**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA)**

**FARGO VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

**CHOICE PROGRAM CARE COORDINATION INITIATIVE**

**October 2016**

The Fargo VA Health Care System (HCS) is launching a Choice Program Care Coordination initiative to support timely access to VA Community Care. Innovative solutions such as this are key as VA works to build a community care program that is easy to use, simple to administer, and meets the needs of Veterans, community providers, and VA staff. Under this initiative, Fargo VA HCS staff will work directly with Veterans and community providers in North Dakota and western Minnesota to coordinate medical appointments. This will simplify and expedite the referral processes to better meet Veterans’ healthcare needs. The Fargo VA Health Care System will launch this on Oct. 4, 2016.

**Fargo VA Brings Customer Service In-House**

VA is making care coordination improvements to create a positive healthcare experience for Veterans, community providers, and VA staff. The Fargo VA HCS Choice Program Care Coordination Initiative connects Veterans with Fargo VA HCS staff to coordinate their care. VA staff will take responsibility for some of the work currently performed by Veterans Choice Program (VCP) contractor HealthNet to make coordinating care and appointments a VA activity. This is in alignment with the MyVA vision and VA’s Plan to Consolidate Community Care providing Veterans a seamless experience across the organization and throughout the country.

**VA Staff Improve the Community Care Experience for North Dakota’s & Minnesota’s Veterans**

The care coordination initiative is a direct response to concerns expressed by Fargo VA HCS Veterans who reported that calling out-of-state contractor representatives resulted in care coordination difficulties. Veterans will now work directly with Fargo VA HCS staff who better understand the local geography and local providers. VA staff will coordinate care, while contractor staff will continue administrative and community provider support.

**VA Staff to Work with Onsite Contracting Staff**

This initiative will build upon the recent improvements to the VCP which placed HealthNet representatives alongside Fargo VA HCS staff to allow for closer collaborations and improved service to Veterans.

**How Can I Get More Information?**

For more information or questions relating to the care coordination initiative, please contact the Fargo VA Health Care System Clinical Resource Management Department at 866-517-9363.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1. What is the purpose of the Fargo VA HCS Choice Program Care Coordination Initiative?**

**A1**. The purpose of the Fargo VA HCS Choice Program Care Coordination Initiative is to improve care coordination for Fargo VA HCS Veterans. VA is committed to delivering a community care program that is easy to understand, simple to administer, and meets the need of Veterans, community providers, and VA staff. Over the next few years, VA will implement its Innovative Solutions initiative across the nation, while partnering with Congress and other stakeholders to implement longer term solutions described in VA’s [**Plan to Consolidate Community Care**.](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/VA_Community_Care_Report_11_03_2015.pdf)

**Q2. Why was the Fargo VA HCS chosen for the initiative?**

**A2.** The Fargo VA Health Care System has a long history of coordinating with community providers to serve Veterans. North Dakota’s and Minnesota’s Veteran population is unique as many Veterans are located in remote, rural areas. To meet the needs of these Veterans, the Fargo VA HCS has formed many partnerships with community providers and organizations to best serve its Veterans. The Fargo VA HCS offers an opportunity to leverage lessons learned from their experience providing community care while making improvements to care coordination.

**Q3. How will the initiative affect VA staff in Fargo?**

**A3.** The care coordination initiative will require four key changes for Fargo VA HCS Choice Program Community Care staff. These changes are responsibilities that had previously been performed by contractors:

• Review of Service Connected/Special Authority (SC/SA) determinations and Other Health

Insurance (OHI) information

• Directly schedule appointments and coordinate care between the Veteran and community provider

• VA clinicians will make clinical determinations for 40-mile eligible Veterans

• Fargo VA Health Care System Care call center will receive calls from 40-mile Veterans

**Q4. What is the role of contractor staff in the initiative?**

**A4.** HealthNet contract staff will continue to support community providers, grow the network, and perform other administrative activities.

**Q5. What are the steps we are taking prior to implementation?**

**A5.** The VA will be working with our partners including our Union partners to ensure seamless implementation.