

Date:

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness (006)

Subj: Enhancement of Security Posture (VIEWS 11756350)

To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. In response to increasing threats from persistent threat actors against Government and health care targets, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is enhancing its security posture by strengthening credential and vetting practices, in accordance with Federal guidelines and consistent with discussions at the April 22, 2024, VA Operations Board. These requirements will be contained in VA Directives/Handbooks 0710, Personnel Vetting Program (Security, Suitability, and Fitness), and 0735, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-12 (HSPD-12), Personal Identity Verification (PIV), Credential Management Program, which are currently under final stages of revision. This represents a significant shift of VA's posture to one of vigilance and trust through verification. As such we anticipate there may be transitional operational impacts and are committed to partnering to implement these changes with minimal disruption to mission delivery.

2. These enhancements will ensure compliance with Government-wide standards, mitigate risk to VA's systems and facilities, and better ensure safety of information, property, employees, visitors, contractors, and other stakeholders. Administrations and Staff Offices must comply with the requirements of these policies as failure to do so subjects the Department to substantial risk of both information and physical security violations.

3. Key enhancements will include: (1) requiring at least a Tier One Federal background investigation for all eligible VA personnel requiring access to VA facilities and/or information systems, such as Health Professions Trainees, researchers, and affiliates; (2) limit PIV-Interoperability (PIV-I) card issuance to the specific length of appointment, not to exceed 180 days; and (3) requiring a Federal Name Check, utilizing a national vetting system, for personnel who are non-U.S. nationals.

4. Collaboration between the Office of Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness, the Veterans Health Administration, the Office of Information and Technology, and other key leaders is underway to capture all requirements, update written policy guidance, satisfy any union bargaining requirements, and prioritize implementation of these updates and timelines.

5. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick Hernandez, Chief, OSP, at Patrick.Hernandez3@va.gov.

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