

**PAUL B. MAGNUSON AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook announces programmatic procedures for the Paul B. Magnuson Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rehabilitation Research and Development Service (RR&D).
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES:** This Handbook has minor revisions to the current award program. It contains updated contact information and eligibility criterion. Award and program documents with temporary, expiration or rescission dates will be updated as necessary, and will be available electronically, at www.rehab.research.va.gov/.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Directive 1203.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of RR&D is responsible for the contents of this Handbook. Questions may be addressed to 202-443-5771 or rrdreviews@va.gov.
- 5. RESCISSION:** VHA Handbook 1203.06, dated June 9, 2008, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of February 2020.

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CONTENTS

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PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. Purpose	1
2. Background	1
3. Scope	1
4. Procedure	2
5. Responsibilities	2

**PAUL B. MAGNUSON AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook defines the procedures for nominating candidates for the Paul B. Magnuson Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rehabilitation Research and Development (RR&D) Service within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The award consists of a one-time cash award to an individual, supplemental funding for their ongoing peer-reviewed research, and a celebratory plaque. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 7303.

2. BACKGROUND:

a. Paul B. Magnuson, M.D., was a bone and joint surgeon who continuously sought new treatments and devices for assisting his patients as they faced unique situations presented by their disability. He saw patients as individuals and asserted, "People are no more alike in the shape and functional movements of their bodies and limbs than they are in their faces." As a person, he was a champion of the underdog. As a physician, he saw his duty, not only as curing, but also as restoring a patient "to his family, his job, and his life." As a researcher, he noted that as long as there is disease and injury, the problems of medicine will never be completely solved. As an advocate for Veterans, he was the architect of the VA health care system as it is known today.

b. World War II not only filled VA beds with patients, it left young men who left their medical training to serve, with no offices to which to return. While civilian hospitals could not provide enough residencies to hire these professionals, VA hospitals were filling with soldiers, but could not hire enough doctors to care for them because of the rules and regulations of the Civil Service. As administrator under General Paul Hawley, and subsequently as Chief Medical Director from 1948 to 1951, Dr. Magnuson argued for doctors, nurses, and dentists to be hired outside of the Civil Service, under what is now known as "Title 38." In addition, he created a system for medical school affiliations to staff VA hospitals with residents, interns, and chiefs of service.

c. Dr. Magnuson's medical career outside VA is equally impressive. In addition to his patient care practice and service as Chairman of the Department of Bone and Joint Surgery at Northwestern University Medical School, he conceived of and founded The Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, was a Founding Member of the American Board of Surgery, and was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

d. Dr. Magnuson left a remarkable legacy to VA and to the rehabilitation professional community. The Paul B. Magnuson Award, established in 1998, is in recognition of the importance of rehabilitation research within the VA health care system. Through this award, RR&D remembers and honors both the man and his legacy.

3. SCOPE: The Paul B. Magnuson Award is the highest honor awarded annually by the RR&D Service to a VA RR&D investigator who exemplifies the entrepreneurship, humanitarianism, and dedication to Veterans displayed by Dr. Magnuson during his career.

4. PROCEDURE:

a. **Evaluation Criteria.** Paul B. Magnuson Honorees are selected by an appropriate review group, which considers all applications and forwards one recommendation to the Under Secretary for Health for approval. Selection of candidates with exceptional merit is based on the following:

(1) Display of a genuine dedication to the care of Veterans with disabilities;

(2) Work which has significantly impacted America's Veterans through innovative solutions to disability issues;

(3) Substantive contributions to the future of VA RR&D by inspiring and mentoring a new generation of investigators; and

(4) An espoused philosophy of the Rehabilitation Team approach to returning patients to the highest possible level of function.

b. **Eligibility.** Each nominee must be employed by VA at least 5/8 time and be an active investigator for the RR&D Service. The research contribution leading to the nomination must have been carried out in VA, and it must clearly relate to VA's rehabilitation research mission.

c. **Nomination Process.** Nominations may be made by other scientists, the local Research and Development (R&D) committee, or the RR&D Merit Review Board through the Director, RR&D.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for approving the nomination.

b. **VHA Awards Team.** The VHA Awards Team verifies the accuracy of the information submitted in the recommendation, ensures that all VA Awards meet the standards outlined in VA Directives 5013 and 5017, and assists in coordinating the approval process.

c. **Chief Research and Development Officer.** The Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO), or designee, is responsible for:

(1) Approving selection of the nominee and submitting VA Form 4659, Recognition of High Level of Performance, through the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, and the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Health to the Under Secretary for Health for award approval.

(2) Upon approval of the nomination by the Under Secretary for Health, notifying the nominee's VA medical facility Director in writing of the award.

d. **Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Director.** The RR&D Director, or designee, is responsible for:

- (1) Appointing the review group and approval or disapproval of the recommended candidate.
 - (2) Forwarding the nomination to the CRADO for approval.
 - (3) Ensuring presentation of the award at an appropriate national, public venue.
 - (4) Authorizing payment to the honoree's VA medical facility of the one-time individual cash award and supplemental research support.
- e. **Review Group.** The review group evaluates all applications and recommends one candidate, based on the specified review criteria, to the Director, RR&D.
- f. **VA Medical Facility Director.** The VA medical facility Director recommends the candidate to the Director, RR&D.
- g. **Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development.** The Associate Chief of Staff (ACOS) for R&D ensures that all required documentation accompanies the nomination letter from the VA medical facility Director and that the complete nomination package is submitted to RR&D for receipt by the specified due date.
- h. **Research and Development Committee.** The local R&D Committee evaluates the merits of all candidates proposed by the VA medical facility and recommends one candidate to the VA medical facility Director.

NOTE: Information regarding the submission process, review process and general award information will be posted and updated as necessary at www.rehab.research.va.gov.