

# Veterans Transportation Service Data Collection

## OMB 2900-XXXX

### **A. Justification**

#### **1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary**

Through the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS), the Veterans Healthcare Administration (VHA) provides transportation to Veterans, Servicemembers, beneficiaries, caretakers and others to and from VA facilities or other places. Transportation provided is for the purposes of examination, treatment and care. The collection of data is necessary to schedule transportation trips to coincide with scheduled appointments, walk-in appointments, urgent care needs and inter-facility transfers for continued examination, treatment and care, while also identifying areas of demand for these services to allow VA to more efficiently and effectively allocate its resources. It is also necessary to ensure that eligible VA beneficiaries receive transportation services based upon the priority of need and status. Additionally, when transporting persons, safety and location accountability are paramount and therefore sufficient information is needed to ensure VA knows whom it is transporting and where. Finally, the collection of this information is necessary to ensure that persons do not receive transportation benefits through VTS while also claiming benefits for mileage reimbursement or special mode transportation under 38 U.S.C. 111.

Legal authority for this data collection is found under 38 USC, 527 which authorizes the collection of data that will allow measurement and evaluation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Programs, the goal of which is improved health care for veterans.”

#### **2. Purpose and Use of Information Collection**

The purpose of the information collection is to ensure Veterans, Servicemembers, beneficiaries, caregivers and other persons receive timely and reliable transportation for the purpose of examination, treatment and care. VHA must determine the identity of the beneficiary, the dates and location required to plan a trip for scheduled or unscheduled appointments, and to ensure reimbursement of beneficiary travel mileage is not paid for transportation provided through VTS. Information is also collected to facilitate overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the allocation of resources for VTS, the impact of VTS on VHA key performance measures to identify demand for VTS benefits in different areas and to ensure efficiency and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. At the present time, users do not personally complete any paper or electronic documents for collection of information. All information is collected and documented electronically by VTS staff in communication directly with the person to be transported or his or her legal representative, or VA staff serving or assisting the person.

#### **3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technical collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and**

**the basis for the decision for adopting the means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

Information will be collected by VTS staff via telephone or in person from the person being transported, authorized family member or legal representative or VHA clinical and administrative staff. All information will be stored electronically in compliance with VA regulations regarding Personal Identifying Information and Personal Health Information. As electronic information collection methods improve, new programs will be evaluated for adoption in scheduling. Electronic scheduling software is utilized to schedule and optimize transports of beneficiaries and other eligible riders. Scheduling transportation is primarily on-demand and is a subject to change. VHA must consider such factors as the coordination of vehicle resources, destinations, appointment times, distances, medical conditions and other circumstances. As a result, a live VTS staff scheduler and the VTS Mobility Manager will be interacting with Veterans, Servicemembers, beneficiaries, family members, caregivers, and legal representatives as needed on a continuing basis.

Electronic/technical applications which function via a Web portal or a mobile application to allow users to request specific rides/transports, check on the status of scheduled transports and to obtain route information will be pursued as part of an overall VetRide Scheduling, Monitoring and Reporting System, which is currently under evaluation and will not be implemented until 2017 at the earliest. This System will meet all Federal and VA security requirements for personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information (PHI). This System will permit users to enter information directly into the VHA VetRide transportation scheduling system.

**4. Duplication of Information**

The information collected will be very minimally a duplication of existing information and only related to ensuring the eligible beneficiary is scheduled, transported and delivered safely to the appropriate destination by the time dictated for appropriate examination, treatment and care.

**5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities**

No small businesses or other small entities are impacted by this information collection.

**6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection**

Without the information collected, VTS would be unable to schedule and safely transport Veterans, Servicemembers and other beneficiaries for the purpose of examination, treatment and care. Additionally, VHA would not have a way to ensure persons are not using VTS and still claiming benefits for the mileage reimbursement or special mode transportation under 38 U.S.C. 111.

**7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances

- 8. a. If applicable, provide a copy of and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the sponsor's notice required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the sponsor in responses to these comments. Specifically, address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

The Proposed Information Collection Activity was published in the Federal Register on May 27, 2015 (Volume 80, Number 101, Pages 30190-30200). VHA received no comments in response to the proposed collections of information.

- b. Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure or reporting formant, and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed or reported. Explain any circumstances, which preclude consultation every three years with representatives of those form whom information is to be obtained.**

Outside consultation is conducted with the public through the 60- and 30-day Federal Register notices.

- 9. Explain any decision to provide payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

The VTS Programs does not provide any payments or gifts to any respondents.

- 10. Describe any assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law, provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation or agency policy.**

Assurances of confidentiality are contained in 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332. Respondents are informed that the information collected will become part of the Consolidated Health Record which complies with the Privacy Act of 1974. This is part of the system of records identified as 24VA136 "Patient Medical Record – VA" as set forth in the 2003 Compilation of Privacy Act Issuances via online GPO access at

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/aces/2003\\_pa.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/2003_pa.html)

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private; include specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to the persons from whom the information is requested and any steps taken to obtain their consent.**

Questions 7, 8, 9, 11, and 14 on the telephone script are arguably sensitive:

7. What is your Mobility Type?
8. How many Attendant(s), if any, will be joining you?
9. What is the Mobility of any Attendants joining you?

- 11. Do you have any assistance needs?
- 14. Are you Homeless?

This information is necessary to provide the transportation service benefit, and this will be explained to the persons from whom the information is requested.

**12. Estimate the hour burden of collection of information:**

**a. VTS Scheduling Information Collection**

Number of Respondents is estimated at:	100,872
Frequency of response annually:	3.32
Average estimated response time:	5 min.
Annual burden is estimated at:	27,907.92 hours

- b. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 on OMB 83-L.**

This request covers one electronic collection method.

- c. Provide estimates of annual costs to respondents for the hour burden for collections of information. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.**

There are no direct costs to respondents for collecting information.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14.**

- a. There is no capital, start-up, operation or maintenance costs.
- b. Costs estimates are not expected to vary widely.
- c. There are on anticipated capital start-up cost components or requests to provide information.
- d. There are no additional costs to respondents.

**14. Provide estimates of annual costs to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operation expenses, (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregated costs estimates form Items 12, 13, and 14 into a single table.**

<b>Transport/Ride Scheduling</b>	<b>GS 6/5 ---100 FTEE GS 6 Step 5, 19.34 per hour includes 14.16% locality pay (source 2015 GS Pay rates) 10 hours per week per FTEE, 52 weeks per year.</b>	<b>\$1,005,680.</b>
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**15. Explain the reason for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of OMB 83-1.**

VTS was initiated in 2010 to provide transportation to Veterans and other VA beneficiaries who were transportation deprived especially those in rural areas and those who were immobile due to disease or injury. The purpose of VTS is to improve and ensure access to needed examination, treatment and care. The information is only minimally new in that a small portion concerning the Veterans date, time, destination, return and need for special services for transportation are collected by the VTS Scheduler using electronic means and collected from the Veteran, other beneficiary, legal representative or VA clinical and administrative staff involved with the Veteran’s care.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outlines plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates and other actions.**

Information collected will be entered into VA information systems during the process of scheduling transports. The data will later be pulled from the system for periodic, routine management reports, and occasional program impact analysis reports performed by the VA Veteran Engineering Research Commission (VERC) for high level management decision making and for reporting program effectiveness to Congress.

**17. Display of OMB Approval Date**

We are requesting no exemption

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, “Certification for Paperwork Act Submissions,” of OMB 83-I.**

There are no such exceptions

**B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods.**

No statistical methods are being employed for this data collection.

