

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
AND  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**SUBJECT:** Expanding the Joint Seamless Transition Program, specifically with regard to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Seamless Transition (OST) Nursing and Social Work Liaisons assigned to Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs).

1. **PURPOSE:** This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) serves as overarching guidance for the VA DoD Joint Seamless Transition Program regarding VHA OST liaisons assigned to MTF, and VHA Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Case Management Program Managers assigned to each VHA health care facility. It establishes policy for VHA Nurse and Social Worker Liaisons assigned to MTFs, and OEF/OIF Case Management Program Managers who serve as liaisons to MTFs without a VHA liaison on duty at the MTF. It addresses Recommendation P-8 of the *Task Force Report to the President Returning Global War on Terror Heroes* (April 2007)

2. **BACKGROUND:** The Joint Seamless Transition Program was established by VA, in coordination with the Military Services, to facilitate and coordinate a more timely receipt of benefits for severely injured service members while they are still on active duty. Currently, there are 12 VHA OST Social Worker Liaisons assigned to ten MTFs, including Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. The liaisons are primarily responsible to ensure the seamless transition of health care services between DoD and VA, to include a comprehensive plan for treatment. Now VHA OST Nurse and Social Worker Liaisons also work on-site at the MTFs, responding to referrals to coordinate inpatient care and outpatient appointments at VA Medical Centers near the patient's intended residence. They coordinate the transfer of care and maintain follow-up with patients to verify the discharge plan is successful, and to ensure continuity of care, therapy and medications. As of March 2007, VHA OST Social Work Liaisons have processed more than over 7,000 patient transfers to VHA from the participating military hospitals.

In compliance with VHA Handbook 1010.01, "Transition Assistance And Case Management Of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) And Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF Veterans" (March, 2007), each VA medical facility has appointed an OEF/OIF Case Management Program Manager to serve as the primary point of contact for coordination of cases and referrals from MTFs which do not have a VHA OST Nurse or Social Worker Liaison assigned to them. At MTFs, where there are VHA OST Nurse or Social Worker Liaisons, the Liaison coordinates transfers to the local VA medical facility through the OEF/OIF Case Management Program Manager.

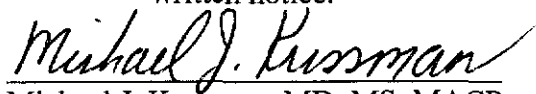
3. **SCOPE:** This MOU applies to all inpatient and outpatient Active and Reserve Component service members on permanent full-time active duty status who have sustained wounds or injuries or become ill in the line of duty.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

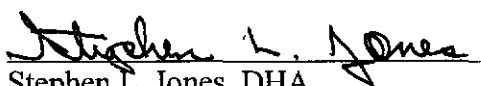
- a. The Department of Veterans Affairs will work with the Department of Defense to place a VHA Nurse or a Social Worker Liaison, or both, at major MTFs requiring these services. VHA will ensure that each VA medical center has an OEF/OIF Case Management Program Manager to serve as a point of contact for OST staff assigned to an MTF, and to serve as a point of contact for those MTFs who do not have a VHA OST Nurse or Social Worker Liaison assigned to them. The Director and the Social Work Program Manager of the OST will work with MTF to arrange for orientation and training of VHA staff and resolve any problems related to providing care.
- b. The Department of Defense (DoD) clinical manager, or a designee, will notify the VHA Nurse or Social Worker Liaison of a "referral" for VA care. This will include sharing any clinical and personal information needed to maintain quality care. DoD will provide adequate office space and basic business supplies to VHA Nurses and Social Workers assigned to the MTFs. DoD will help the OST orient VHA Nurses and Social Worker Liaisons to their assignments at the MTF, and will work with the Director of the OST to resolve any barriers to providing care and provide orientation and training on unit procedures.

5. **EFFECTIVE DATE, TERMS OF MODIFICATION, TERMINATION:**

- a. Requests for modification of this agreement will be submitted in writing from one party to the other not less than 30 days before the desired effective date of such modification.
- b. This MOU shall be effective when signed by all parties to the agreement and shall remain in effect unless canceled by any party upon 90 days advance written notice.

  
Michael J. Kussman, MD, MS, MACP  
Acting Under Secretary for Health  
Department of Veterans Affairs

5/30/07  
Date

  
Stephen L. Jones, DHA  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

5/30/07  
Date