

October 6, 2006

## SUPERVISOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy for the provision of supervisory competency development in VHA.

**2. BACKGROUND:**

a. Selection and development of first-level supervisors is defined as a top human resource management priority in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). This Directive is designed to establish VHA's commitment to supervisory development and to specify training requirements in accordance with national regulations (see VA Handbook 5015) and recommendations from the Office of Personnel Management (see subpar. 5b).

b. **Definitions**

(1) **New Supervisors.** For purposes of this Directive, new supervisors are employees who are promoted or hired into a supervisory position and have no previous supervisory experience in VA. This applies to all disciplines, services and levels.

(2) **Experienced Supervisors.** For purposes of this Directive, experienced supervisors are those employees who have been in the role of supervisor in VA for one or more years.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy to ensure that all new and experienced supervisors receive training in the approved supervisor competencies (see Att. A).

**4. ACTION:**

a. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management is responsible for:

(1) Monitoring of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) on their performance in this area of supervisory training.

(2) Establishing performance standards in each supervisor's annual performance plan covering compliance with the policy on supervisory training.

(3) Ensuring all experienced VHA supervisors receive ongoing training (approximately 20 hours per year) in leadership and supervisory topics.

b. **Chief Officer.** Each Chief Officer is responsible for:

(1) Designating a point of contact, known as the Supervisor Training Coordinator, to distribute and update the new training modules.

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(2) Ensuring all experienced VHA supervisors receive ongoing training (approximately 20 hours per year) in leadership and supervisory topics.

(3) Ensuring each new VHA supervisor receives training in the supervisor competencies within 1 year of appointment

c. **VHA Central Office Program Office Director.** Each VHA Program Office Director is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring implementation of the basic supervisory training curriculum for new supervisors.

(2) Supporting the 20 hours of continuing education for experienced supervisors annually. The plan for implementing supervisory training must be incorporated in their annual workforce succession plan beginning with the FY 2007 planning cycle.

d. **VISN Directors.** VISN Directors are responsible for:

(1) Designating a point of contact, known as the Supervisor Training Coordinator, to distribute and update the new training modules and obtain and report the respective Program Office or VISN-wide training and evaluation data on an annual basis. *NOTE: Existing coordinators for VISN Leadership Programs, Education, or Human Resources may be assigned this adjunct duty.*

(2) Ensuring the training curriculum, including all supporting videos, PowerPoints and other materials are made available in support of the Supervisory Training. *NOTE: Existing programs may be acceptable if the content is validated against the criteria of the national curriculum. A process is being developed by which subject matter experts will make this determination.*

(3) Ensuring all new supervisors in the respective VISN, medical facility or Program Office receive training in the supervisor competencies within one year of appointment.

(4) Ensuring all experienced supervisors receive 20 hours of supervisory, management, or leadership training and development annually. *NOTE: Appropriate content is offered by EES as well as other sources (see Att. B). Developmental opportunities should be tailored to individual needs of the supervisor and the management training priorities set by VISN and VHA Central Office Program Office management.* The plan for implementing supervisory training must be incorporated in their annual workforce succession plan beginning with the FY 2007 planning cycle.

e. **Facility Director.** Each Facility Director, in collaboration with Human Resources and Education Service or facility designee, is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring implementation of the basic supervisory training curriculum for new supervisors.

(2) Supporting the 20 hours of continuing education for experienced supervisors; and

(3) Participating in the National Supervisor Training Evaluation Plan annually by providing necessary data.

f. **Human Resource and Education Service Manager.** The Human Resource, Education Service Manager, or designee, is responsible for implementing and incorporating updates to the supervisory training program annually, as well as monitoring and reporting participation.

g. **Employee Education System.** EES is responsible for:

(1) Providing training materials to support required training for new supervisors, including updates and revisions.

(2) Assisting in providing and identifying options for continuing education for experienced supervisors;

(3) Developing and providing evaluation tools to Supervisory Training Coordinators.

h. **Office of Management Support.** The Management Support Office is responsible for:

(1) Compiling VHA Central Office, VISN, and Medical Center training and evaluation data and reporting to the National Leadership Board (NLB) Human Resource Committee on an annual basis.

(2) Supporting implementation and tracking of the program through the VHA national leadership and workforce development database until this functionality is assumed by EES through the Learning Management System (LMS).

i. **Supervisor Training Coordinator.** The Supervisor Training Coordinator is responsible for:

(1) Developing a local implementation plan including identification of local training resources, selection of training modality and certification of local program content. ***NOTE: Existing programs may be acceptable if the content is validated against the criteria of the national curriculum. A process is being developed by which subject matter experts will make this determination.***

(2) Local marketing and communications.

(3) Serving as a sub-administrator on the VHA Leadership and Workforce Development Database system to review registration of supervisors and monitor completion of training data. ***NOTE: URL and training will be provided by the VHA HPDM office.***

(4) Coordinating the administration of pre- and post-tests.

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- (6) Verifying supervisors complete training program.
- (7) Serving as point of contact for VISN data collection for national roll up.
- (8) Incorporating updates into local program, as necessary.

**5. REFERENCES:**

- a. VA Handbook 5015, Employee Development. April 2002.
- b. "Supervisors in the Federal Government: A Wake-Up Call," U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness. January 2001.
- c. Supervisor Toolbox (Supervisor Online Resource) at: <http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/supervisor/>.

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The VHA Office of Management Support (10A2) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-273-6303.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires October 31, 2011.

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Attachments

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ATTACHMENT A

**BUILDING SUPERVISOR SUCCESS  
VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA) SUPERVISOR CORE  
COMPETENCY MODEL**

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Competency Defined</b> | <p>a. A competency is the combination of skills, knowledge, and abilities a supervisor needs to meet the demands of a leadership position at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).</p> <p>b. The competencies expected of VHA supervisors are as follows.</p> |
|------------------------------|--|

**2. Day-to-Day Operations**

High Performance Development Model  
(HPDM) Core Competencies:

Technical Skills

Customer Service

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Flexibility

Systems Thinking

- a. Communicates and enforces policies and procedures (operational, privacy, information technology (IT) security, etc.).
- b. Promotes and ensures a safe work environment.
- c. Establishes and follows time, attendance, and leave procedures.
- d. Carries out fiscal responsibilities within your assigned area.
- e. Monitors and manages assigned budget as appropriate.
- f. Creates links between day-to-day work and organizational goals.
- g. Effectively and efficiently conducts meetings.
- h. Communicates effectively with peers, staff, management, and customers.
- i. Understands and resolves issues and conflicts.
- j. Identifies and responds to the needs of internal and external customers.

### **3. Labor and Employee Relations**

#### HPDM Core Competencies:

Technical Skills  
Interpersonal Effectiveness  
Organizational Stewardship  
Systems Thinking

- a. Knows how to locate and is familiar with applicable union contracts.
- b. Knows when to proactively seek pre-decisional input from appropriate sources and labor partners.
- c. Has working knowledge of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), harassment, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), and affirmative action and knows when to seek counsel regarding related issues.
- d. Knows the grievance process and policy.
- e. Appropriately counsel and document employee performance and conduct issues as needed.
- f. Resolves employee issues/complaints at the lowest level and refers unresolved grievances and complaints to appropriate sources.

### **4. Employee Performance Management**

#### HPDM Core Competencies:

Technical Skills  
Interpersonal Effectiveness  
Organizational Stewardship

- a. Clearly communicates performance expectations.
- b. Ensures employees have appropriate supplies, equipment and materials to perform their jobs well.
- c. Provides feedback and coaching as needed.
- d. Conducts performance reviews and/or proficiency ratings in a timely fashion.
- e. Provides recognition and/or rewards for high level performance.
- f. Addresses performance and conduct issues promptly as they occur.
- g. Handles issues with a consistent approach and documents as appropriate.

**5. EEO and Diversity**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Technical Skills  
Interpersonal Effectiveness  
Flexibility

- a. Has working knowledge of EEO, harassment, ADR, and affirmative action and knows when to seek counsel regarding related issues.
- b. Resolves employee issues and complaints at the lowest level and refers unresolved complaints to appropriate sources.
- c. Fosters an environment that values and respects individual differences.
- d. Takes an active role in prevention of harassment behavior.
- e. Adheres to policies.

**6. Workload, Staffing and Team Management**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Interpersonal Effectiveness  
Creative Thinking  
Systems Thinking

- a. Appropriately establishes priorities and assigns tasks accordingly.
- b. Ensures staff understands short-term priorities.
- c. Effectively assigns and delegates work.
- d. Achieves goals via a united team effort.
- e. Assists employees in balancing workload with family and personal life responsibilities in a fair manner by modeling and setting a culture of work and life balance.

**7. Position Management and Staffing Practices**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Technical Skills  
Systems Thinking

- a. Understands and adheres to federal regulations regarding staffing practices.
- b. Understands recruitment options and collaborates with Human Resources throughout the staffing process (recruiting, hiring, staffing).
- c. Regularly assesses and establishes staffing plans that meet workforce needs.
- d. Reviews and develops position descriptions, responsibilities, and duties.
- e. Understands and follows Performance Based Interviewing (PBI) techniques.

**8. Employee Development**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Personal Mastery  
Organizational Stewardship

- a. Ensures local education requirements are met as appropriate.
- b. Assists employees to assess competency skill gaps and create and implement personal development plans.
- c. Fosters employees' potential and career goals for effective succession planning and retention.
- d. Is aware of employee development resources and opportunities.
- e. Manages workload to support employees and ensure they have sufficient time available to participate in developmental opportunities.

**9. Strategic Alignment**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Organizational Stewardship  
Systems Thinking  
Personal Mastery

- a. Ensures staff understands organizational direction and their part in achieving those goals and mission of VA.
- b. Creates plans that actively support the achievement of organizational goals.
- c. Monitors and measures strategic goals related to their service.
- d. Identifies barriers and resources and makes recommendations needed to meet performance measures.
- e. Assists staff to understand how their efforts impact others to perform and contribute to their meeting strategic goals.

**10. Quality Management and Improvement**

HPDM Core Competencies:

Technical Skills  
Systems Thinking  
Organizational Stewardship

- a. Follows guidelines to ensure continuous readiness and compliance with accrediting and regulatory bodies.
- b. Seeks out ways to continuously improve processes and performance.
- c. Uses Job Satisfaction Index data to address and minimize employee dissatisfaction.
- d. Involves employees in improving the quality of products, services and work processes.
- e. Assesses, designs, and implements strategies that address the needs and expectations of both internal and external customers.

ATTACHMENT B

ONGOING SUPERVISOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Employee Education System (EES) Monthly Leadership Satellite Series.** EES schedules rebroadcasts of the best leadership satellite programs the third Wednesday of each month and encourages facilities to name a Coordinator to assemble supervisors and managers to watch the satellite and have a local discussion about applying the concepts to their work. *Go to <http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/> and check the VAKN calendar for the third Wednesday offerings.*

2. **The Supervisor Toolbox.** This website includes many resources and links to support supervisory responsibilities at [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/supervisor/supervisor\\_toolbox/index.htm](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/supervisor/supervisor_toolbox/index.htm) . Supervisors who have not taken the new curriculum may want to take some of the modules and count them as continuing education hours.

3. **Books on Supervision, Management and Leadership in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Libraries.** EES has ordered quantities of books that align with the High Performance Development Model for each facility library. In some cases, missing copies can be replaced by ordering from EES through your Education Contact or ESR. These books include:

- a. Achieving Impressive Customer Service: 7 Strategies for the Health Care Manager.
- b. Breaking Free: A Prescription for Personal and Organizational Change.
- c. Coaching for Development: Skills for Managers and Team Leaders Communicate with Confidence.
- d. Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others.
- e. FISH! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results.
- f. The Manager's Pocket Guide to Generation X.
- g. Managing Upward: Strategies for Succeeding With Your Boss.
- h. Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self Interest.

4. **Videos on Supervision, Management and Leadership.** EES has also ordered the best videos on these topics and placed them in Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) libraries (the lead library for each VISN). In some cases, missing copies can be replaced as with books. Titles include:

- a. "Discussing Performance."

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- b. "The Front of the Class: Learning to Lead."
- c. "General Hospitable."
- d. "Keeping the Good Ones."
- e. "Leadership Skills for VA Supervisors," a series of short films made by and for VA.
- f. "Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership."
- g. "Max and Max: Unleashing Potential in People and Dogs."
- h. "The Practical Coach."

**5. Web-based Courses and Simulations on VA Learning Online (VALO).** There is a range of opportunities, from short courses to complex simulations that you can access from the Internet as well as through the VA Intranet by using VALO web address needed at: <http://www.vcampus.com/online/valo/preindex.html> . Offerings include:

- a. "Addressing Problem Performance Simulation."
- b. "Assertive Communication Simulation."
- c. "Behavior-based Safety for Supervisors."
- d. "Etiquette for Supervisors."