



## DOCUMENTATION IS KEY: Obtaining CATS and PATS Records

For those in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program and those anticipating joining the program, obtaining these records on a periodic basis is vital to understanding the entire CG Program picture.

**CATS** (Caregiver Application Tracking System) and **PATS** (Patient Advocate Tracking System) are NON-medical records completed by Caregiver Support Coordinators and Patient Advocates respectively. The information contained is often used for program re-evaluations, continuing eligibility, and sometimes reflect different information than the medical records. Without this information, you lack the capability to review for accuracy, correct errors, and understand the full picture.

We have concerns. CATS and PATS were not openly disclosed and found only from patterns discerned through thousands of seemingly illogical caregiver decisions. VACO has acknowledged in writing that both CATS and PATS usage will continue. Once these non-medical databases became known and caregivers submitted requests (only available through FOIA requests, or Freedom of Information Requests), there have seemingly been deletions from the records, and apparent removal of information that may have assisted in reversing Caregiver Program decisions for Tier Reduction or Program Termination.

Starting the process means a Freedom of Information Request (FOIA) to your local VAMC staff outlined below. To obtain these records, there is no form, and we suggest language similar to:

**TO:** Privacy Officer, VA Medical Center \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

**CC:** VA Medical Center Director \_\_\_\_\_ (name)



FROM: VA Caregiver \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (last 4 of SS#)

RE: FOIA REQUEST FOR CATS AND PATS RECORDS  
(Caregiver Application Tracking System and Patient Advocate Tracking System Records)

“Dear Sir or Madam,

This request is for specific records needed to respond to an appeal/eligibility to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Our deadline for appeal is \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

We are requesting unchanged, unmodified, non-redacted, and complete CATS (Caregiver Application Tracking System) and PATS (Patient Advocate Tracking System) records from date of application \_\_\_\_\_ (month and year) to the VA Caregiver Program through today \_\_\_\_\_ (date) for Caregiver \_\_\_\_\_ (name) of Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ (name), last four of SS# \_\_\_\_.” This information is critical to our timely documentation submission.

Thank you for your prompt response.

Very respectfully,

CG name and signature

Veteran name and signature

Submit this request to the Privacy Officer (or FOIA Officer sometimes) at your local VAMC and keep copies for yourself, noting the date and time of submission, the person submitted to, any notes of conversations. If you receive a response saying

it will be an excessive time period, exceeding your need for the information to appeal, provide a copy to your Caregiver Support Coordinator, their Supervisor, and request an extension of the appeal period in writing.



Once records are received, review them carefully with the Veteran's medical records for accuracy. If there are errors, you must submit a line-by-line correction document, along with documentation (if available) requesting record corrections. Submit these to the same Privacy Officer for submission and ask timelines. Check for confirmation of this information.

There are further steps you may need to make, but please not only obtain these documents, but also document every single step in the ADL's and Supervision/Protection provisions for program eligibility. For those pre-9/11 veterans anticipating application into the program, do this documentation now, in advance, and be prepared to follow the same eligibility requirements.

We hope this information is helpful, and if you're working with an advocate, cc them on the memorandum also. If this process changes, we will let you know, and meanwhile, knowledge is invaluable, and sharing it with others is as well.

We recommend you print this blog posting and wish you the best of success.

Best to you,

Linda Kreter and the VeteranCaregiver Team

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