



Veterans Health
Administration

VHA: Working to Reduce and Eliminate Use of Social Security Numbers (SSNs)

The VHA SSN-WG is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders and business owners to reduce/eliminate unnecessary collection and use of the SSN across VHA.

**Office of Management and Budget
Memorandum 07-16, "Safeguarding
Against and Responding to the
Breach of Personally Identifiable
Information," issued on May 22,
2007, directs agencies to:**

- *Eliminate unnecessary use of SSNs in systems and programs*
- *Participate in government-wide efforts to explore alternatives to agency use of SSNs as personal identifiers for both Federal employees and in Federal programs*
- *Develop an agency plan that addresses elimination of the unnecessary collection and use of SSNs by **March 31, 2009***

THE VHA SSN WORKING GROUP

The Veterans Health Administration Social Security Number Working Group (VHA SSN-WG) was established in December 2007 to lead the coordinated effort to eliminate unnecessary collection and use of the SSN across VHA. The VHA SSN-WG includes representatives from the VHA Office of Information's Health Data and Informatics and Enterprise System Management Offices, Program Offices, Security and Privacy, and the VA Office of Information & Technology's Office of Enterprise Development and Veterans Health IT.

In support of the Department-wide effort led by the VA Office of Privacy and Records Management to address the issue of eliminating the unnecessary collection and use of SSNs, the VHA SSN-WG:

- **Supervises all VHA activities related to evaluation of VHA holdings and eliminating unnecessary use of SSNs**
- **Oversees VHA's inputs to the VA SSN Working Group activities and project plan to ensure compliance with OMB memorandums and current legislation**

VHA HOLDINGS ASSESSMENT

VHA will be conducting a thorough review and assessment of a "holdings" inventory for all areas and functions within VHA, scheduled to be completed by December 2008. Data collected will then be evaluated to determine business requirements for maintaining full SSN, reducing SSN display, or eliminating use of the SSN. The inventory will cover:

- **applications**
- **programs**
- **systems**
- **system displays and outputs**
- **forms**
- **data collection and / or storage areas,**
- **Class III / local facility-developed software**
- **vendor-produced / purchased software**
- **all databases and registries used throughout VHA**

Please direct questions or requests for more information to the mail group:
VHA SSN Initiative Q&A at VHASSNInitiativeQ&A@va.gov