



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
99 Chauncy Street, 11th Floor, Boston, MA 02111
617-753-8000

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor


MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MPH, MD
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

Memorandum

TO: Acute Care Hospitals, Non-acute Care Hospitals, Clinics, Adult Day Health Centers and Long Term Care Facilities

FROM: Eric Sheehan, JD
Bureau Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality 

DATE: September 12, 2016

RE: Addition of Veteran Status Question for DPH Incident Reporting

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide notification of an update to the patient or resident demographic information required when reporting incidents or events through the Health Care Facility Reporting System (HCFRS) within the Virtual Gateway. This memorandum is provided in response to Section 30 of Chapter 62 of the Acts of 2014, *An Act Relative to Veterans' Allowances, Labor, Outreach and Recognition (VALOR II)*. Acute care hospitals reporting incidents or events through HCFRS where patient information is entered will now be required to designate the resident or patient's Veteran status. All other health care facilities reporting incidents or events through HCFRS where patient information is entered should consider the designation of the resident or patient's Veteran status as a best practice.

The question, found in the demographic section of the intake form in HCFRS, reads:

"Has the patient/resident ever served in the military?"

The wording is an adaptation of the question "have you ever served in the military" and is the most widely accepted and culturally appropriate method to identify a Veteran who may be in need of services or direction during or following medical treatment. The American Academy of Nursing has developed the website, <http://www.haveyoueverserved.com/>, as a service for America's Veterans, which includes information for Veterans and for the health care professionals serving them. This information outlines relevant questions that should be asked to determine military history, a list of general areas of concern for all Veterans, common military health risks, and suicide risks.

Questions on compliance with these requirements may be directed to the Department at DPH.BHCSQ@Massmail.state.ma.us