

SUBJECT: Use of the Medical Center Chapel and Prayer Rooms

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish guidelines and procedures regarding the utilization of the medical center Chapel and prayer rooms are places for worship, prayer and meditation for hospitalized Veterans, their families, volunteers, and the medical center staff.
2. **POLICY:** The medical center Chapel and Prayer Rooms are designated space and are reserved for the religious purposes and needs of patients, their families, and the medical center staff. The Chief of Chaplain Service is to ensure the Chapel and Prayer Rooms are used by hospitalized Veterans, their families, volunteers, and medical center staff for worship, prayer, and meditation.
3. **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:**
 - A. The Medical Center Director through the Nurse Executive has delegated to the Chief of Chaplain Service the authority for ensuring the successful implementation of this policy and procedure. This policy and procedure will apply to all Chaplain Service personnel.
 - B. It is the responsibility of the Chief of Chaplain Service to ensure that all Chaplain Service staff is knowledgeable and to ensure that the medical center Chapel and prayer rooms are utilized as a place for worship, prayer, and meditation by hospitalized Veterans, their families, volunteers, and the medical center staff.
4. **PROCEDURES:**
 - A. The chapels Chapel and prayer rooms will be available for private devotions for all patients/staff at all times other than those times that are scheduled for religious services.
 - B. The Main Chapel will be prepared for worship by the Chaplaincy Staff responsible for the worship service. Symbols unique to the faith groups may be utilized for such services. The responsible Chaplaincy Staff will return the chapel to its neutral arrangement following the service.
 - C. Requests will generally be declined for religious services which do not involve hospitalized Veterans. Weddings, funerals, baptisms, and special non-religious meetings will not normally be conducted in the chapel. These events will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Use of the chapel for other than scheduled services of worship and prayers or private devotions will be reviewed and approved by the Chief of Chaplain Service under the purview of the Medical Center Director. Based on VHA Handbook 1111.02, Spiritual and Pastoral Care Procedures, only VA Chaplaincy Staff will be permitted to preside over religious services held in the medical center chapels.

5. **REFERENCE**: VHA Handbook 1111.02, Spiritual and Pastoral Care Procedures, transmitted July 18, 2008.
6. **RESCISSION**: Policy #EC-39, Use of Medical Center Chapels, dated October 21, 2015.

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