

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: JUL 20 2015
From: Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)
Subj: Clinical Recommendation for the Eye Care Provider
To: VAMC Directors (00)
Thru: Network Directors (10N1-23)

1. The Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Vision Center of Excellence (VCE) was created in 2009 to support our Service members and Veterans through advocacy, policy development, research prioritization, and facilitation of clinical care integration for the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of military eye injuries, including those suffering vision damage associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Visual Syndrome. VCE is charged with improving the care of Service members and Veterans affected by eye injuries and diseases, including visual dysfunctions related to TBI.

2. VCE participated in the planning, facilitation and development of outputs from expert workgroups held in Las Vegas, NV, in August 2011, and Galveston, TX, in August, 2012. These workgroups brought together a panel of experts in vision, rehabilitation and TBI across the DoD, VA and civilian sectors with the goal to develop consensus as it relates to the treatment of visual dysfunctions associated with TBI and vision problems from eye injury. VCE used literature, existing clinical practice guidelines (CPG) and conclusions/consensus drawn from these workgroups to develop comprehensive meeting summaries and subsequent clinical recommendations for the eye care provider specifically related to the assessment, management and referral needs related to visual dysfunctions in Service members and Veterans with TBI and vision problems from ocular trauma caused by blast.

3. Following the meetings, panel members, as well as additional experts in the fields of vision, rehabilitation and TBI, served as review consultants providing multiple rounds of feedback and edits to the process highlighted in the algorithm and tables contained in the clinical recommendations. A cross-walk was also conducted with existing CPGs. The outputs from the workgroups and expert review/consensus include:

- a) Clinical Recommendation (CR) for the Eye Care Provider: Eye and Vision Care Following Blast Exposure and/or Possible Traumatic Brain Injury, and accompanying Provider Pocket cards for quick reference;

Page 2.

Subj: Clinical Recommendation for the Eye Care Provider

b) Algorithm Cards for the Eye Care Provider: Eye and Vision Care Following Blast Exposure and/or Possible Traumatic Brain Injury

4. The CR and provider pocket cards will be disseminated to VCE stakeholders and leaders in optometry and ophthalmology serving the military and Veteran patient population as well as made publically available on VCE's website. The recommendations contained in the CR will be used to inform eye care providers of recommended procedures as well as serve as a quick reference guide for consideration in the assessment, management and referral of patients with possible TBI and blast exposure. Taking into account the contents contained in the CR and/or provider pocket cards, a provider will ultimately apply their best clinical and sound judgment for all aspects of care.

5. For additional information, please contact Felix Barker, Director of Rehabilitation and Reintegration, at felix.barker@va.gov, or via phone at (301) 400-1130.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet Murphy".

Janet Murphy, MBA

Attachment