

December 14, 1999

VISTA DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING MODALITY AND PACS INTERFACE CONFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes interface requirements between diagnostic imaging modalities and Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS) with the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA) hospital information system.

2. BACKGROUND

a. VHA has been one of the pioneers in implementing PACS in a clinical environment. VHA was also one of the first to implement interfaces between commercial PACS and diagnostic imaging modalities with a hospital-radiology information system (i.e., VISTA), based on the Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine (DICOM) standard from the American College of Radiology and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

b. Recent reviews and surveys by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of the Inspector General have noted that PACS and diagnostic imaging modalities are being procured in VHA that do not satisfy common interface requirements to the VISTA hospital and radiology information systems. Interfaces to these units may or may not have been developed locally. This results in high funding expenditures for systems that can not exchange necessary patient data and images between a PACS and diagnostic imaging modalities and VISTA or between medical facilities in a network or between networks with PACS.

c. In addition, shortcomings and considerable disparity in the implementations of the diagnostic imaging modalities exist. For example, the accession number is always needed by software to properly identify the study. Although this has been a requirement of the DICOM standard for ten years, roughly three-fourths of the diagnostic imaging modalities that VHA has interfaced do not support it.

d. Interfacing of PACS and diagnostic imaging modalities with VISTA is critical for timely exchange of patient data and diagnostic images to facilitate quality patient care.

3. POLICY: VHA policy requires that medical care be provided in the most timely, efficient and qualitative manner. PACS and diagnostic imaging modalities must be interfaced to the VISTA hospital and radiology information systems to achieve these goals.

4. ACTION

a. VHA medical facilities must include requirements for interface to VISTA in all procurements of PACS and diagnostic imaging equipment and systems.

b. The VHA Modality Interface DICOM Conformance Requirements should be included as the interface requirement specifications for procurement of diagnostic imaging modalities.

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2004

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c. The VHA VISTA PACS Interface DICOM Conformance Statement is to be included in the interface requirement specifications for procurements of PACS.

***NOTE:** The documents for subparagraphs 4b. and 4c. are available on the VHA Chief Information Office intranet web site at <http://vaww.va.gov/imaging> and on the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management internet web site at <http://www.va.gov/oa&mm/busopp/formats.htm>.*

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief Technology Division, Diagnostic Services (115) is responsible for the contents of this directive.

7. RESCISSION: None. This VHA Directive expires December 31, 2004.

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