

**UNDER SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures related to nomination and selection for the "Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research."
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** The certification authority has been changed.
- 3. RELATED DIRECTIVES.** VHA Directive 1204.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Research and Development, Health Services Research and Development Service (124) is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be addressed to 202-461-1500.
- 5. RESCISSIONS.** VHA Handbook 1204.4 dated April 15, 2002, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION.** This Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date of September 2013.

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UNDER SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook describes procedures related to nomination and selection for the "Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research."

2. BACKGROUND

The "Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research" was established in 1998 in recognition of the importance of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) health services research program and its vital link to the health care of veterans and the public. VHA annually invites nominations for this award in recognition of the highest level of achievement in health services research. A committee convened by the Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) reviews all nominations and recommends one VA investigator to the Under Secretary for Health for approval.

3. REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Director, HSR&D, appoints the review committee, comprised of experienced health services researchers with and without VA affiliation. The committee includes the chairman of HSR&D's Scientific Merit Review Board, a member of HSR&D's Career Development Review Group, and others familiar with health services research, VA priorities, and HSR&D goals.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

The Review Committee receives and reviews the nominations, based on the following criteria:

- a. The candidate's research has added significantly to the understanding of factors that affect the health of America's veterans, or has led to a major improvement in the quality of veterans' health care.
- b. The candidate has made a substantive contribution to the future of VA health services research by inspiring a new generation of investigators and has demonstrated excellence in training and mentorship of new investigators.
- c. The candidate has enhanced the visibility and reputation of VA research through national leadership in the research community.

5. ELIGIBILITY

Each nominee must be employed by VA at least 5/8 time. The research contribution leading to the nomination must have been carried out in VA, and it must relate clearly to VA's research mission.

6. DESCRIPTION OF AWARD

Awardees receive a \$5,000 cash award and an inscribed plaque commemorating the awardee's achievement. In addition, the awardee's facility receives \$50,000 per year for up to 3 years to support the awardee's research providing the awardee is the recipient of a currently-funded, nationally peer-reviewed research project (VA Merit Review, or non-VA research support). The award is presented at a national meeting.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Program Coordinator.** The Program Coordinator is responsible for:

- (1) Announcing to the field the opportunity to nominate a candidate for the Under Secretary's Award and
- (2) Providing guidance for preparing the nomination application,
- (3) Convening the review panel,
- (4) Ensuring that all nominations receive both administrative and scientific review,
- (5) Obtaining the appropriate concurrences and approvals,
- (6) Arranging the presentation of the award.

b. **Facility Research and Development (R&D) Committee.** The facility R&D Committee evaluates the merits of all candidates proposed by the VA medical center and recommends one candidate to the VA facility Director.

c. **Facility Director.** The facility Director recommends the candidate to the Director, HSR&D, through the Network Director.

d. **Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D.** The ACOS for R&D ensures that all required documentation accompanies the nomination letter from the VA facility Director and that the complete nomination package is submitted to HSR&D for receipt by the specified due date.

e. **Award Review Committee.** The Review Committee evaluates all applications and recommends one candidate, based on the specified review criteria, to the Director, HSR&D. If no candidate meets the established criteria for this award, no award will be given.

f. **Director, HSR&D.** The Director, HSR&D, or designee, is responsible for:

- (1) Appointing the Review Committee.
- (2) Reviewing and forwarding the nominee to the Chief R&D Officer for approval.

(3) Ensuring presentation of the award at an appropriate, national, and public venue.

h. **Chief R&D Officer.** The Chief R&D Officer, or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Approving selection of the nominee and submitting VA Form 4659 to the Under Secretary for Health for award approval.

(2) Notifying, in writing, the nominee's VA medical center Director, when the nomination is approved.

i. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for approving the nomination. At the national ceremony, the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, is responsible for presenting the award to the honored researcher and to the Director of the sponsoring VA facility.

j. **Administrative Officer for R&D.** The Administrative Officer for R&D, at the nominee's VA facility, facilitates payment of:

(1) A one-time cash award of \$5,000 to the honoree.

(2) \$50,000 per year, for up to 3 years, for research support.