



September 28, 2016

Janet J. Coleman
Office of Regulation Policy & Management
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW, Room 1068
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Ms. Coleman:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 124,900 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write in response to the [proposed rule](#) titled Release of VA Records Relating to HIV (RIN 2900-AP73) as published by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the August 5, 2016 Federal Register.

The AAFP fully supports the VA proposal to amend medical regulations governing the release of VA medical records and remove the restriction on protecting negative test results for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sickle cell anemia. We agree with the VA regulation that HIV testing is a common practice today in healthcare and the stigma of testing that may have existed when HIV was first discovered is no longer prevalent. The AAFP also agrees with the VA that continuing to protect negative HIV tests causes delays and an unnecessary burden to veterans, especially when sharing electronic medical information with veterans' outside providers for their treatment through health information exchange efforts. We applaud the VA for issuing this proposed rule since it helps eliminate the current barrier to electronic medical information exchange. Our policy on "Confidentiality, Patient/Physician" supports a free flow of information as necessary for sound medical care.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and make ourselves available for any questions you might have. Please contact Robert Bennett, Federal Regulatory Manager, at 202-232-9033 or rbennett@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Wanda D. Filer, MD, MBA, FAAFP
Board Chair

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