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CHAPLAIN ALLIANCE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
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Chaplains commend VA on revised religious liberty policy

WASHINGTON — Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty is expressing gratitude to the Department of Veterans Affairs for its recent [memorandum](#) to key officials that updates the policy guidance on religious exercise and expression in VA facilities and property.

The updated policy guidance allows outside groups and individuals to sing religious songs during holidays on VA property. As the policy guidance states, “Once the director authorizes holiday singing in a designated location, VA must remain neutral regarding the views expressed by the group or individual generally or in its holiday songs.” The policy guidance also clarifies that church groups may sing Christmas carols, and the VA cannot restrict the religious content of songs.

The policy also allows Veteran Service Organizations to set up displays with religious items on VA property. For example, the VA must remain neutral regarding the use of any religious item, such as a Bible, in a display recognizing prisoners of war or those missing in action.

“No one should try to water down Christmas for our veterans just because they object to any religious references or items. I am most grateful that the VA has clarified their policy prior to the upcoming holidays,” said Chaplain (COL) Ron Crews, USA Retired, executive director of Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty. “This should make clear that churches may sing Christmas carols and distribute Christmas cards at VA hospitals. Further, veteran organizations may set up MIA/POW tables that include a sacred text. The guidelines state that hospital administrators may allow this and provide reasonable guidance as to where displays may be set up and where and how long a church choir may sing. Further, this new policy should put a stop to those organizations that complain without basis about any mention of faith in VA facilities.”

[The Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty](#) is an organization of chaplain endorsers, the faith groups that provide chaplains for the U.S. military and other agencies needing chaplains. The endorsers in the Chaplain Alliance speak for more than 2,600 chaplains serving the armed forces.

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