

## Announcement to the Field

### **National Contract Template for Provision of Prosthetic Limbs- Utilization Monitors**

*April 03, 2015 Orthotic and Prosthetic Service (OPS)*

Background:

In August 2014 the VHA Office of Procurement & Logistics (10NA2) announced the release of Procurement Policy Lightning Bolt 14-11. ***Creation of New Procurement Request Checklists and Templates for VHA Prosthetic customers: Request for Prosthetic Limbs Procurement***

The new checklist and accompanied templates were developed by a VHA National Prosthetic Limb IPT to standardized VHA Statement of Works with minimum salient requirements for prosthetic limb vendors. The IPT developed various acquisition templates to include a standardized SOW to meet VHA Prosthetic limbs needs. The Prosthetic Limbs SOW template is mandated by the program office and must be utilized when requesting artificial limbs. All templates were reviewed and vetted through our Prosthetic SMEs, OGC and our Quality Assurance managers. ***Templates for Artificial Limbs Procurement***

This new approach was implemented with an aim towards creating greater consistency of care across VA so that quality of care available to veterans is not dependent on geography. It was implemented following extensive coordination with the VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) and in response to two General Accounting Office (GAO) reports detailing areas for improvement in the delivery of orthotic and prosthetic care to veterans.

An important provision of the new contract template is coding, coverage and reimbursement for monitoring and utilization devices. Not unlike the contract template itself, the implementation of monitoring and utilization devices was in response to concerns from the OIG whether veterans were actually using the devices that they were receiving through the VA.

Per the contract template the VA may prescribe and authorize an automated prosthetic utilization and function monitoring device(s) for data collection and analysis for a new lower extremity prosthetic limb (transtibial, knee disarticulation, transfemoral and hip disarticulation level; does not include socket replacements). The utilization and function monitoring device will have the ability to record intensity, endurance, and gait symmetry, dynamic function, including alignment, forces and moments with proven accuracy. The Outcome Monitoring and Utilization device(s) must record the following:

- Stance and swing time for gait symmetry, dynamic function including alignment, forces, and moments;
- Cadence and cadence variability;
- Step count – continuous recording of total step count;
- Number of steps per selected time interval;
- Longitudinal, historical and objective analysis;
- Peak performance index, quantifiable into baseline and faster than baseline rate of walking, distance and variable cadence;
- Functional level assessment capability; and
- Measurement of socket load during gait.

VA may request "Veteran Outcome Reports" based on the data collected. The report shall contain narrative and graphical representation of the above variables.

Prescription and reimbursement for a utilization device(s) is a new practice in the orthotics and prosthetics profession. VACO anticipates questions regarding the prescribing, utilization, and billing of these products when provided by contract vendors. In anticipation of these issues please see comments below.

1. The VA Orthotic and Prosthetic service is working with the VA Amputation System of Care to establish clinical application recommendation for data collection.
2. All Veterans eligible and receiving care in the care are eligible for utilization monitoring devices regardless if whether the device is provided by VA staff, or vendors
3. A combination of up to two devices may be utilized to meet the requirements referenced above and may be added to both new and existing prostheses.
4. For Veterans with bilateral lower extremity amputation, or Veterans with multiple prostheses, it may be clinically appropriate and medically necessary to prescribe and fit utilization monitors on each of these prostheses. This is essential to gain a complete understanding of how veterans are functioning.
5. Reimbursement when provided by a contract vendor is established in the National Contract Template for the Provision of Prosthetic Limbs.
6. Reimbursement is limited to add on devices and not be billed as a separate feature of another product, (i.e. microprocessor controlled component knee, foot, etc.).

The use of utilization monitors for prosthetic limbs is a priority throughout the VA system. As a result, I strongly encourage you to begin utilizing these devices as a standard practice with your prosthetic patients.

Thank you for your assistance in cooperating with the terms of the Contracting Template and for your adoption of prosthetic limb monitoring and utilization devices.

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