

June 28, 2004

**WILLIAM A. NELSON AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN HEALTH CARE ETHICS**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice announces the establishment of the William A. Nelson Award for Excellence in Health Care Ethics.

2. BACKGROUND: This award, honoring William A. Nelson, Ph.D., former Chief of the Ethics Education Service in the National Center for Ethics in Health Care, recognizes VHA employees whose careers exhibit the highest standards of excellence, dedication, and accomplishment in the field of health care ethics (including clinical ethics, organizational ethics, and research ethics).

a. Dr. Nelson retired on November 3, 2003, after 30 years of Federal service. During his career, he was instrumental in the promotion of ethical health care practice throughout VHA. This award acknowledges the continuation of Dr. Nelson's career-long legacy by recognizing other VHA employees who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to promoting ethical health care practice in VHA. Contributions to health care ethics may be in the area of education, consultation, policy development, scholarship, and/or leadership.

b. Nominations are solicited annually. A committee, appointed by the Director, National Center for Ethics in Health Care, reviews all nominations to determine eligibility and recommend a selection. The award recipient receives a plaque and a cash award of \$2,500.

c. All current VHA employees (minimum 5/8 time) who meet the program criteria in paragraph 4 are eligible for this award. **NOTE:** *Contractors and individuals employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) less than 5/8 time are not eligible.*

3. AREAS OF RECOGNITION: Contributions may be in one or more of the following areas:

a. **Education.** Teaching and/or program development in health care ethics and/or development of educational resources for veterans or VA employees.

b. **Consultation.** Contributions that inform, advise, or assist veterans and their families, or VHA staff or managers with ethical dilemmas and decisions (usually through a formal ethics consultation service or advisory committee); and/or contributions to the improved practice of ethics consultation.

c. **Policy.** Contributions in the development and implementation of institutional policies that define or promote ethical clinical practice, management decisions, and/or research.

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d. **Scholarship.** Research or publications that support ethical practice through the development and dissemination of new or refined arguments or insights into ethical problems in health care.

e. **Leadership.** Vision and initiative in promoting awareness and systematic improvement in ethical health care.

4. CRITERIA. Criteria to be considered in competing for each year's award include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Significance, originality, effectiveness, approach, and generalizability of contributions in health care ethics;

b. Scope of contributions, and

c. Impact of contributions on ethical health care practice

5. NOMINATION PACKAGE. The nomination package must include the following:

a. A letter of nomination from the facility Director for field nominees, or from the VHA Chief Officer or Program Director for VA Central Office nominees, including a detailed summary of the nominee's contributions and basis for the nomination; and

b. Concurrence by the Network Director for field nominees, or the VHA Chief Officer for nominations made by VA Central Office Program Directors; and

c. The nominee's current curriculum vitae, resume or other summary of education, training, and work history; and

d. Three letters of support (in addition to the nomination letter) outlining the nominee's contributions; and

e. A completed nomination application.

NOTE: Employees may obtain a copy of the Nomination Application and Package Checklist from the National Center for Ethics in Health Care (10E), or download these from the Center's Web site, <http://vaww.va.gov/vhaethics>.

f. The original and five copies of the complete nomination package must be sent to: Ethics Award, National Center for Ethics in Health Care (10E), Veterans Health Administration, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20420.

(1) The nomination packages must be received in 10E by March 1 of each year.

(2) Nomination packages may only be submitted via interoffice mail, regular mail, or express mail. ***NOTE:*** Email and facsimile submissions will not be accepted

6. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: National Center for Ethics in Health Care (10E) is responsible for the contents of this Notice. For additional information, contact the Ethics Center at (202) 501-0364, or vhaethics@hq.med.va.gov.

7. RESCISSION: This VHA Notice expires June 30, 2008.

Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP
Acting Under Secretary for Health

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