

## **Request for Expedited Review of Survey of Veteran Enrollees' Health and Use of Health Care (OMB 2900-0609)**

### Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to request an expedited Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review to approve the continued administration of the Survey of Veteran Enrollees' Health and Use of Health Care (OMB 2900-060), also referred to as the Survey of Enrollees.

### Survey Background:

The Survey of Enrollees is an annual survey of approximately 42,000 Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) health care system. The information collected is a cornerstone for utilization and cost projections used to inform the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) budget and cannot be pulled from any other administrative data base. The survey information also provides the basis for national policy and initiatives. The survey has been conducted since 1999.

### Request and Justification:

The current OMB approval was received on February 4, 2013 and expires on February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016. During the previous clearance cycle, discussions between the VHA actuary, Milliman, and OMB raised the issue of timeliness in fielding the survey. Milliman noted that their utilization and cost projections were potentially hampered due to inconsistent timeframes for conducting the survey. Since that time, VHA has strived to consistently field the survey beginning in March and ending in June to avoid any "seasonality" impact on the survey results. In addition, it is imperative for Milliman to have the data in August of each year in order to apply it to the following year's projections.

As VHA began preparing to renew OMB's approval of this information collection instrument, efforts were made to update and simplify the questions asked, as well as create new modules in response to VHA's need to improve access for Veterans as well as adequately provide for the changing healthcare needs brought on by both current military conflicts and an overall aging population. This included a thorough review by a survey methodologist and several months of working with VHA offices in need of survey data for their policy work. Additional modules are those related to Digital Access and Caregiver Support. In addition, what was previously called the Key Driver module was revised and retitled "Views about Health Care...". This revision both fixed a logic pattern of the survey that has been frustrating for Veterans in their responses, as well as updated the key driver concepts to better capture the Veteran experience and factors influencing their trust in a health care system.

These efforts will make the survey easier for Veterans to complete as well as provide actionable data that will serve to improve VHA services. However, they did take longer than expected to complete.

Despite this delay, the data collection was submitted on September 11, 2015 for review. It has been posted in the federal register for 60 days and received no comments. As required by the paperwork reduction act, it is now posted in the federal register for a final 30 days.

Ideally, in order to field the survey by mid-March, in keeping with VHA's goal to field it at the same time each year, we would have had a final clearance from OMB by January 31<sup>st</sup>. Given the delay in finalizing the survey changes, we have worked with our contractor and, although our deadlines will be tight, we can meet our deadline to field in mid-March if we have an approval by March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Questions about this request may be directed to Laura Bowman, Strategic Analysis Service.  
(202-461-7108 or lbowman@va.gov)