

ATTACHMENT

VHA PROSTHETIC CLINICAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (PCMP) SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PROVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES FOR COMPUTERS, PERIPHERALS AND SOFTWARE

As part of the process of developing a comprehensive national strategy to provide standardized computers, software, peripherals and training to blinded veterans, it was determined by the PCMP workgroup that a need also exists to provide guidelines for local support services to blinded veterans.

I. Covered Services

The following reasonable, necessary and required support services will be provided to blinded veterans requesting assistance with computer systems, peripherals and software. Identified providers in the community will provide the services on a fee for services basis.

- A. The Computer hardware and software may be prescribed through an outpatient or inpatient program, i.e., VIST, BROS, VA low vision clinic, BRC, VISOR, or approved non-VA agency or provider serving the blind and visually impaired.
- B. Blinded veterans, who are deemed appropriate for local training by the VIST Coordinator may be considered for local Fee Basis services, if eligible. If Fee Basis service will not cover cost, the local Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service is permitted to procure computer equipment, evaluation and training according to VHA Handbook 1173.5 (dated September 23, 2002), section 4d(3) (b) and 1173.5, section 10. The veteran needs to be enrolled and vested.
- C. Training may take place in the veteran's home or at another acceptable location. This includes education and training on upgrades of software and hardware.
- D. In home repair service (includes education, training, repair, configuration and/or set-up) within 14 working days after Prosthetics receives a written request from the Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinator. If in-home service is not available, Prosthetics will arrange to have the equipment shipped to and from an authorized service center.
- E. All telephone support will be provided within 24 hours of notification to the VA.

- F. Set-up and delivery of computer hardware, peripheral devices and software that are being replaced or upgraded. Replacement of a hard drive will include installation of operating system and access software.
- G. Diagnosis and troubleshooting of all computer related problems that prevent full use of the computer system (e.g. removal of viruses, solving e-mail problems).
- H. Replacement ink and toner cartridges will be provided for all printers issued by the VA.
- I. Set-up and configuration of e-mail and Internet access.
- J. Set-up and configuration of anti-virus programs.

II. Identification of Local Service Providers

- A. Qualified service providers will provide verification of competency to provide quality training and installation of computer equipment, software and access technology. (See Attachment).
- B. A list of qualified service providers will be established with a collaborative effort between VIST, BROS and Prosthetics.
- C. The Prosthetic Activity will maintain a roster of qualified and competent service providers.

III. Procedures

- A. Veterans requesting local training to qualify for issuance of a computer, peripheral or software will present a written request with justification through the VIST Coordinator or BROS.
- B. The VIST Coordinator will send a consult to Prosthetics containing a justification of need.
- C. After the Prosthetics Activity receives the consult, they will authorize and make arrangements to have services provided by an authorized service provider.
- D. Computer packages provided under the national contract will be configured and delivered to the location stipulated in the purchase/delivery order.

- E. After delivery, the computer will be set up in an appropriate location and tested to ensure proper configuration. E-mail and Internet will be connected. Anti-virus programs will be installed and configured.
- F. All equipment and software will operate properly at the completion of set-up and the veteran will be provided any necessary orientation and continued education.
- G. Blinded veterans experiencing difficulties using VA issued computer equipment and software will report problems to the VIST Coordinator.
- H. The VIST Coordinator will identify the nature of the problem and submit a consult to Prosthetics Service requesting a local service provider be authorized to evaluate and troubleshoot the problem.
- I. After the Prosthetics Activity receives the consult requesting service, repair or issuance of computer related equipment or software, they will authorize and make arrangements to have services provided.
- J. The service provider will contact the veteran within one workday to assess the extent of the malfunction and determine if the problem can be resolved through telephone consultation.
- K. If the problem cannot be resolved through a telephone consultation, the service provider will be authorized to conduct an on-site evaluation. Veterans residing in remote areas that are difficult for a service provider to conduct an on-site assessment will be instructed to ship the computer system or components to a service provider.
- L. Contractors will submit a completed work order to the Prosthetics Activity for payment. The report will include an itemized listing of charges and fees as well as a description of the services provided.
- M. Appropriate fees and charges will be determined by the Prosthetics Service at each facility

IV. Quality Assurance

- A. Service call work orders, training, and repair invoices will be signed by the veteran to indicate completion of the work.
- B. The VIST Coordinator and Prosthetics will be responsible for quality control in a collaborative manner. The stakeholders will also be consulted and involved.

V. Training and continuing education by Non-VA Service Providers

- A. Non-VA service providers (e.g. community based agencies, technicians and vendors specializing in access computer training, equipment) will provide initial training when authorized as well as continuing education and training to the veterans at the time of a service call.
- B. All education and training will be documented in the repair or service invoice that is submitted to Prosthetics for payment.

VI. Service to remote sites

- A. Veterans residing in areas too remote for on site service calls will be authorized to ship their computer and/or peripherals to the local service provider via UPS, FedEx or other suitable mode of transportation.
- B. The cost of shipping to and from the veteran will be paid by Prosthetics.

VII. Non-VA Local Service Provider Responsibilities

- A. Technicians and instructors will be technically and functionally competent to deliver, set-up accessible computer equipment provide on-site education and training on access and computer related issues, diagnose and troubleshoot computer related problems. (See Attachment).
- B. Technicians will adhere to any instructions provided by manufacturers or VA staff regarding special set-up of equipment and/or software.
- C. Technicians may provide support or initial diagnosis of computer related problems via telephone consultation with veteran. If the problem cannot be resolved through telephone consultation, then an on-site service call will be provided.
- D. When replacing a hard drive, Technicians will also reinstall the operating system (OEM) and access software.
- E. Technicians will provide any necessary on-site education and training during installation of initial equipment or upgrades of hardware and software. This will be done to minimize unnecessary service calls and repairs.

- F. If appropriate, Technicians will connect or re-connect electronic mail and Internet access and configure the operating system as required.
- G. Technicians will remove detectable viruses and install anti-virus software or the latest upgrade of anti-virus software during on-site service calls.
- H. Instructors providing initial computer, peripheral and software training will have established the same competencies as instructional staff at a Blind Rehabilitation Center. (See Attachment)

VIII. VIST Coordinator and BROS responsibilities

- A. Assist Prosthetics in the identification of qualified local service providers.
- B. Educate veterans about the process for obtaining services
- C. Partner with Prosthetics Service in problem solving and dispute resolution.
- D. Assist in developing and monitoring quality assurance issues.

IX. Prosthetic Service Responsibilities

- A. Maintain a list of qualified vendors.
- B. Purchase access software upgrades.
- C. Pay for services authorized.
- D. Monitor quality and timeliness of services.
- E. Partner with VIST in resolving disputes.
- F. Partner with VIST to develop a local quality assurance monitoring process.
- G. Determine fees for services.
- H. Umbrella contracts may be authorized.
- I. Contract with multiple service providers.

- J. Develop contracts with regional repair facilities and vendors where the remoteness of an area prevents local services.
- K. Pay for justified and necessary computer training in the local community.

X. Service of Computers, Peripherals and Software not provided under the National Computer Contract or under its warranty

- A. Local Prosthetic Activities will be responsible for repair, replacement and service of computers and peripherals not covered under the National computer contract.
- B. Local Prosthetic Activities will be responsible for providing service locally on computers, peripherals and software issued under the National computer contract when the need for such service is not covered under the national contract.
- C. Local Prosthetic Activities will be responsible for providing the service, repair and replacement of peripheral devices no longer covered under the manufacturer warranty