

VA Primary Care Patient Experience Interviews: Question and Answer Addendum

Q. What is the VA Primary Care Patient Experience Interview?

A. The interview is being conducted as part of the Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT) Demonstration Lab initiative in response to a request by primary care leaders in your region (Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 22). PACT was rolled out in 2010, and involved re-organizing primary care so that care is provided by team that includes a primary care provider, a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, and a clerk. We are interviewing patients from 5 selected sites to gather information about recent experiences of accessing VA primary care for an urgent medical concern/condition. All interviews will be conducted by telephone and will last approximately 30 minutes. The results will be summarized and used to improve access and/or to inform further evaluation of factors affecting access to care.

Q. Who is conducting the interviews?

A. The interview guide was designed by Investigators from the Veterans Assessment and Improvement Laboratory (VAIL), the PACT Demonstration Lab in your region, in collaboration with primary care leaders. We have assembled and trained a team of qualitative researchers to conduct the interviews and analyze the data. Members of this team will be selecting and contacting patients and scheduling the interviews.

Q. Who is invited to participate and how long will it take to complete?

A. We will randomly select 50 veteran patients. Interviews will be conducted by telephone by trained qualitative researchers at a time that is convenient for the patient. We estimate that the interview will last 30 minutes, depending on how you answer the questions.

Q. What will I be asked to do to participate in the interview?

A. Your participation involves participating in one interview. The interviews will be conducted by telephone at a time that is convenient for you, and with your permission, will be audio-recorded. Your decision to participate in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you may choose not to answer any question. You can decline or withdraw participation at any time, and your participation decision will have no adverse effect on you or the care you receive at the VA.

Q. Who will see my answers to the interview questions?

A. Your answers to interview questions will be confidential, which means that only the Project Team members will hear and see your responses. However, if you mention a health issue or concern that the interviewer believes may be urgent, the information you provide about your concern may be shared with your medical team. Your interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. We will assign a numerical code to your interview and the transcript, so that your answers cannot be associated with your name. Only the project team members will have access to the “cross-walk” file that tells us your code, and this will be securely stored and used only for record-keeping and data analysis. Once the transcript is complete and has been verified, we will destroy the audio-recording. Your answers will be combined with the answers of other interview participants to describe patient experiences with accessing primary care at the VA. We will not directly identify you or what you said in any reports, documents, or publications.

Q. What will you do with my information?

A. Your answers and those of other interview participants will be analyzed by the project team to understand patient's experiences of access to primary care. The project team members will "code" the data by identifying key themes, and prepare a report summarizing the Veteran experience. The information will be used by primary care leaders in your region to conduct quality improvement activities for improving access. Other VA healthcare system leaders within and outside of your region may also receive copies of the report. Please note, if you mention a health issue or concern that the interviewer believes may be urgent, the information you provide about your concern may be shared with your medical team.

Q. How do I participate in the interview?

A. You can call Michael McGowan, 818-891-7711 x36035, and leave a voice mail message with your name and phone number stating "I would like to participate in the VA Primary Care Patient Experience Interview". Or, we will call you within a few days of sending the invitation to ask if you would like to be interviewed. If you agree to participate, we will schedule a time that is convenient for you to conduct the interview.

Q. What should I do if I do not want to participate?

A. This interview is completely voluntary. This means that you are not required to participate, and your participation decision will have no harmful effect on you or the care you receive at the VA. If you choose not to participate, you can call Michael McGowan, 818-891-7711 x36035, and leave a voice mail message with your name and stating "I do not wish to be called about the VA Primary Care Patient Experience interview". Or, when the interviewer calls you on the telephone, you can simply tell the interviewer you do not want to participate.