Veterans Choice Program bi-modal survey is to collect feedback via telephone and web from a representative sample of VCP Veterans and identify potential areas of improvement to assist VCP in improving the quality of the program. A bi-modal survey will allow VCP to reach those Veterans without access to the internet and maximize survey response rates. The survey will be voluntary to all Veterans selected and will focus on collecting feedback across four main areas: program awareness, support services and resources; satisfaction with the non-VA healthcare providers; and overall program satisfaction. Veteran satisfaction is a top priority for Choice Act implementation, and qualitative information assessing the subjective customer experience and overall effectiveness of VCP is needed so the program can effectively address the needs of the Veteran in the future.

Because the benefits provided through the Act are temporary and will expire within 3 years of the Act’s enactment or the expenditure of the Act’s funding, whichever comes first, activities to help us gauge the effectiveness of service delivery of the Act’s programs are time sensitive. Consider the following characteristics of the VCP bi-modal survey to determine eligibility in the Fast Track Process –

- a. Section 101 of the Act mandates the issuance of Veterans Choice Cards within 90 days of the enactment of the Act to eligible Veterans. To assess the effectiveness of the Veterans Choice Cards and identify and implement actions to improve utilization of the Card, timely insight from the Veteran’s perspective is needed. This insight will help the VCP address potential shortfalls in the program and allow for VCP to uphold the intended impact of the Veterans Choice Cards and implement immediate program updates.
- b. Participation by respondents and data collection is voluntary.
- c. The burden on participants for the VCP survey is not high. An annual estimate of 8,000 respondents per year, or 0.001% of the Veteran population, will be given the *option* of completing the survey. Those who do volunteer have an estimated burden of

approximately 10 minutes per survey. Four surveys will be conducted annually, and will be administered to a simple random sample drawn without replacement, so that each sample is unique and no Veteran will be selected more than once.

- d. Because the Act mandates the issuance of Veterans Choice Cards to eligible Veterans within 90 days of enactment, the VCP bi-modal survey will have immediate utility to the VA in assessing program awareness, support services and resources; satisfaction with non-VA healthcare providers; and overall program satisfaction. Given the demographics of the Veterans eligible for the Act's temporary benefits and the aggressive statutory deadlines of the Act, a Fast Track ICR is needed for this routine collection of the Veteran feedback.
- e. The results of this survey are for government use only. Public dissemination of results is not intended. Veteran feedback relating to awareness, understanding, attitudes, and experiences of Veterans using VCP will be used to update programs, communications, and business processes to ensure the spirit and requirements of the Act are being met and the care and services our Veterans need are being provided.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

The VA is in the process of mailing out Veteran Choice Cards with an expected completion date of the end of January 2015. Approximately 9 million Veterans will be mailed a Veteran Choice Card and letter explaining the program. Despite all Veterans being mailed a card, eligibility for the program is determined by the following:

- i. Veterans who meet a distance requirement described in §101 of the Choice Act.
- ii. Veterans who are currently waiting for an appointment longer than 30 days from the date that an appointment is deemed clinically appropriate by a VA health care provider, or the Veteran's preferred date if no such clinical determination has been made.
- iii. All remaining Veterans enrolled for VA healthcare who may become eligible for the Choice Program in the future.

The population pool for potential respondents to the VCP survey will include approximately 9 million Veterans. All 9 million Veterans will have at least some experience with the Veterans Choice Card by the time the bi-modal survey is administered to the survey population. From this population, a simple, random sample of 20,000 Veterans will be drawn without replacement each quarter. Within this sample, only 2,000 responses will be collected and the VA will target those Veterans estimated as eligible for VCP. In total, 8,000 Veterans will be sampled from the population to participate in the VCP survey over a 12 month period.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Stephanie Mardon, VHA CBO Director, VCP Chair

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? [] Yes [x] No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? [] Yes [] No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? [] Yes [] No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? [] Yes [x] No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Individuals	8,000	9 - 10 minutes	1313 hours
Totals	8,000	9 - 10 minutes	1313 hours

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$250,000*

* The above cost is the value of the contract paid to by the VA for the completion of the VCP survey and is therefore an estimate of the cost to the government for one 12 month period.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
[x] Yes [] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)?
If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

By the end of January, Veterans Choice Cards will be sent to all of approximately 9 million Veterans. Every Veteran will have received a card and a letter explaining the program. The VCP bi-modal survey will be administered via web and telephone to collect a representative sample of Veterans and maximize response rates. To reach respondents, invitations to participate in the VCP survey will be emailed and mailed to Veterans with an email address and/or mailing address on record with the VA.

The VCP will survey 2,000 Veterans on a quarterly basis, resulting in 8,000 Veterans to be surveyed each year. A random sample is beneficial to get a general pulse for the survey as it reaches a wide range of respondents.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

Web-based or other forms of Social Media

Telephone

In-person

Mail

Other, Explain

2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Instructions for completing Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback”

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g. Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

PURPOSE: Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

CERTIFICATION: Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

Personally Identifiable Information: Provide answers to the questions. Note: Agencies should only collect PII to the extent necessary, and they should only retain PII for the period of time that is necessary to achieve a specific objective.

Gifts or Payments: If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

BURDEN HOURS:

Category of Respondents: Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households; (2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected per row.

No. of Respondents: Provide an estimate of the Number of Respondents.

Participation Time: Provide an estimate of the amount of time (in minutes) required for a respondent to participate (e.g. fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

Burden: Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of Respondents and the Participation Time then divide by 60.

FEDERAL COST: Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents. Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

Administration of the Instrument: Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g. for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

Submit all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.