(VSR VIP Pre-D)

Private Medical Record (PMR) Retrieval Program

Trainee Handout

**Table of Contents**

[Objectives 2](#_Toc3725099)

[References 3](#_Toc3725100)

[Topic 1: Overview of the PMR Retrieval Program 4](#_Toc3725101)

[Topic 2: Roles and Development 5](#_Toc3725102)

[Practical Exercise 11](#_Toc3725103)

Objectives

* Describe the purpose of the PMR Program
* Recognize important forms related to the PMR Program
* Identify what is required to obtain PMRs
* Define responsibilities of the PMR Contractor
* Recognize the role of the PMR Super User and the PMR Vault
* Explain how PMR items are tracked within VBMS Core

References

[M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, Chapter 1, Section D - Requesting Evidence From Private Healthcare Providers (PHPs)](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000036530/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-D-Requesting-Evidence-From-Private-Healthcare-Providers-PHPs?query=PHP)

Topic 1: Overview of the PMR Retrieval Program

**Purpose of PMR Retrieval Program**

The purpose of this program is to have a contractor, currently DOMA Technologies, obtain PMRs by contacting private health providers (PHPs) and requesting the treatment records identified on the medical release form(s). The main objective is to provide development assistance to RO employees, allowing them to work on other development actions.

The PMR program is a VA Innovation Initiative that uses contractor support for claims development assistance in obtaining private medical records. As a pilot, the program operated from September 2010 through October 2014 at 10 VA Regional Offices. Based on the program's success to deliver private treatment records on average within 12 days, in November 2014, the program was deployed nationally to 56 Regional Offices, Pension Management Centers (PMC), and the Decision Review Operation Centers (DROC).

Medical requests from federal facilities, VA Medical Centers and mental health clinics are excluded.

**PMR Program Forms Required**

Obtaining PMRs on behalf of a claimant begins when the claimant, fiduciary, or next of kin provides VA with:

* VA Form 21-4142, *Authorization to Disclose Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs* *(gives authorization to PHPs/Vet Centers to disclose information to VA),*
* VA Form 21-4142a, *General Release for Medical Provider Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (provides the PHP’s/Vet Center’s contact information)*, is required if the newest version of the VA Form 21-4142 is submitted by the claimant, or
* A form provided by the record holder that authorizes the release of the required information such as special forms required by the PHP (i.e. authorization for release from Kaiser Permanente, Mayo Clinic, etc.).

***Important***: PHPs will not accept photographs taken of completed *VA Forms 21-4142* or *21-4142a* that have been submitted to VA in lieu of the actual document(s). If a photograph has been submitted, the claims processor must request the actual form from the claimant, per instructions in M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 1.D.1.d.

Topic 2: Roles and Development

**Responsibilities of PMR Contractor**

The PMR contractor will process the medical release regardless of the benefit types from

* ROs
* PMCs, and
* Decision Review Operation Center (DROC)

Incoming medical release requests received through the centralized mail (CM) program will be automatically routed to the PMR contractor for processing. Upon receipt, the PMR contractor will review the medical release forms to determine if the forms meet the processing requirements.

Exception: Medical release requests released through Veterans On-Line Application Direct Connect and eBenefits will not be automatically routed to DOMA.

The PMR contractor will develop any PMR release forms with sufficient information. The PMR contractor will also develop the PMR release form, if they can complete the form by pulling the missing information from SHARE.

DOMA is responsible for:

* Reviewing incoming medical release requests
* Identifying if insufficient information is on a medical release request which requires verification action from the RO of jurisdiction (ROJ)
* Creating and sending initial and follow-up third party development letters for medical release requests, to claimants and private health care providers
* Securely transmitting to VA all medical records received
* Reviewing and responding to incoming help desk tickets

***Notes***:

* If the PMR contractor sends a third-party notice to an incorrect address for the PHP, the PMR Super User should open a help desk ticket to advise the PMR contractor of the error.
* The PMR contractor ***will not*** notify the Veteran on negative responses received from PHPs. Consequently, ROs must follow the notification procedures outlined in. [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 1.D.1.g](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000036530/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-D-Requesting-Evidence-From-Private-Healthcare-Providers-PHPs#1g).
* If the PMR contractor receives an undeliverable notice from the address of record, they will close out the medical release request unless they have a forwarding address provided by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

**Medical Releases Not Processed by PMR Contractor**

There are several circumstances when the PMR contractor will not process the medical release. The contractor will create a *Reject Notice* which will be transmitted to the claims folder through the CM program.

Most commonly, this will occur when

* the medical release is
  + illegible
  + a photograph of the completed form
  + a duplicate medical release (previously submitted)
  + identifying treatment at a
    - VAMC
    - Vet Center
    - Military treatment facility (MTF), or
    - Federal facility
  + improperly signed
  + missing PHP information that cannot be obtained by PMR contractor
  + missing a signature and/or signature date
  + identifying a foreign provider
  + for a non-medical record request
  + expired, or
  + displaying claimant with a foreign address
* PHP declines request for private treatment records
* a request is cancelled, or
* a death certificate is needed

**Responsibility of the VSR**

* Review of rejected medical releases to ensure the medical release is truly incomplete and does not provide sufficient information that allows the PMR contractor the ability to process the form.
* Completion of any subsequent development action that is needed when the private medical records are not received by the PMR contractor and further development is warranted.
* Review uploaded VA Forms 21-4142 and 21-4142a to ensure they have been referred to the PMR program and are being developed.

**PMR Super User**

The ROs will identify PMR Super Users who will support the PMR contractor processing activity by

* Serving as their RO's point of contact
* Monitoring the PMR workflow process locally
* Uploading medical release requests which have not been previously submitted to PMR contractor
* Logging in ***daily*** to the PMR Program portal and completing the PMR portal checklist
* Reviewing PMR metrics available in the PMR Portal
* Communicating the provisions of the PMR Program to employees who are designated to develop claims
* Timely communicating any challenges to the PMR PMO staff, and
* Attending PMR conference calls.

**PMR Vault**

There are instances in which the PMR requests will not be received through the CM program. These include [*VA Forms 21-4142*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf)and[*21-4142a*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142a-ARE.pdf) received through Veterans On-Line Application (VONAPP) Direct Connect (VDC) and eBenefits uploads.

In these instances, the Regional Offices (ROs) will be responsible for uploading the forms to the PMR Vault for processing by the PMR contractor.

The PMR Vault is a secure online website that:

* Receives incoming medical release requests from the ROs which did not go through the CM automated process, and
* Serves as an electronic method for PHPs to upload PMR requests to the PMR contractor for processing.

***Note***: Access to the PMR Vault is gained by using a unique RO passcode provided to each RO individually from the *PMR PMO.*

**PMR VBMS Core Tracked Item**

To ensure adequate tracking of development actions completed by the contractor under the PMR Program, RO employees must manually create a tracked item in VBMS Core when a PMR request is pending.

RO employees must follow the steps in the table below

* prior to placing a case in ready for decision (RFD) status, or
* before deciding any case placed in RFD status automatically.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Action** |
| 1 | Review the VBMS Core electronic contents to verify a medical release request is pending in the PMR Program.  In these cases, the eFolder will contain the   * third party notice sent to the claimant by the PMR contractor, and * medical release request forms bearing the watermark *PMR Program Referred*.   ***Example***:  Bottom of 21-4142a PMR program referred  Top of 21-4142  ***Note***: If it is determined that medical release requests were sent and they are now rejected or returned to VA, then follow the steps noted in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 1.D.2.h](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000036530/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-D-Requesting-Evidence-From-Private-Healthcare-Providers-PHPs#2h). |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2 | If a request is still pending in the PMR program, add a tracked item to VBMS Core.   * On the CLAIM DETAILS screen, click the   + TRACKED ITEMS tab, and then   + the ADD TRACKED ITEM button. * From the ADD TRACKED ITEMS screen   + choose Custom Tracked Item from the CHOOSE A CATEGORY drop-down menu,   + select the Custom Tracked Item development action, and   + click the ADD TO LIST button. |
| * 3 | Click the ADD button to finalize the tracked item after entering the following data:   * enter “*DOMA pending – [provider name]*” in the ITEM REQUESTED field, and * enter the amount of days remaining from the 15-day suspense period following the initial PMR request.   ***Notes***:   * If 15 days have passed since the initial request, enter the amount of days remaining from the 30-day response period. * In the event the PHP does not respond, the PMR contractor will start the close-out process 31 days after the initial request by completing *VA Form 27-0820*, documenting attempts made to receive the records.   ***Example***: If establishing the tracked item   * 4 days after the PMR request, input *11* in the TRACKED ITEM SUSPENSE field, or   18 days after the PMR request, input *12* in the TRACKED ITEM SUSPENSE field. |

**Rejected Requests from PHP**

A PHP who provides a service in a private setting may impose various protections with respect to their health information, including important controls over how their health information is released to requesting parties.

If the PMR contractor creates a *Reject Notice* because the PHP declines to give VA a copy of the claimant’s private treatment records, follow the instructions in the table shown below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **If ...** | **Then ...** |
| the PHP requires a [*VA Form 21-4142*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf) with an original signature | * prepare a letter in MAP-D or VBMS Core informing the claimant that he/she must   + send the completed form with an original signature to the PHP, or   + obtain the PMRs and submit them to VA * change the time limit for responding to the letter to 30 days * send the letter to the claimant, and * allow 30 days for a response. |
| the PHP requires the claimant to complete a special authorization form | * prepare a letter in MAP-D or VBMS Core containing the development action labeled *Private provider requires spec. release* * change the time limit for responding to the letter to 30 days * send the letter to the claimant, along with the special authorization form (if available), and * allow 30 days for a response.   ***Note***: If the claimant returns the special authorization form to VA instead of obtaining the records him/herself, follow the instructions in [M21-1, Part III, Subpart iii, 1.D.2.f](https://vaww.vrm.km.va.gov/system/templates/selfservice/va_kanew/help/agent/locale/en-US/portal/554400000001034/content/554400000036530/M21-1-Part-III-Subpart-iii-Chapter-1-Section-D-Requesting-Evidence-From-Private-Healthcare-Providers-PHPs#2f). |

***Important***:

* If the claimant fails to respond to the request for PMRs ***within 30 days***, route his/her claim to the rating activity when all other development is complete.
* VA processes claims in an electronic environment, which requires a [*VA Form 21-4142*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf) with an original signature to be scanned into the claims folder through CM. A [*VA Form 21-4142*](http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/VBA-21-4142-ARE.pdf) with an original signature ***will not*** be returned to the ROs.

Practical Exercise

1. What is the purpose of the PMR Retrieval Program?
2. What are the two VA forms used to request the veteran’s private medical information?
3. The PMR Process involves which of the following:
   1. Claimant, Centralized Mail (CM), PMR Contractor, Private Healthcare Provider
   2. VARO, Hospital Release of Information, Medical Quality Review Team, Veteran
   3. Decision Review Officer, Rating Specialist, VSR, File Clerk
4. From where does the PMR Contractor process the medical release forms?  
   1. Contracting Receipt Stations, ROs, VA Mall Kiosks
   2. ROs, Pension Management Centers (PMCs), and Decision Review Operation Centers (DROC)
   3. Accredited Veterans Service Officers (VSOs), Private Attorneys, and the Veterans
5. Who has the authority to access the PMR contractor’s online portal application?  
   1. VSR
   2. RVSR
   3. Public Contact
   4. PMR Superuser

1. Rejected or returned medical release requests from a PHP or PMR Contractor are outlined in which VA reference?  
   1. M21-1 Part III. Subpart iii.1.D.2.h
   2. CFR 3.700
   3. M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii.1.D.1.h
   4. M21-1 Part III, Subpart iii.1.D.1.c
2. From the date the claimant signs it, how long is the newest version of the VA Forms 21-4142 and 21-4142a valid?
   1. Three months
   2. One year
   3. Two years
   4. One month