

# VA Chaplaincy Title 38-Hybrid

Presentation for: **COMISS Network**

Presented by: **Chaplain Kimberly R. Willis, M.Div., BCC**  
**Executive Director of VA Chaplain Service**

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# Agenda

- Title 38-Hybrid Defined?
- Title 38-Hybrid VA Chaplain Journey
- Title 38-Hybrid & Board Certification
- Title-38 Hybrid Benefits
- Title-38 Hybrid Employment



# Title 38-Hybrid Defined

- **Title 38 and Title 38-Hybrid employees** are medical or health care providers who work at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or National Institutes of Health (NIH) and are appointed under **Title 38** of the US Code.
- Hiring authority combining elements of Title 5 and Title 38.
- Title 38 covers appointment and advancement.
- Title 5 covers pay, duty, leave, employee protections.
- Grade/pay determined by qualification standards, applied by Professional Standards Boards. Focus on professional credentials, education, experience, and achievement.
- Direct and expedited hiring.

# Title 38-Hybrid VA Journey

- **Title 5 employees** are administrative or support staff who work at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or National Institutes of Health (NIH) and are appointed under **Title 5** of the US Code.
- The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) approved Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) Codes for VA Chaplains: Q9001 Chaplain Assessment, Q9002 Chaplain Individual Counseling, and Q9003 Chaplain Group Counseling
- VA Chaplains changed from administrative, non-count workload to clinical, count workload because of the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) decision. VA Chaplains started entering Encounters into the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS), so VA Chaplains now contribute workload to the Patient Care Encounter (PCE) System.
- VA Chaplains acquired a clinical Budget Object Code instead of an administrative Budget Object Code.



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# Title 38-Hybrid & Board Certification

- While Board Certification is not a National or Regional license however the rigors of Board Certification for chaplains provides:
  - Clinical professionalism and standardized clinical accountability.
  - Serves in the place of the clinical state license.  
All clinical professionals are required to be licensed



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# Title 38-Hybrid Benefits

- In line with the Secretary of Veteran Affairs priorities:  
Hire Faster, Connect to Best/Soonest Care, Sere Veterans With Toxic Exposure, Whole Health, Homelessness and Caregivers, Preventing Veteran Suicide
- Increase in Board Certified specialty care chaplains  
Provide in-time care to Veteran population, their families, and staff  
Hospice/Palliative Care, Mental health, Moral Injury, PTSD, Suicide Prevention
- Expanded interdisciplinary opportunities
- Emphasis on skill enhancement through varied professional development platforms



# Title 38-Hybrid Benefits

- Funding from Congress is increasingly for clinical care in VA verses administrative or support funding. Being Title 38-Hybrid ensures greater likelihood of continued VA Chaplain hiring due to funding issues.
- Chaplains' workload has moved from non-count to count contributing to the Medical Center Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation (VERA), the Congressional allocation distribution across the Veteran Health Administration (VHA).



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# Title 38-Hybrid Employment

- Need to have hiring requirements meet specific and measurable clinical standards – thus requirement of 4 units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and Board-Certified Chaplain (BCC)
- Role specification for chaplains as expressed in Functional Statements
- Hiring competed entirely by the local VA Medical Center Human Resource office
- May/may not post on USAJOBS
- Ease hiring of CPE graduates who complete year-long clinical pastoral education residency



# Questions



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