



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington, DC 20420

**IL 10-2004-015**

In Reply Refer To: 10C2

**October 15, 2004**

**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER**

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)  
NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NAC) 2004 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Information Letter transmits recommendations adopted by the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) at its 2004 annual meeting in Orlando, FL, and provides Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) comments. These comments are derived from a nationwide electronic mail survey of Voluntary Service Program Managers.

2. The following 2003 recommendations are written verbatim as adopted by the VAVS NAC. The recommendations are identified by quotations and each is accompanied by the respective VA comment:

a. **RECOMMENDATION:** "Recommends Excused absence for hazardous weather. Representatives and Deputy Representatives who live in the northern climates find occasion when a storm or its aftermath makes for hazardous driving. The city or area near the VA medical center may be clear, but the outlying areas may still have ice or snow, making it dangerous to drive to the VA medical center. If there is a quorum present for the VAVS meeting, it should go on as planned; but those who couldn't attend because of the driving conditions should be excused."

**VA COMMENT:** Disapproved. The integrity of the local VAVS Committees must be maintained. Inclement weather occurs throughout the country and VAVS Program Managers are best suited to know the conditions in the area and make decisions regarding canceling and/or rescheduling of the quarterly meeting.

b. **RECOMMENDATION:** "In order to recruit and retain volunteers to sustain the VAVS program, the NAC recommends that VA provide resources, full-time employee (FTE) equivalents, and support services for the establishment of a recruitment and retention committee at each facility, comprised of VA staff, volunteers, and community and youth organizations."

**VA COMMENT:** Approved. Voluntary Service Office, VA Central Office will encourage facility Directors to support the establishment of a Recruitment and Retention Committee. This committee is to be comprised of VA staff, volunteers, and community organizations.

c. **RECOMMENDATION:** “The NAC recommends that VA include in its recruitment collateral a brochure of all local and national designated volunteer scholarships of all NAC member organizations, and any and all local VA programs.”

**VA COMMENT:** Approved. An information sheet or brochure of nationally-offered scholarships that target student volunteers is an excellent way to recruit. Although resources prohibit the listing of scholarships that are local to specific areas, an information sheet or brochure can be developed that provides an overview of national scholarships, their sponsors, and contact information.

d. **RECOMMENDATION:** “The NAC recommends that VA develop a volunteer retention assignment dedicated to retention initiatives.”

**VA COMMENT:** Approved. This is an excellent way to utilize volunteers to supplement paid staff. Volunteers may be recruited to develop and implement recruitment and retention initiatives specific to each facility.

e. **RECOMMENDATION:** “The NAC recommends that VA partner with colleges’ and universities’ communications departments to develop and distribute information on volunteer opportunities.”

**VA COMMENT:** Approved. Partnerships such as this are essential to overall volunteer recruitment plans. Facilities and their respective VAVS Committees that are located near colleges and universities should be involved with the student population.

3. VHA Central Office, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), is responsible for distributing a copy of this Information Letter to all current VAVS NAC National Representatives.

S/ Louise Van Diepen for  
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Acting Under Secretary for Health

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