

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Between

United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration

And

United Through Reading

I. PURPOSE:

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is entered into between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA or Department), Veterans Health Administration (VHA), 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20420, and United Through Reading (UTR) 1455 Frazee Rd, Suite 500, San Diego, CA 92108, collectively referred to as the "Parties." This MOA sets forth a structure in which both entities will work in a mutually beneficial manner to offer Veterans who are away from their families the opportunity to be video-recorded reading storybooks to the children in their lives, and to create positive emotional connections during times of separation. UTR and VA share common priorities and interests of helping Veterans create that "everyday" moment throughout separations, often due to medical illness, isolation from community, need for temporary or permanent institutionalization due to rehabilitative/custodial/functional assistance, and geographical separations. The goal of the partnership is to promote a feeling of connection between Veterans and their families.

II. BACKGROUND:

A. VA

VA is committed to working closely with non-profit organizations and other community partners to identify new and innovative ways to support VA's commitment to care for those who "have borne the battle" and their families. In 2014, the VA Secretary launched the MyVA initiative to effect a fundamental change in VA's systems and structures to align with the VA mission and values. Enhancing strategic partnerships is an important component of the MyVA Initiative. The Strategic Plan promotes VA collaboration with Federal agencies and other entities, both public and private, that provide benefits, services, and resources to Veterans and their families.

The Office of Community Engagement's mission is to serve as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships at the national, state, and community levels. As a facilitator and access point for public and private entities interested in partnering with VHA, the Office of Community Engagement commits to serving as national resource to build and enhance partnerships that will benefit Veterans, their families, caregivers, and Survivors.

Under 38 U.S.C. §523, VA has the authority to collaborate with state and private entities to promulgate and to foster the enhanced delivery of benefits and services of appropriate programs such as UTR. VA has the statutory authority to accept gifts and donations that would enhance the Secretary's ability to provide services or benefits, codified under 38 U.S.C. § 8301.

B. United Through Reading

United Through Reading® (UTR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to uniting U.S. military families who face physical separation by facilitating the bonding experience of reading aloud together. In more than 200 locations worldwide, UTR offers military service members the opportunity to be video-recorded reading books. The video recording of their readings are mailed to family members or caregivers who in turn share the recording with the children to promote connections with their loved ones during separation. Through this agreement, wounded, ill, and injured Veterans in VA residential programs will have an opportunity to send a recorded reading to the children in their lives while they are physically separated. Such opportunities can create an emotional connection between Veterans and their family members. The UTR experience will empower families to bridge physical separations by encouraging literacy and enhanced family support systems.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES:

VHA commits to:

- A. Provide space for video recording within VA facilities
- B. Provide recording equipment for the recording. Equipment required for the program:
 - 1) Laptop with Windows 10, built in webcam, and a DVD burner, or
 - 2) Laptop and camcorder kit which requires a laptop with Windows 8 or 10 with a SD Card reader, and DVD burner, and a camcorder with tripod which will record to SD Card
- C. Coordinate through Voluntary Service for volunteer activities
- D. Identify VA facility residential programs suitable for the UTR partnership and coordinate with the appropriate staff
- E. Coordinate with UTR to bring awareness of the partnership

UTR commits to:

- A. Provide a UTR staff member volunteer to host recordings
- B. Supply a selection of children's books from which Veterans can read
- C. Provide blank DVDs, books, mailers, backdrops, posters and handouts
- D. Provide software, instructions, and training

- E. Conduct training for local volunteers to run the program
- F. Coordinate and maintain the video-recording schedule
- G. Use surveys to collect customer satisfaction to share outcome measures with VA

IV. OBJECTIVES:

VHA and UTR have a shared goal of enhancing the overall Veterans' experience with VA health care services. The goal of the partnership is to bridge physical separations by encouraging literacy and enhancing family support systems to wounded, ill, and injured Veterans in VA residential programs. This MOA sets forth a framework of intent and cooperation between the Parties to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Reduce anxiety experienced as a result of separation
- 2. Increase a sense of connectedness with family members
- 3. Improve the morale of Veterans and Servicemembers
- 4. Provide support to the family member at home by connecting through video reading recordings
- 5. Promote literacy in children

V. PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Success will be measured by the number of Veterans participating in the program. UTR measures the program's outcomes by capturing the end user's experience through a customer-based survey. Outcome measurements help to monitor the program's effectiveness of practices and the program's impact. UTR's best practice model incorporates customer focus process and outcome improvements.

VI. POINTS OF CONTACT:

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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VHA Office of Community Engagement
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UNITED THROUGH READING
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United Through Reading
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KurtSchwend@utr.org

VII. LIMITATIONS:

(a) For the purposes of this MOA, a partnership is a voluntary, collaborative, working relationship between VA and UTR. The term partnership does not imply that VA and UTR are jointly liable for either party's obligations. Each party will be responsible for its

own costs, obligations, or liabilities. The VA liability will be managed under the Federal Torts Claims Act.

(b) UTR will not use this MOA to sell or promote any products or services.

(c) UTR will not use the name of the Department or any of its components, except in factual publicity and with prior approval of VA. Factual publicity includes announcements of dates, times, locations, purposes, agendas, speakers, and fees, if any, involved with activities or events. Such factual publicity shall not imply that the involvement of VA serves as an endorsement of the general policies, activities, or products of UTR. Where the publicity references the Department, publicity will be accompanied by a disclaimer to the effect that no VA endorsement is intended. UTR may use VA's logo, seals, flags, and other symbols only pursuant to a written determination by VA that the proposed use by UTR advances the aims, purposes, and mission of the Department. VA approval is not guaranteed.

(d) VA will not use and has obtained no ownership interests in UTR or other UTR names, logos, and/or trademarks (the Marks). VA will obtain UTR's prior written approval to use the Marks.

(e) This Agreement is not intended to be an exclusive arrangement. The relationship established in this Agreement in no way limits VA or UTR from establishing similar relationships with any other entity.

(f) This Agreement does not represent any endorsement by VA of the general policies, activities, or products of UTR.

(g) Any publicity released by either Party concerning this MOA, the services or supports providing within, or any resulting outcomes, will be subject to prior approval of the other Party.

(h) Neither Party can commit the other to any cost, expense, or obligation without the prior written consent of that Party. Should this MOA lead to a formal contractual-type of agreement, the parties will negotiate and memorialize such General Terms & Conditions in a formal document, including, but not limited to, a period of performance, funding issues, and liability matters. Neither party may commit the other to any transfer of funds under this MOA absent a formally negotiated agreement.

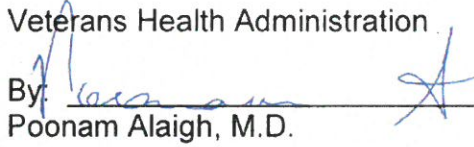
(i) This MOA may not be assigned or otherwise transferred by any Party, in whole or in part, without the expressed prior written consent of the other Party, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.


VIII. DURATION, AMENDMENT, REVIEW, AND TERMINATION:

This agreement is effective when signed by both parties and will remain in effect until terminated by either party or three years, whichever comes first. Amendments must be bilaterally executed in writing, signed by authorized representatives of both entities. No oral or unilateral amendments will be effective. Only terminations done in accordance with the terms of this agreement may be done unilaterally.

This agreement may only be terminated in writing with 30 days' notice sent from the authorized representative of the terminating party to the authorized representative of the other party. In no case will any oral termination be effective nor will any termination attempted outside these stated requirements.

IX. APPROVALS:

Veterans Health Administration
By: 
Poonam Alaigh, M.D.
Acting Under Secretary for Health,
Veterans Health Administration
Department of Veterans Affairs

United Through Reading
By: 
Kurt Schwend
Senior Director for Operations and
Technology
United Through Reading

Date: 7/28/17

Date: 8/1/2017