

The Veteran Experience Center Sample

The Bereaved Family Survey is used to measure family satisfaction based on care received in inpatient Veterans Affairs Medical Centers nationwide.

Step 1: Identifying the sample

- Deceased Veterans are identified on a monthly basis at each VA inpatient facility
- In order to be included in our sample, Veterans must have:
 - 1) died in an inpatient VA hospital
 - 2) spent at least 24 hours in a VA hospital in the last month of life
 - 3) a medical record with complete Next-of-Kin (NOK) contact information, including a working telephone number and complete address (see below)
- For each Veteran, we identify one contact* (generally a family member) in the following order of priority:
 - 1) Individual named as the patient's NOK in the Central Patient Record System
 - 2) Individual named as the patient's Secondary NOK
 - 3) Individual named as durable power of attorney for health care (DPOA)

**If you feel that you have been contacted about the BFS in error, or if you feel for any reason that you are not equipped to fill out the BFS, please call the Veteran Experience Center at (877)503-5817. We can help you understand why you were contacted, and we may be able to help you identify another family member or friend who could complete the BFS instead.*

Step 2: Contacting family members

- Four to six weeks after the Veteran's death, family members are mailed a paper copy of the BFS and a letter from the director of the Veteran Experience Center, Scott Shreve, describing the BFS
 - 1) Family members are asked to return the paper copy of the survey, complete the survey online, or call the Veteran Experience Center to complete the BFS over the phone with a research coordinator
 - 2) If we do not receive a completed survey by mail, we send out a reminder postcard with our contact information (for completing the survey over the phone, or to receive another mailed copy of the survey) and instructions for completing the survey online
 - 3) If we have still not received a completed survey by mail, we send out a second copy of the BFS
 - 4) Family members who have not responded to the survey after all three mail contacts receive a reminder follow-up phone call
- Family members may be excluded from participation in the BFS for any of the following reasons:
 - 1) they decline to participate in the survey or do not agree to be interviewed
 - 2) they feel too uncomfortable to answer the survey questions, or they are reluctant to discuss details about the Veteran's death
 - 3) they do not feel informed enough to answer questions about the Veteran's last month of life
 - 4) they do not speak English or Spanish