
**VA Written Informed Consent to Medical Treatment
(4: Health and Dental Care)
Resolution No. 23-03**

WHEREAS, a black box warning on prescriptions is the most serious type of warning that the Food and Drug Administration gives to medication(s) which can have serious consequences to the health and wellbeing of veterans; and

WHEREAS, FDA Industry Guidance states “A persistent or significant incapacity or substantial disruption of the ability to conduct normal life functions” or “A life-threatening adverse event” may occur from black box medications; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration Handbook 1004.01(5), *Informed Consent For Clinical Treatments And Procedures*, provides for informed consent but does not require health care providers to obtain written informed consent which would provide a resource to the veteran to use outside of a crisis situation; and

WHEREAS, written informed consent will ensure clarity throughout the prescription process for providers and patients; and

WHEREAS, the unadjusted suicide rate among Veterans rose from 24.7 per 100,000 in 2005 to 31.3 per 100,000 in 2017 and 32.0 per 100,000 in 2018 according to the *2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*; and

WHEREAS, antidepressants are prescribed for patients who have PTSD and in 2004, the FDA required black-box warnings on antidepressants indicating that they were associated with an increased risk of suicidal ideation and behavior in young people; and

WHEREAS, use of certain medications and medical conditions can either temporarily or permanently affect a service members military readiness status making them a non-deployable asset; and

WHEREAS, the Reserve Organization of America was previously involved with the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense when the VA prescribed drugs that rendered a Reservist to be not medically qualified; and

WHEREAS, written informed consent on drugs would allow beneficiaries to work with their medical provider to find medical treatments that would not provide negative impacts to their military status, to them or their ability to function;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Reserve Officers Association, d.b.a. Reserve Organization of America, compel the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure patients prescribed black box warning drugs provide written informed consent prior to any authorization or agreement to undergo such medical treatment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA be required to include caregivers in the written consent of black box warning drugs.

Adopted by the National Convention, 1 Oct. 2023

Amendments to Dept. of VA resolution (passed Aug. 29) submitted and endorsed by national.