

**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

# Memorandum

Date: November 15, 2021

From: Chief Jassiem M. Omar

subj: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Mutual Assistance

To: Sheriff J.E. "Eddie" Guerra

Thru: VHA Senior Security Officer

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish general working relationships between the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) Police Service and Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department as a means of reinforcing interagency coordination and responsibility concerning law enforcement, emergency response, requests for assistance, and physical security and access control operations at VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (McAllen Outpatient Clinic) located at 901 East Hackberry Ave., McAllen, Texas 78501.
2. **POLICY:** VA Handbook 0730, denotes that *"There are memoranda of understanding with local law enforcement agencies which ensure timely backup support for VA police officers" and "requires that each VA Police Service establish workable support agreements with law enforcement officials"*. The current Police Program Inspection guide requires that "The Chief, Police Service has current support agreements for responses to crimes (to include VA Police Officer involved shootings and CIT training and collaboration with Federal and local law enforcement entities)."
3. I have attached a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Veterans Affairs VATVCBHCS and the Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department for your review and concurrence.

Sincerely,

---

**Omar, Jassiem M.  
Chief, Police Service**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS,  
VA TEXAS VALLEY COASTAL BEND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM (VATVCBHCS)  
AND  
HIDALGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) and the Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department, hereinafter referred to as "parties."

**1. PURPOSE.** To establish general working relationships between the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) Police Service and Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department as a means of reinforcing interagency coordination and responsibility concerning law enforcement, emergency response, requests for assistance, and physical security and access control operations at VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (McAllen Outpatient Clinic- MOPC) located at 901 East Hackberry Ave., McAllen, Texas 78501.

**2. REFERENCES.**

- a) VA Directive 0730, *Security and Law Enforcement*, 12 December 2012
- b) VA Handbook 0730, *Security and Law Enforcement*, 11 August 2000
- c) The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System (VATVCBHCS) shares concurrent jurisdiction with the State of Texas. Assistance in any life-threatening situations, (i.e., hostage situation, bomb threat, brandishing of firearm, murder, rape, etc.), can be requested from the local city Police Department.

**3. GENERAL.**

a. VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS), also known as McAllen Outpatient Clinic (MOPC) is located in the City of McAllen. VATVCBHCS provides primary, specialty, and extended care to Veterans throughout McAllen area. The mission of the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) is to provide timely, efficient, ethical, safe, compassionate, and quality health care to Veteran patients.

b. The Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department has concurrent jurisdiction with the Federal Government over VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) properties. This jurisdiction grants local police agencies the authority to jointly enforce Federal and state laws with VA Police on VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) properties.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES.**

a. VATVCBHCS Police Service will:

(1) Maintain law and order and enforce Federal and state laws and VA regulations at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS), including the hospital building and designated parking lots, for the protection of property owned or occupied by the VA and persons on the property.

(2) Provide primary initial response to any and all incidents or emergency situations at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS).

b. Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department will:

(1) Respond to VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) Police Service's requests for assistance. Such assistance may include, but not limited to, the following situations:

(A) Armed hostage taking situations that would require an armed response to assist VA Police in containing the situation until appropriate Federal agencies (such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation - FBI) can respond to assume control.

(B) Crimes involving armed robberies of funds, drugs or properties where the individuals committing the crimes leave VA police jurisdiction.

(C) Vehicle accident investigations, which may result in non-injuries, injuries, or death involving the VA Police patrol vehicles.

(D) Any major incident that would require additional Officers for traffic control to allow emergency vehicles a clear access to the facility.

(2) Provide additional Officers when needed to assist with the physical arrest of a violent/disorderly person(s) who poses a serious threat to VA patients, visitors, medical staff or themselves.

(3) Provide assistance in the transportation of prisoner(s) who have been arrested at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) on occasions when there are only two VA police officers on duty.

(4) Authorize access to and use of Hidalgo County Sheriffs Department central dispatch and patrol units in the field for VA Police. The parties agree that the access and use of such information is solely limited to official law enforcement purposes and that the process of reprogramming VA radios would be at no cost to the County of Hidalgo.

(5) Should any VA Police Officer be involved in a shooting, the FBI will be notified immediately. If the FBI declines investigation, or if the FBI response is delayed, Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department may provide investigative assistance to VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Healthcare System (VATVCBHCS) Police. This assistance may range from establishing, preserving, and controlling the crime scene, to performing as the lead investigative agency.

(6). Compact Act Section 205 Police Crisis Intervention Training for VA Police requires that each VA medical center polices service develop a plan to enter into partnerships with local mental health organizations and experts, Veteran community organizations, as well as local police departments to share training resources on Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT). This assistance may range from collaborated training and sharing Law enforcement to coordinated intervention tactics. When there is an extreme crisis involving a veteran(s),

## **5. ACCEPTANCE & RATIFICATION**

a. The provisions of this MOU are effective upon signature and date as indicated below and will be reviewed every 3 years, or as required.

b. This agreement may be unilaterally suspended or cancelled by either side upon giving at least 180 days written notice to the other party.

c. This MOU does not create additional jurisdiction or limit or modify existing jurisdiction vested in the parties. This MOU is intended exclusively to provide guidance and documents an agreement for general support between the parties. Nothing contained herein creates or extends any right, privilege, or benefit to any person or entity.

d. Other areas of mutual interest may arise where services and support from one party of this MOU is required by the other party of this MOU. This MOU is not meant to limit those instances nor prohibit cooperation outside the above listed situations set forth and agreed upon.

**FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VA TEXAS VALLEY COASTAL  
BEND HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Omar, Jassiem M.**  
Chief of Police, U.S. Dept. Veterans Affairs  
VATVCBHCS

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Martinez, Homero**  
Director, VATVCBHCS

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**FOR HIDALGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**GUERRA, J.E. "EDDIE"**  
Sheriff, Hidalgo County SO

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**