

November 13, 2001

NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

- 1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy and procedures for the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program.
- 2. BACKGROUND:** The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program was established as an official Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program in March 1978, and is celebrated each year during the week of February 14. The purpose of this national program is threefold:
 - a. To pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans.
 - b. To increase community awareness of the role of the medical center.
 - c. To encourage individuals to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers.
- 3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy to promote volunteerism within the medical centers. The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans has been implemented for that purpose.
- 4. ACTION:** Responsibilities are as follows:
 - a. **VHA Central Office Voluntary Service Office (10C2).** VHA Central Office Voluntary Service Office (10C2):
 - (1) Develops guidelines and criteria for the selection of a National Salute Chairperson and presents a list of possible candidates to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for concurrence/selection of a National Chairperson.
 - (2) Arranges for announcement of the National Salute Chairperson on the VHA conference call.
 - (3) Develops a proposed budget to support the National Salute Chairperson's expenses incurred while visiting VA medical facilities (the budget will be presented to the General Post Fund (GPF) Review Committee for approval).
 - (4) Coordinates the development of collateral materials to promote the National Salute Program.
 - (5) Coordinates the Chairperson's schedule of visits to VA medical facilities.
 - (6) Assists the Voluntary Service Program Manager at the local level with the National Chairperson's visits.

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES NOVEMBER 30, 2006

VHA DIRECTIVE 2001-065
November 13, 2001

(7) Provides a sample National Salute Program evaluation format to the field for each Voluntary Service Program Manager to complete.

(8) Coordinates a photographic opportunity with the White House for the Salute Chairperson.

(9) Prepares appropriate recognition for the National Salute Chairperson.

(10) Coordinates the Ann Landers' "Valentines for Vets" program.

b. **VA Medical Center Director.** The VA medical center Director is responsible for:

(1) Designating a National Salute Coordinator.

(2) Establishing necessary committees.

(3) Allocating resources and management support to ensure an active program.

c. **The National Salute Coordinator.** The National Salute Coordinator is responsible for:

(1) Planning and implementing local programs during the week of the National Salute to fulfill the National objectives of the program.

(2) Inviting and encouraging community leaders and organizations to participate in local programs.

(3) Coordinating with the local Public Affairs Office to publicize the week's events and encourage active participation through Voluntary Service activities.

(4) Completing the Salute Facility Evaluation Form (see Att. A) and submitting to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), in VHA Central Office by the 10th workday of March.

(5) Coordinating the distribution of valentines both locally and with the Ann Landers' program.

d. **VA Office of Public Affairs (OPA).** OPA is responsible for:

(1) Assisting Voluntary Service Office (10C2) in the development of a celebrities list of potential Chairpersons for the National Salute.

(2) Developing Public Service announcements to be used by the medical centers print and electronic media to be distributed to the field.

(3) Assisting in the development of marketing tools and brochures to promote the Nation's Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program.

VHA DIRECTIVE 2001-065
November 13, 2001

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be directed to 202-273-8952.

RESCISSION: This VHA Directive expires November 30, 2006.

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Under Secretary for Health

Attachment

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ATTACHMENT A

**SAMPLE FORMAT FOR EVALUATING THE FACILITY'S
NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS**

***NOTE:** The following report is due to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office, Voluntary Service Office (10C2) by the 10th workday of March, with a single copy each to the VA Central Office, Office of Public Affairs (OPA) (80), and OPA Regional Public Affairs (80E).*

Sample Format

1. Name of facility and station number.
2. Address.
3. Name and title of the facility National Salute Coordinator.
4. Telephone number.
5. A brief narrative of National Salute activities (including programs, photos, and length and time of program).
6. Approximate number of patients visited.
7. Approximate number of visitors.
8. List any special visitors, e.g., sports celebrities, military personnel, etc.
9. Media coverage: newspapers, television and radio.
10. Recommendations and/or Concerns.
11. Number of valentines received from the Ann Landers Program and other sources.
12. Innovative uses of distribution of valentines.
13. Number of volunteers recruited as a result of the program.