

**PROCEDURES FOR DEDICATIONS, REDEDICATIONS, GROUNDBREAKINGS AND  
ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES**

- 1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for inviting guests to dedications, rededications, groundbreaking and anniversary ceremonies, and for requesting funds for these ceremonies.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities Directors are now delegated authority to spend up to \$5,000 for groundbreaking, dedication, rededication, and anniversary ceremonies. Expenditures between \$5,001 and \$10,000 must be approved by the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** None.
- 4. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief Facilities Management Officer (18) is responsible for the content of this Directive. Questions may be directed to 202-565-4307.
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 96-044, and Interim Issue 10-87-6 (M-1, Pt. I., Ch. 28) are rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of April 2008.

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Under Secretary for Health

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## **PROCEDURES FOR DEDICATIONS, REDEDICATIONS, GROUNDBREAKINGS AND ANNIVERSARY CEREMONIES**

### **1. PURPOSE**

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for inviting guests to dedications, rededications, groundbreaking and anniversary ceremonies, and for requesting funds for these ceremonies.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

a. M-1, Part I, Chapter 28, Activation of New Hospitals, which references groundbreaking and dedication activities, has not been updated in its entirety since 1970. Interim issues were published in 1983, 1984, and 1987, covering the policy and procedures for groundbreaking, dedication, and anniversary ceremonies.

b. Previous policy stated that the amount allowed for these ceremonies was \$5,000 upon the approval of the Under Secretary for Health (10). Requests in excess of \$5,000 were referred by the Under Secretary for Health, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (00).

c. Groundbreaking and/or dedication ceremonies are appropriate for new and replacement medical facilities, major additions to an existing facility, and new satellite outpatient clinics. Rededication ceremonies are appropriate when a facility or a portion of a facility is renamed for an individual. Ceremonies recognizing the anniversary of a medical center will normally be conducted at 25-year intervals. Local circumstances may indicate ceremonies for less auspicious occasions. For example, the dedication of a general purpose intensive care unit may be a significant event in a small community, whereas the dedication of a major addition in a large metropolitan area may warrant a simpler ceremony.

### **3. SCOPE**

a. Directors of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities are now delegated authority to spend up to \$5,000 for groundbreaking, dedication, rededication, and anniversary ceremonies.

b. Expenditures between \$5,001 and \$10,000 must be approved by the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director. Approved ceremonial expenses are restricted to those categories listed in Paragraph 4.

c. Funds for groundbreaking and/or dedications for major construction projects are supported from project contingency funds and need to be included in the project funding statement.

d. If the ceremony pertains to an outpatient clinic in a leased space, local medical care appropriation funds will be obligated.

e. Invitations to the ceremony beyond the VISN Director level are to be sent by the VISN Director to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) for processing through Executive Correspondence (101B) to the VHA Chief of Staff (10B) (see par. 6 and App.s A and B).

#### 4. CATEGORIES OF EXPENDITURES

a. The following categories of expenditures are allowable:

- (1) Flowers,
- (2) Printing of programs and invitations,
- (3) Chrome plating and engraving of a ceremonial shovel,
- (4) Transportation, and
- (5) Rental, if not available, of platforms and carpets, tents, chairs, and public address systems.

b. The use of appropriated funds for entertainment and food, including associated expenses such as transportation for a band, table linens, and tableware, or purchase of mementos and gifts to ceremony participants and attendees, is prohibited.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Facility Director**. The facility Director is responsible

- (1) For initiating and planning for such events in accordance with VHA policy.
- (2) For submitting a notification of the ceremony to the VISN at least 90 days in advance of the proposed ceremony.
- (3) If the ceremony costs more than \$5,000, for preparing a budget, by category, of the estimated cost. Dedication expenses relative to new medical facility construction must be charged to the appropriate construction accounts. Local medical care funds need to be obligated if the ceremony pertains to an outpatient clinic in a leased space.
- (4) For extending formal invitations to officials such as Congressional representatives, State representatives, governor(s), service organization representatives, medical school officials, and others.
- (5) For ensuring correct protocol for platform seating, speakers, special tours, and other items related to the ceremony.
- (6) For keeping the VISN Director informed of all plans and activities.

b. **VISN Director**

(1) The VISN Director has the authority to approve funds between \$5,001 and \$10,000 for these ceremonies. Additional medical care funds for these ceremonies will not be provided beyond what is available locally. Anniversary ceremonies will not be funded with appropriated funds.

(2) To obtain funding from the construction project account, the VISN Director is to notify the Chief Facilities Management Officer (18) and request that the funds be transferred to the medical facility.

**6. INVITATIONS**

From time to time, facilities make inquiries concerning the issuance of invitations for special events and ceremonies to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Under Secretary for Health, the Deputy Under Secretary for Health or other VHA officials. To assist in this process, the proper format to use in making these requests is attached:

a. Attachment A is the proper format for requesting the presence of any key VA Central Office official. If available, the facility's official invitation may be enclosed.

b. To request "messages" signed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Under Secretary for Health, send the printed message on the appropriate letterhead (i.e., VA or VHA), with suggested language and special printing requirements. If pictures are also desired, specify sizes and whether black and white or color photos are desired. Photos will be returned in a camera-ready format.

c. **Procedure**

(1) The VISN Director sends the invitation to the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) for review.

(2) Upon receipt of the medical facility's invitation, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) forwards the invitation through Executive Correspondence (101B) to the Chief of Staff (10B) for coordination of VA Central Office attendance.

(3) Decisions are to be transmitted promptly by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N) to the VISN Director's office for transmittal to the medical facility.

**FORMAT FOR THE INVITATION TO SPECIAL EVENTS AND CEREMONIES**

**1. Subject:** Include subject of the event (dedication, rededication, groundbreaking ceremony, etc.) and the name of the facility sponsoring it.

**2. Purpose:** State the reason for the invitation to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office’s key official(s) and what the sponsoring facility expects the key official/invitee to do at the event.

**3. Date and Time:** State the date and time of the event. If the facility is flexible on the date and time, it is recommended to submit three proposed dates and times, preferably on a Monday or Friday.

**4. Proposed Guest List:** List names and titles of people receiving an invitation that may be of interest to VA Central Office’s key officials (e.g., Congressional Representatives and Senators, State Representatives, Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representatives).

**5. Justification for VA Central Office Presence:** Give critical factors that key officials need to consider when making a decision to attend the event.

*NOTE: It is important to note what impact the event will have locally and/or nationally.*

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Participation

VHA Participation

\_\_\_\_\_  
(00)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(10)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(001)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(10A1)

Other Participation: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approved for:

Confirmed Date of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_(Date)\_\_\_\_\_

Department-level Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

VHA Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

**A SAMPLE OF A SPECIAL EVENTS AND CEREMONIES INVITATION**

**1. Subject:** Dedication Ceremony for the Clinical Addition at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, City, State.

**2. Purpose:** To invite Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi, or designee, to be a keynote speaker at the dedication ceremony.

**3. Proposed Date and Time:** September 1, 2003 at 2:00 PM

September 8, 2003 at 2:00 PM

September 15, 2003 at 2:00 PM

**4. Proposed Guest List:** Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Senator John Doe, Senator Mary Smith, Governor Jim Smith, Congresswoman Sally Jones, and Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Representative Joe Smith.

**5. Justification for VA Central Office Presence**

a. Local impact is significant. The opening of the clinical addition is a significant event because of the active involvement with the community. There has been consistent public and political interest from the early planning stages for the new clinical addition. Local and national news media are expected.

b. The presence of VA Central Office officials will enhance the message of VA's commitment to improving veterans' health care and reinforce VA's focus on outpatient services.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Participation

VHA Participation

\_\_\_\_\_

(00)

\_\_\_\_\_

(10)

\_\_\_\_\_

(001)

\_\_\_\_\_

(10A1)

Other Participation: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved for:

Confirmed Date of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Department-level Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

VHA Representative: \_\_\_\_\_