

**DEPARTMENT OF  
VETERANS AFFAIRS**

# Memorandum

Date: September 2, 2021

From: Executive Director, VHA National Surgery Office (11SURG)

Subj: National Release of CPRS Template for Risk Analysis Index (RAI)

To: VISN Chief Surgical Consultants (10N1-23)

VISN Surgical Care ICC Leads (10N1-23)

Thru: Assistant Under Secretary for Health, Clinical Services/Chief Medical Officer (11)

Cc: VISN Chief Medical Officers (10N1-23)

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1. The National Surgery Office supports VHA's journey as a high-reliability organization through commitment to surgery quality improvement, including ongoing learning and sharing of effective practices.
2. Impacts of "frailty" on post-surgical outcomes are increasingly recognized, but strategies for quantification of frailty are not standardized. The Risk Analysis Index (RAI) of frailty was developed by surgeons within VHA to rapidly risk stratify patients before surgery to trigger care pathways intended to improve patient-centered outcomes. The RAI and associated consideration of alternate care pathways has been adopted by the VHA Diffusion of Excellence program as the "Surgical Pause."
3. Dr. Hall, VHA Diffusion of Excellence, and their collaborators have developed a national CPRS template to facilitate measurement and documentation of values for the RAI. The template will be released in September 2021 and is intended to facilitate RAI assessment at any facility surgery program desiring to incorporate the Surgical Pause into local clinical practice. RAI values assessed with the national CPRS template are recorded in the Corporate Data Warehouse as a health factor, thus facilitating site and clinic-specific reporting of RAI utilization.
4. Use of the RAI, Surgical Pause, and the national CPRS template are not mandatory. Questions regarding the national CPRS template or the Surgical Pause program should be directed to the Surgical Pause Team at [VHASurgicalPause@va.gov](mailto:VHASurgicalPause@va.gov).

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