

October 2, 2008

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH ANNUAL PHARMACY AWARD PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice announces the establishment of the annual Under Secretary for Health Awards for Pharmacy, focusing on three areas: Excellence in Pharmacy Practice, Advancement of Pharmacy Programs, and the Pharmacy Benefits Management Innovation Award.

2. BACKGROUND: These awards have been developed to recognize significant and noteworthy achievement in VHA pharmacy practice.

a. **Excellence in Pharmacy Practice Award.** The Excellence in Pharmacy Practice Award honors individual pharmacy staff members or pharmacy teams which are actively engaged in the care of patients at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility, are patient-centered and demonstrate a level of practice that sets them apart from their peers.

b. **Advancement of Pharmacy Programs Award.** The Advancement of Pharmacy Programs Award honors non-pharmacy personnel who have achieved distinction promoting pharmacy-related objectives designed to enhance the delivery of high quality pharmaceutical care.

c. **Pharmacy Benefits Management Innovation Award.** The Pharmacy Benefits Management Innovations Award honors pharmacy staff who have demonstrated exceptional leadership to positively influence practice locally, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN)-wide, or system-wide within VHA.

3. CRITERIA: Specific nomination criteria and nominating information are contained in Attachments A, B, and C.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **VISN Director.** The VISN Director is responsible for ensuring that the criteria, nomination procedures, and selection procedures for these awards are distributed to all VISN Medical Center Directors. The awards are the:

- (1) Under Secretary for Health Excellence in Pharmacy Practice Award (see Att. A).
- (2) Under Secretary for Health Advancement of Pharmacy Programs Award (see Att. B).
- (3) Under Secretary for Health Pharmacy Benefits Management Innovation Award (see Att. C).

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b. **Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Strategic Healthcare Group (SHG).** The Chief Consultant for the PBMSHG is responsible for ensuring that:

(1) Appropriate announcements regarding the selection process are distributed annually, and

(2) An Awards Selection Committee to recommend recipients to the Under Secretary for Health is appointed annually. *NOTE: This committee must consist of at least seven VHA staff, none of whom may be award nominees, but one of which must represent the PBM SHG.*

c. **Facility Director.** Upon receiving a national Award or honorable mention, the facility Director is responsible for ensuring that local recognition of the awardees occurs during National Pharmacy Week (October).

d. **Chief, Pharmacy Service.** The Chief of Pharmacy is responsible for ensuring that appropriate announcements regarding the awards and selection process are distributed annually.

5. AWARD PRESENTATION: For each individual award, the recipient receives a cash award of \$5,000, which is for personal use. Each team award has a value of \$10,000 cash, which is to be evenly divided among the team members for their personal use.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Pharmacy Benefits Management Chief Consultant is responsible for the contents of this Notice. Questions may be addressed to 202-273-8429.

7. RESCISSION: This VHA Notice expires September 30, 2012; however, the information remains in effect.

Michael J. Kussman, MD, MS, MACP
Under Secretary for Health

Attachments

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ATTACHMENT A

**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH ANNUAL EXCELLENCE IN PHARMACY
PRACTICE AWARD**

The Under Secretary for Health Excellence in Pharmacy Practice Award honors individual pharmacy staff members or pharmacy teams which have demonstrated exceptional leadership to positively influence practice locally, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN)-wide, or system-wide within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

1. **Eligibility.** All pharmacy staff members or pharmacy teams are eligible for this award.

2. **Criteria**

a. **Pharmacists.** Each of the pharmacist nominees must have demonstrated excellence in at least four of the following six areas:

- (1) Expert competency in pharmacy practice.
- (2) Excellence in education and training for patients or health care professionals.
- (3) Effective collaboration with other health care colleagues.
- (4) Effective use of evidence-based practices to enhance or improve health care outcomes.
- (5) Development and implementation of strategies for improving pharmaceutical care or improving resource utilization.
- (6) Promoting pharmacy practice and the pharmacy profession within their local community.

b. **Pharmacy Technicians.** Each of the technician nominees must demonstrate excellence in at least three of the following four areas:

- (1) Improving and delivering care to patients.
- (2) Collaboration with pharmacists and health care teams to provide outstanding pharmaceutical care.
- (3) Improving job-related skills with demonstrated performance improvement.
- (4) Recognition from coworkers or management for providing exceptional patient satisfaction.

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3. Nomination Procedures

a. Any Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employee may nominate a VA pharmacy employee by a written memo of nomination. For the nomination of a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or a group of individuals, at least four of the six criteria must be met for pharmacists and three of the four criteria met for pharmacy technicians.

b. The narrative must be limited to three single-spaced typed pages.

c. Each element being addressed is to be stated as the header for each section.

d. Nominations are to be forwarded to the Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management (119), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, by February 28th of each year.

ATTACHMENT B

**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH ANNUAL
ADVANCEMENT OF PHARMACY PROGRAMS AWARD**

The Advancement of Pharmacy Programs Award honors non-pharmacy personnel who have achieved distinction promoting pharmacy-related objectives designed to enhance the delivery of high quality pharmaceutical care.

1. **Eligibility.** Any Veterans Health Administration (VHA) non-pharmacy staff member is eligible for this award.
2. **Criteria.** Nominees must have recently demonstrated leadership in the advancement of innovative pharmacy practices, as measured in at least four of the following five areas:
 - a. Fostered or created an organizational climate ensuring appropriate integration of pharmacy practice into the overall health care delivery processes.
 - b. A commitment to supporting the full range of professional practices for pharmacists or pharmacy managers and to fostering career growth and development programs for pharmacy staff.
 - c. Supporting the integration of evidence-based pharmacy practices into the facility's health care delivery processes.
 - d. Achieved recognition beyond his or her facility for the advancement of pharmacy practice.
 - e. Provides the necessary support to maintain an efficient and effective pharmacy department. *NOTE: This could include human resources or advanced technological equipment.*

3. Nomination Procedures

- a. Nominations may be made by Pharmacy Service of the facility where the nominee was employed when the achievements were made.
- b. The narrative statement must specify the nominee's influence in achieving the accomplishment.
- c. Nominations must be limited to three single-spaced typed pages; and each element being addressed must be stated as the header for each section.
- d. Nominations are to be forwarded to the Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management (119), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, by February 28th of each year.

ATTACHMENT C

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH
PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGEMENT INNOVATION AWARDS

1. **Eligibility.** Any Veterans Health Administration (VHA) pharmacy entity (Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), department, section, team, committee, etc.) which was involved in conceiving, developing, or implementing a noteworthy and innovative project is eligible.

2. **Criteria.** Nominees must have demonstrated leadership in advancing innovations in pharmacy practice, with demonstrated outcomes as measured against four of the following six areas:

a. Innovation in pharmacy automation or in using existing Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (VistA) capabilities in unique ways to improve pharmacy workflow or patient outcomes.

b. Innovation in programs designed to improve patient safety. *NOTE: Achievement is measured in improved patient outcomes and organizational performance.*

c. Innovation in recruitment and retention or staff satisfaction strategies.

d. Innovation in career development and succession-planning for pharmacy staff.

e. Innovation in developing academic partnerships or affiliations. *NOTE: This could include cooperative educational and/or research initiatives, internships, etc.*

f. Innovation in resource utilization.

3. **Nomination Procedure**

a. Nominations may be made by any VHA staff member.

b. Narrative statements must address the criteria in describing the nominee's accomplishments, including outcomes directly related to the accomplishment.

c. Nominations must be limited to three single-spaced typed pages.

d. Each element being addressed must be stated as the header for each section.

e. Nominations are to be forwarded to the Chief Consultant, Pharmacy Benefits Management (119), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, by February 28th of each year.