

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding employee recognition and awards.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This change revises occupational coverage in VA Directive 5017, dated April 15, 2002, by deleting physicians and dentists who are no longer eligible for special advancements for achievement (SAA) and special advancements for performance (SAP) per the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-445, dated December 3, 2004, which established a new pay system for physicians and dentists in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)). The changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Directive 5017 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations Web site](#).
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Employee Relations and Performance Management Service (051), Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations.
- 4. RELATED HANDBOOK:** VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** Refer to the Transmittal Sheet for VA Directive 5001, General Introduction and Administration.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/Robert T. Howard
Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary
Supervisor, Office Information and
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/R. Allen Pittman
Assistant Secretary for
Human Resources and Administration

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1. PURPOSE. This directive establishes VA's policy on employee recognition and awards. It also establishes policy for special advancements for achievement and performance for Title 38 and Title 38 hybrid employees as well as cash awards for registered nurses and nurse anesthetists. Procedures for implementing the policies in this directive are found in VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.

2. POLICY

a. It is the policy of the Department to recognize individual employees who make contributions in support of the mission, organizational goals and objectives, and VA's Strategic Plan.

b. The Department shall also provide advancement opportunities for full-time, part-time and intermittent [] podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, nurse anesthetists, physician assistants and expanded-function dental auxiliaries appointed under authority of 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) or 7405(a)(1)(A); and, Title 38 hybrid employees appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(3) or 7405(a)(1)(B). Such advancement opportunities shall be predicated on the recognition of quality service rendered, additional experience and professional attainment as determined by an examination of the employee's individual record. Advancement opportunities shall include Special Advancements for Achievement and Performance. In addition, VA's recognition and awards programs shall include cash awards for full time, part time, and intermittent registered nurses and nurse anesthetists appointed under 38 U.S.C. 7401(1) and 7405.

c. VA's recognition and awards programs will be administered using the following principles and practices:

(1) Recognition has its greatest impact when it is provided as soon as possible following the contribution or achievement.

(2) The views of employees and employee representatives are critical to the program's effectiveness in motivating employees.

(3) The form of recognition used should be appropriate to the contribution that was made.

(4) When a desired outcome results from a group or team effort, all contributing members of the team should be recognized. The amount of recognition per team member may vary depending on the level of contribution.

(5) Appropriate presentation and adequate publicity are important to the program.

(6) Employee representatives should be involved in the development, implementation, and review of specific recognition programs.