

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900–0576]

Agency Information Collection Activity: Certification of Affirmation of Enrollment Agreement Correspondence Course**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.**ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VBA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed revision of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before January 3, 2022.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information through Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at www.Regulations.gov or to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20M33), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420 or email to nancy.kessinger@va.gov. Please refer to “OMB Control No. 2900–0576” in any correspondence. During the comment period, comments may be viewed online through FDMS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Maribel Aponte, Office of Enterprise and Integration, Data Governance Analytics (008), 1717 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 266–4688 or email maribel.aponte@va.gov. Please refer to “OMB Control No. 2900–0576” in any correspondence.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995, Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA’s functions, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) the accuracy of VBA’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 3686(b); 38 U.S.C. 3323(a); 10 U.S.C. 16131, and 38 CFR 21.74256(b).

Title: Certification of Affirmation of Enrollment Agreement Correspondence Course.

OMB Control Number: 2900–0576.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: VA uses information from the current collection to pay education benefits for correspondence training. This information allows VA to determine if the claimant has been informed of the 5-day reflection period required by law.

Affected Public: Individuals and households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 3 hours.

Estimated Average Burden per Respondent: 3 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Annually.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 69.

By direction of the Secretary.

Maribel Aponte,

VA PRA Clearance Officer, Office of Enterprise and Integration/Data Governance Analytics, Department of Veterans Affairs.

[FR Doc. 2021–24069 Filed 11–3–21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**VA Standards for Quality****AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs.**ACTION:** Solicitation of public comment.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is soliciting public comment on VA’s current standards for quality to ensure that they include the most up to date and applicable measures for veterans.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before December 6, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted through www.regulations.gov. Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to “VA Standards for Quality.” Comments received will be available at www.regulations.gov for public viewing, inspection or copies.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph Francis, VHA Office of Analytics

and Performance Integration (API), 17 API, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Room 668, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461–5517. This is not a toll-free number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 1703C of 38 U.S.C., as added by section 104 of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act of 2018 or the VA MISSION Act of 2018, VA formally established standards for quality regarding hospital care, medical services, and extended care services furnished by the Department in October 2019 (84 FR 52932). VA’s quality standards were chosen based on a comprehensive assessment of health care industry standards for quality, their relevance to veterans, and the availability of comparative data for community providers. Wide ranging expert guidance and stakeholder input was also sought from veterans, Veteran Service Organizations, federal partners, health care specialty associations and organizations, and the public through focus groups, meetings, and requests for information. The current VA standards for quality and associated measures are publicly available on VA’s Access to Care website (<https://www.accesstocare.va.gov>).

After internal review of VA’s standards for quality in 2021, significant changes were not made to the initial standards established in 2019. The current quality standards address important dimensions of care for veterans and are aligned with industry standards. The addition of new metrics is limited in many cases by the lack of appropriate community comparison data; and this has been compounded in CY 2020 and 2021 by the impact of the COVID–19 pandemic. Notably, the pandemic resulted in gaps in the available healthcare data and temporary suspension of some measures (e.g., COVID–19 Quality Reporting Programs Guidance Memo—Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) (March 27, 2020); <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/guidance-memo-exceptions-and-extensions-quality-reporting-and-value-based-purchasing-programs.pdf>). This has created a problematic situation where, in some cases, VA’s current quality data results are being compared to pre-COVID periods of community data. VA has an ongoing commitment to evolving the quality standards in accordance with veteran needs and industry advancements. The quality standards will be reviewed internally again in FY 2022 to ensure they are up-