

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: April 11, 2007

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management (DUSHOM)
Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO)

Subj. Certification by Principal Investigators: Security Requirements for VA Research Information

To: Network Directors (10N 1-23)

1. Over the past year and especially during the last 2 months, VA investigators have made impressive advances in assuring the protection and security of research data. A certification process for Principal Investigators (PIs) was outlined in a memorandum from the Deputy Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management and the Chief Research and Development Officer dated February 6, 2007 entitled "Certification by Principal Investigators: Security Requirements for VA Research Information". (<http://www.research.va.gov/resources/data-security/docs/PI-Certification.pdf>) This certification process, which is to be completed by April 15, 2007 (Item 2b) is a means to document VA's progress and commitment to VA research data protection and security.

2. This memorandum required that all PIs submit completed certification forms that are applicable for all his/her active protocols, to the ACOS/R&Ds at their VA health care facilities. The following information addresses questions we have received related to the April 15th (Monday April 16 is acceptable) deadline for the certification process.

3. The intent of the certification process is to demonstrate the commitment of VA's research program and VA investigators to protecting sensitive information including veteran's personal identifiers and health information. This certification process is also intended to develop a team approach to privacy and security of research data. By completing the certification the PI is stating that:

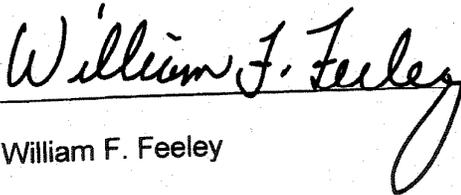
- He/she is aware of VA policy and guidance that governs the collection, use, storage, transmission, and security of research data.
- He/she has reviewed all his/her active studies and has identified any areas that require further procedures/actions to ensure the security of the data.
- He/she is working with the facilities administration (including the Research Office and the Privacy Officer), and the ISO on these issues.

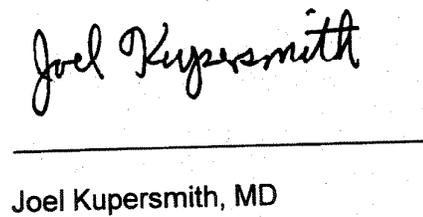
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5. Any questions concerning the policy may be addressed to your Research Office, or you may contact Brenda Cuccherini, PhD (Brenda.cuccherini@va.gov) or Joe Francis, MD (joe.francis@va.gov) in the Office of Research and Development.

6. This topic will also be discussed at the ORD Field Conference Call, Monday, April 16, 1:30 PM EDT, Dial-in 800-767-1750, access 17323.


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