

## STAFFING

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy regarding the recruitment, appointment, advancement, and change in assignment of Registered Nurses in Grades IV and V.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. Appendix II-H5 is replaced in its entirety. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the [Office of Human Resources Management](#) Web site. Significant changes include:
  - a. Eliminates authority to waive education requirements at Nurse IV and V.
  - b. Adds paragraph regarding the criteria for grading nurse leadership positions.
  - c. Adds new paragraph and table regarding the complexity of assignments required for placement at Nurse IV and Nurse V positions.
  - d. Modifies VISN Nurse Professional Standard Board membership
- 3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Management.
- 4. RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix H5, "Recruitment, Appointment, Advancement, Change in Assignment and Reassignment of Registered Nurses (RNs) in Grades IV and V," dated January 12, 2003 and August 12, 2005.

**CERTIFIED BY:**

/s/  
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY  
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**APPENDIX H5. RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT, ADVANCEMENT,  
CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT AND REASSIGNMENT OF REGISTERED NURSES (RNs)  
IN GRADES IV AND V**

**1. SCOPE.** This appendix covers recruitment, appointments, advancements, changes in assignment, and reassignments of RNs in Nurse IV and Nurse V. This includes facility Nurse Executives (i.e., Chiefs of Nursing Service, Associate Directors for Nursing or Associate Directors for Patient Care Services), and other key nursing personnel (i.e., RNs in Nurse IV or above who are not Nurse Executives). This appendix does not apply to nurse anesthetists, RNs “acting” in positions that would otherwise be covered by this appendix, and personnel other than RNs in Associate Director for Patient Care Services positions.

**2. RECRUITMENT, APPOINTMENT, ADVANCEMENT, CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT AND REASSIGNMENT OF KEY NURSING PERSONNEL**

a. **Recruitment for Nurse Executives.** The following actions must be taken when Nurse Executive positions are being filled.

(1) **Establish Search Committee.** Search committee responsibilities might include assessing the facility’s needs, identifying job related skill(s) which need to be emphasized in the selection process (e.g., organizational leadership, management skills, education/staff development, resource utilization, quality management, expertise in a specific nursing discipline, research, exceptional labor-management relations skills), identifying recruitment sources, and screening applicants.

(2) **Notify VHA Central Office.** Notify VHA Central Office [(108)] of the vacancy, of any skills to be emphasized in evaluating candidates, and of the proposed closing date of the announcement. VHA Central Office will announce the position and its location, the skills to be emphasized, if any, the closing date, and required materials (curriculum vitae and last two proficiency reports or equivalent) in the Weekly Summary Bulletin. The announcement will also include a statement that applicants should apply directly to the employing facility.

**NOTE:** *Closing dates should be far enough in advance to conduct a comprehensive recruitment effort and give applicants sufficient time to submit required material to the facility.*

b. **Recruitment for Key Nursing Positions Other than Nurse Executive.** When positions other than Nurse Executive are being filled, the actions in subparagraphs 2a(1) and (2) must be taken when local officials determine that a formal recruitment effort is necessary.

**NOTE:** *Local officials may decide that in order to fill certain key nursing positions (other than Nurse Executive) it is not necessary to establish a search committee.*

c. **Appointment To Nurse IV or V**

(1) After the recruitment process has been completed, the Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO), or designee, will evaluate all applicants against minimum qualification requirements and

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forward applications of all qualified applicants to the Search Committee or other group designated to review the applications.

(2) The Search Committee, or other group, will rate applicants “Qualified” or “Highly Qualified” and forward all applications to the approving official for a tentative selection.

(3) The approving official will forward the tentative selection to the appropriate Nurse Professional Standards Board (NPSB). The NPSB will review the scope of the position and the candidate’s qualifications to determine if assignment of Nurse IV or V is warranted and will make a recommendation to the approving official.

**NOTE:** *Except as specified in subparagraph 3a of this appendix, VA Central Office NPSB is appropriate for VA Central Office employees, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) staff, and on all appointments to Nurse Executive and Nurse V positions. The NPSB for the VISN (see paragraph 4) acts on other appointments to Nurse IV [ ]. Under no circumstances are facilities to use other boards at local facilities, or another VISN Board, in lieu of using the VISN Board designated for their network. [Waivers of education at the Nurse IV and Nurse V levels are not authorized.]*

(4) The facility Director or designee [approves or disapproves] the selection. All candidates will be advised of their selection or non-selection for the position.

**d. Promotions to Nurse IV or Nurse V**

(1) The recommending official forwards the proposed functional description, employee’s curriculum vitae and the latest two proficiency reports (or their equivalent) to the appropriate NPSB for review.

**NOTE:** *VHA Central Office NPSB is appropriate for VHA Central Office employees, VISN staff, all Nurse Executives, [ ] Nurse V positions. All other promotions and advancements to or within Nurse IV [ ] are to be reviewed by the VISN NPSB (see paragraph 4). [Waivers of education at the Nurse IV and Nurse V levels are not authorized.]*

(2) The NPSB reviews the employee’s qualifications and the scope of the position to determine whether the proposed grade is warranted and makes a recommendation regarding the employee’s promotion to the approving official (facility Director or designee).

(3) The approving official approves or disapproves the promotion [of all Nurse IV and Nurse V positions except Nurse Executive positions. The approving official or designee will process the recommended action for promotion of the Nurse Executive through the Executive Resources Board (ERB) for approval.]

[ ]

[e.] **Reassignments and Changes in Assignment**

**NOTE:** *A reassignment is a change from one position to another. A change in assignment is a change in the duties and responsibilities of a specific position.*

(1) **Reassignment.** If a nurse is reassigned and the reassignment does not involve a change in grade, an NPSB review and recommendation are not required. If a change in grade is involved, the procedures in paragraph 2d will be used.

(2) **Change in Assignment.** If the duties and responsibilities of a position are significantly changed, the procedures in paragraph 2d will be used to determine whether the employee should be advanced to a higher grade. Minor changes in duties and responsibilities may be accomplished by revising or amending the employee's functional statement.

[**NOTE:** *The VA Central Office NPSB is appropriate for review of consideration in reduction in grade for all Nurse IV and Nurse V positions.*]

**3. APPOINTMENT, ADVANCEMENT, REASSIGNMENT, AND CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT OF NURSE EXECUTIVES.** Procedures for the recruitment, appointment, advancement, change in assignment and reassignment of Nurse Executives are the same as in paragraph 2. [However, w]hen a selection is made for one of these positions, facility officials will notify the appropriate Network Director and the Office of Nursing Services (108) in VA Central Office.

**4. NPSBs FOR VISNs**

[a.] **VISN Board Membership.** The [Office of Nursing Services (ONS) will appoint one Nurse Executive from the designated facilities in the covered VISN's to] serve as the VISN NPSB Chairperson[. The VISN NPSB chair] will designate [ ] members from Nurse IVs and Vs at facilities serviced by the [VISN] NPSB [to serve as board members].

[b.] **Technical Advisor.** The technical advisor to the VISN NPSB will be the HRMO, or designee, at the facility where the Chairperson is assigned.

[c.] **VISN NPSB Assignments.**] Each VISN is assigned to an NPSB as follows:

- (1) [ ] VISNs 1, 2, 3
- (2) [ ] VISNs 4, 5, 6
- (3) [ ] VISNs 7, 8, 9
- (4) [ ] VISNs 10, 11, 12, [23]
- (5) [ ] VISNs 15, 19
- (6) [ ] VISNs 16, 17, 18
- (7) [ ] VISNs 20, 21
- (8) [ ] VISN 22

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**5. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

a. With each request for action, the requesting facility will forward to the servicing NPSB the following items:

(1) A memorandum from the recommending official supporting the action and indicating a proposed effective date;

(2) VA Form 10-2543, Board Action, with items 1, 2, 3, and 5 on the front side completed. Item 5 should document the candidate's educational preparation, the dates of and adjectival ratings for the latest three proficiency reports, a summary of professional experience, and expiration date of the candidate's license; and

(3) Copies of the last two proficiency reports, plus any other significant documentation concerning the nurse's performance.

b. Additional documentation which individual NPSBs might require should be kept to a minimum.

**6. VHA CENTRAL OFFICE MAINTENANCE OF BOARD ACTION FOLDERS.** The Office of Nursing Services (108) does not maintain board action folders for actions covered by this appendix.

**[7. CRITERIA FOR GRADING NURSE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT NURSE IV AND NURSE V**

a. Assignment of the Nurse IV and Nurse V grade levels is based on the complexity and responsibility of the assignment and the individual's qualifications. See VA Handbook 5007, Part II, Chapter 2, paragraph 1a(7), and VA Handbook 5005, Part III, Chapter 4, Section A, paragraph 1f(1)(b). Key nursing personnel are assigned to Nurse IV or Nurse V if the scope and complexity of their assignment is comparable to the scope and complexity of a facility Nurse Executive.

b. The VA Central Office (VACO) NPSB will review and make recommendations on all appointments and advancements to Nurse Executive positions, Veterans Integrated Service Network and VA Central Office positions at either Nurse IV or Nurse V. The VACO NPSB will also act on all other Nurse V positions. Recommendations of the VACO NPSB are approved by the Chief Nursing Officer or designee. All other appointments and advancements to Nurse IV are based on recommendations of the VISN NPSB and are approved by the facility Director.

c. Criteria for determining whether the complexity of an assignment warrants placement at the Nurse IV and Nurse V grades are outlined in paragraph 8 below.

## 8. COMPLEXITY OF ASSIGNMENT REQUIRED FOR PLACEMENT AT NURSE IV AND NURSE V

a. **General.** Registered nurses are appointed and promoted to Nurse IV and Nurse V based on the scope and complexity of their assignment and qualifications. Assignments of Nurse IV and Nurse V grades are position-specific. This appendix provides guidance for determining whether facility, VISN or Central Office registered nurse positions meet the criteria for placement at Nurse IV or Nurse V.

b. **Nurse Executive Positions.** The term “Nurse Executive” refers to the top nursing management position at a VHA healthcare facility/system. Nurse Executives are members of the senior management team. The organizational title of the Nurse Executive position will vary (e.g.: Chief Nurse, Nurse Executive, Associate Director for Nursing Services, Associate Director for Patient Care Services) but must be consistent with senior management titles recognized by VA Central Office. Appointment or advancement to a Nurse Executive position is based on the complexity of the position and the recommendation of the Central Office NPSB (see paragraph 2 above). Generally, Nurse Executives are appointed at the Nurse V grade, however they may be appointed at the Nurse IV grade in positions with responsibility for programs that are less comprehensive and less complex.

### c. Key Nursing Personnel

(1) **Comparability to Nurse Executive Positions.** VA policy provides that registered nurses in assignments other than Nurse Executive may be appointed or advanced to Nurse IV or V if the scope and responsibility of their assignment is comparable to a Nurse Executive position. The Scope and Complexity Criteria Table in paragraph 9 of this appendix will be used to determine the appropriate grade for key nursing positions.

(2) **Establishing Positions.** The facility, VISN or VACO Program Office should establish a formal process for approving the design and implementation of such positions. Responsibilities in new positions should not duplicate or otherwise reduce responsibilities of other positions if the grades of those other positions are based the responsibilities involved.

(3) **Key Nursing Assignments Warranting Nurse IV or Nurse V.** Positions at these grades are typically located in organizational settings where there is a high rate of activity and a broad mission involving a full range of complex programs and/or services. Program responsibility includes full responsibility for program design, integrating the program with other related programs and organizational goals, monitoring, as well as responsibility for evaluating and administering the program. Positions at Nurse IV and V grades also have full accountability for program outcomes.

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APPENDIX H5****(a) Examples of Nurse IV Positions**

1. Managers for Service Lines;
2. Positions in VISN offices that have broad program responsibility for a single program that covers all facilities within the network; and
3. Positions at facilities with full program responsibilities that meet criteria listed in the Scope and Complexity Criteria Table in paragraph 9 of this appendix.

**(b) Examples of Nurse V Positions**

1. VISN positions with broad program responsibility for multiple programs covering all facilities within the network;
2. Positions with substantial sphere of influence across multiple sites or programs and across the full continuum of care;
3. Positions with substantial involvement in multi-site, regional, and/or national professional and health related issues; and
4. Positions at tertiary facilities that have full program responsibility for more than one of the following programs: clinical, education, research, or quality management.

**(4) Consideration Procedures.** Nurse Executives and facility Directors must initially determine that a position meets the scope and complexity requirements before an individual can be considered for appointment or promotion by the appropriate NPSB. Procedures for such determinations and employee consideration are outlined in VA Handbook 5005, Part III, chapter 4, paragraph 6f(3). Nurses must have demonstrated mastery of the High Performance Development Model Core Competencies and must also demonstrate a potential for performance at the Nurse IV/V grades of the Nurse Qualification Standards.

**d. Vacancies and Reassignments.** Since the Nurse IV and Nurse V grades are based on a combination of assignment characteristics and individual qualifications, the placement of individuals in vacated positions at these grades is to be based on the recommendation of the appropriate NPSB. Positions of individuals at the Nurse IV or Nurse V grade should not be significantly modified, nor should individuals in these positions be assigned to other positions or duties, which may not warrant Nurse IV or Nurse V without having the action reviewed by the appropriate NPSB.

**NOTE:** *VISN offices may be organized in a manner that warrants more than 1 Nurse V position, and may have up to four Nurse IV positions. Although uncommon, highly complex facilities may also be organized in a manner that warrants a Nurse V position, in addition to the Nurse Executive position, and may have up to six Nurse IV positions.*

**9. SCOPE AND COMPLEXITY CRITERIA TABLE FOR KEY NURSING PERSONNEL AT NURSE IV AND NURSE V**

CRITERIA	NURSE IV	NURSE V
<p><b>Reporting Relationship</b>                      Who the employee reports to and what level in the organization.</p>	<p>Positions reporting to the facility/healthcare system Nurse Executive, facility Deputy Nurse Executive, facility or VISN CMO/COS/SL Director, VISN QMO, facility or VISN Director, VACO Chief or Deputy Chief Officer</p>	<p>Positions reporting to an SES level, the facility or VISN Director, facility or VISN Deputy Director, VISN CMO, VACO Chief or Deputy Chief Officer, or VACO supervisory positions.</p>
<p><b>Program Management/Leadership</b>                      A structured plan, system or curriculum under which action is taken toward a goal. The program focus may be clinical (patient care), administrative, educational (patient or staff), or research. The program must identify a purpose, policy, delegation of authority and procedure.</p> <p><b>Accountability for Outcomes</b></p>	<p>Positions at this level are responsible for a major function in an organization and involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibility for planning, designing and carrying out a program that encompasses a wide range of facility/healthcare system/VISN/CO activities</li> <li>- Developing a clinical or clinically-related program or mission</li> <li>- Setting long and short-range goals for the program that are interlinked with goals of the facility/healthcare system/VISN/CO</li> <li>- Adjusting organizational goals</li> <li>- Developing new techniques and methods</li> <li>- Responsibility for methodology, approach, interpretation and evaluation of program</li> <li>-Accountability for success and outcomes of the program</li> </ul>	<p>Positions are part of senior management and are responsible for organizational performance and outcomes. These positions involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Responsibility for planning, designing and carrying out multiple clinical or clinically-related programs</li> <li>- Setting long and short range goals for programs that are interlinked with goals of the Medical Center/VISN/VHA</li> <li>- Adjusting organizational goals</li> <li>- Developing new techniques and methods</li> <li>- Responsibility for methodology, approach, interpretation and evaluation of programs under the jurisdiction of the position</li> <li>-Accountability for the success and outcomes of multiple programs</li> </ul>

CRITERIA	NURSE IV	NURSE V
<p><b>Resources Management</b>            Scope of responsibility and accountability for forecasting, managing and accounting for program resources</p>	<p>Positions at this level involve:            -Recommending new projects and programs within program            -Assessing and making recommendations for human and material resource needs for clinical, administrative and/or research programs as appropriate            -Providing input for determining budgetary requirements in line with organizational funding            -Responsibility for allocating program's resources and monitoring in compliance with program goals</p>	<p>Positions at this level involve:            -Contributing significant input into allocation of organizational resources, including human and material resources needs for clinical, administrative, education and/or research programs as appropriate            -Recommending and possessing responsibility for new projects and programs within the organization/VISN/National level</p>
<p><b>Program Impact</b>            The impact or potential impact of the programs on both internal and external activities</p>	<p>-The position is responsible for programs that are essential to the mission of the organizational unit and affect overall outcomes and levels of performance achieved by the organization            -The programs impact the Department's outcomes and/or how the Department is perceived or regarded by the population served. Impact is both internal and external to the organization            -Where appropriate, the position interacts with a variety of Affiliates to provide clinical experience and involves a faculty appointment</p>	<p>-The position is responsible for multiple programs that are essential to the mission of the entire Medical Center/VISN/VHA national level and affects overall outcomes and levels of performance achieved by the organization            -Position is responsible for a full range of health services            -Impact is both internal and external to the organization            -Position impacts a wide range of Department activities and a wide variety of highly sophisticated medical center, VISN, VHA programs and/or other special programs            -Position functions as a leader and role model for other organization leaders, e.g., serving as a mentor for Executive Career Field (ECF) participants            Where appropriate, position interacts with a variety of academic institutions, serving as a member of academic advisory boards (such as deans committee, advisory committees)(optional)</p>

CRITERIA	NURSE IV	NURSE V
		-Involves academic mentoring at the graduate level or postgraduate level (optional) -Position involves providing leadership in conducting and integrating complex research studies involved with health care delivery at the medical center, network or Central Office level (optional)
<b>Site Management</b> Breadth of responsibility	-Position involves program responsibility at facility/stand alone OPC/VISN or National level providing oversight or coordination of program	Position involves: - Program responsibility at multiple facilities and/or with multiple campuses/clinics and complex programs or -Management of complex programs at VISN or CO levels
<b>Environmental Changes</b> External issues that impact complexity of position	Position includes: -Organizational climate and culture including such issues as work environment, diversity, employee recognition, and safety. -Challenging community relations -Involvement with elected officials on VA related issues/concerns, i.e. members of Congress, VSO, State and Local -Affiliations such as medical school, allied health, etc. and/or professional organizations, community agencies -Labor Relations responsibilities	Position includes: -Organizational climate and culture including such issues as work environment, diversity, employee recognition, and safety. -Challenging community relations -Involvement with elected officials on VA related issues/concerns, i.e. members of Congress, VSO, State and Local -Affiliations such as medical schools, allied health, etc. and/or professional organizations, community agencies -Labor Relations responsibilities -Involved in/leads planning for serving needs/changes in patient population; construction design/redesign of the physical plant

CRITERIA	NURSE IV	NURSE V
<p><b>Management Responsibilities</b></p> <p><b>Scope of Authority</b>            Facilitation of success, i.e., effectively accomplishing mission through collaboration and communication across organizational levels and lines, and effecting beneficial partnerships with external organizations or groups such as DoD, VBA, and professional organizations</p>	<p>Position involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Representing the Senior Management or the level below Senior Management - Comparable to position at medium to large facilities or serves as an Executive at a small to medium Medical Center or</li> <li>-Serves in VISN or VACO assignment that has responsibility for a single program</li> <li>-Position has broad authority and responsibility for decision making within the scope of the position</li> </ul>	<p>Position involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Member of Senior Management – comparable to position at medium to large facilities or Network/Chief Offices</li> <li>-Position has broad authority and responsibility for decision making</li> </ul>