

February 27, 2009

## LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN MENTAL HEALTH

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides direction and policy in filling leadership positions in mental health.

### 2. BACKGROUND

a. Providing high quality mental health services remains a priority of VHA. To support this outcome, it is important that the most qualified individuals be selected for leadership positions in mental health programs, regardless of their professional disciplines.

b. This principle helps to ensure both a high-quality corps of mental health leaders and an appropriate diversity of professional backgrounds. Further, this approach is most consistent with interdisciplinary care, which is the cornerstone of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health programs.

c. Mental health leadership positions include all positions where the incumbent has responsibility for an interdisciplinary work force.

d. It is important to create and support innovative leadership models for all mental health care disciplines. Promoting interdisciplinary recruitment for these important leadership roles supports VHA's goal of being the employer of choice in the health care field.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy to recruit and hire the most qualified individuals for key leadership positions in mental health.

**4. ACTION:** The facility Director is responsible for ensuring that:

a. Announcements for filling VHA leadership positions in mental health contain language inviting applicants from the four core mental health professional disciplines: nursing, psychiatry, psychology, and social work.

b. All applicants are reviewed in a fair process leading to selection of the most qualified applicant.

c. Any exception to this policy receives the concurrence of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) who must collaborate with the Office of Mental Health Services (116).

**5. REFERENCES:** None.

**THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES FEBRUARY 28, 2014**

**VHA DIRECTIVE 2009-011**

**February 27, 2009**

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Deputy Chief Consultant, Office of Mental Health Services (116), Office of Patient Care Services (11), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions can to be referred to (202) 461-7347.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 2004-004 is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires February 28, 2014.

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