

May 4, 2012

**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION FOUR TIERED LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: LEADERSHIP, EFFECTIVENESS,  
ACCOUNTABILITY, AND DEVELOPMENT (LEAD)**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy for the provision of leadership development through the use of the Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability, and Development (LEAD) criteria in VHA.

**2. BACKGROUND**

a. VHA faces a significant leadership and technical loss of talent from the impending baby boomer generation retirement. As leaders from all levels of the organization retire, or move into positions of higher responsibility, vacancies in leadership positions result in serious talent gaps. Experienced workers below the Executive Career Field (ECF) ranks will retire at a rapid rate taking their skills and knowledge with them.

b. To create a continuum of leadership development, a four-tiered leadership development strategy, is envisioned in the VHA Succession and Workforce Development Strategic Plan. The first tier is the Facility LEAD Program; the second tier is the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) LEAD Program; the third tier is the Health Care Leadership Development Program (HCLDP); and the fourth tier is the Health Care Executive Fellowship (HCEF) Program.

c. The VHA National Leadership Council approved, and maintains that each VHA facility and VISN is to establish a leadership development program for employees.

d. VHA Central Office employees may participate in leadership development programs co-sponsored by the Office of Workforce Management and Consulting (WMC) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Learning University (VALU). These programs provide equivalent tier I and II leadership development for VHA Central Office employees.

e. **Definitions**

(1) **LEAD.** LEAD is a national succession initiative with national oversight, committee governance, and specific criteria. VISN and local leadership programs may have a name other than LEAD, making the name unique to the VISN or facility; however, the program must meet the nationally-approved criteria to be considered a LEAD Program.

(2) **LEAD Coordinator.** The LEAD Coordinator is a Facility, VISN, or VHA Central Office point of contact assigned the duties and coordination of the organization's LEAD Program.

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(3) **LEAD Participant.** The LEAD participant is one who by successfully completing or graduating from a LEAD Program is considered a high-potential employee in VHA's succession planning program.

(4) **VA Competency Model.** The VA Competency Model is the competency model which serves as VHA's development model for all employees and is the foundation of all succession and development initiatives in VHA.

(5) **VHA Certified Mentor Coach Program.** The VHA Certified Mentor Coach Program is a VHA national succession program, implemented in 2005, designed to standardize mentor and/or coach training for all persons serving in this role within VHA Succession initiatives, and nationally recognizes those who become certified.

(6) **VHA Designated Learning Officer (DLO).** The DLO is a leader, learning expert, and strategic advisor. The DLO promotes and advocates for all learning programs, including employee competence development; clinical and administrative training; workforce succession initiatives; and student and trainee management. The DLO ensures the alignment of learning for programs with overall organizational impact on VHA's mission and vision.

(7) **VHA Succession and Workforce Development Strategic Plan.** The VHA Succession and Workforce Development Strategic Plan is VHA's annual publication for succession and workforce development. LEAD is a key element within VHA's leadership continuum, and has pivotal links to several technical workforce development programs.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy to ensure that leadership development programs are administered in compliance with nationally-approved learning objectives, criteria, program design, selection criteria, and leadership support and recognition, and they are available to employees (General Schedule (GS) Wage Grade (WG), Title 38, and Title 38 Hybrid) at all levels of the organization.

### 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 monitoring the VISNs performance in meeting nationally-approved criteria, which are categorized as: Strategic Needs Assessment, Program Design, Selection Process, Program Evaluation, Leadership Support, and Reward and Recognition; they are defined at: <http://vaww.htm.wmc.va.gov/Programs/lead/default.aspx>. *NOTE: This is an internal Web site and is available only to program participants.*

b. **Office of Workforce Management and Consulting (WMC), Healthcare Talent Management (HTM).** The WMC HTM Office is responsible for the national program management of the VHA LEAD Program. *NOTE: VA Central Office program offices LEAD program equivalent will be offered in collaboration with VALU.*

(1) Supporting implementation of the LEAD Program.

(2) Tracking all LEAD Program participants.

(3) Tracking all mentors.

(4) Serving as the Administrator for the Class Management System (CMS) and Personal Development Plan (PDP) applications.

(5) Coordinating in partnership with stakeholders, the provision of VHA's Mentor Coach Training for LEAD mentors, and encouraging VHA Mentor Coach Certification in collaboration with the Mentor Certification Advisory Board (MCAB).

c. **National Center for Organization Development (NCOD)**. The NCOD is responsible for:

(1) Assessing the 180 and/or 360 portion of the LEAD Program.

(2) Administering the pre- and post-180 and/or 360 assessments to LEAD participants, as requested.

(3) Training VISN and facility staff to provide 180 and/or 360 feedback and interpretation.

(4) Serving as a national liaison for organization development on national LEAD workgroups and initiatives.

d. **VA Learning University (VALU)**. VALU is responsible for:

(1) Evaluating, annually the administration of a VHA Central Office LEAD Program in collaboration with WMC ensuring that is equivalent to the VISN and Facility LEAD Program and is in compliance with nationally-approved criteria.

(2) Serving as the point of contact for communication with the HTM Office and VHA LEAD Program Manager.

(3) Coordinating in partnership with stakeholders, the provision of VHA's Mentor Coach Training for LEAD mentors, and encouraging VHA Mentor Coach Certification in collaboration with WMC and HTM.

e. **Employee Education System (EES)**. EES is responsible for:

(1) Providing educational and evaluation consultation as it links to the VA Competency Model.

(2) Providing consultation specifically for the VHA National Mentor Coach Training.

(3) Ensuring the educational content for the "VHA Mentor Coach Training."

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(4) Ensuring the National Program roll-out of Train the Trainer (TTT) Mentor Coach Training.

(5) Providing content for “Core Training” facilitators.

(6) Ensuring these facilitators have attended a national TTT sessions.

(7) Evaluating national TTT sessions.

(8) Reviewing and approving, in concert with the MCAB, the use of content and material submitted as equivalent to or in lieu of currently defined “Core Training.”

(9) Updating educational content on the Core Mentor Coach SharePoint site.

(10) Serving as a national liaison for leadership development on national LEAD work groups and initiatives.

f. **Mentor Certification Advisory Board (MCAB).** The MCAB is responsible for:

(1) Overseeing the national VHA mentor certification initiative.

(2) Collaborating with the EES and the HTM Office.

g. **Chief Officers.** VHA Chief Officers are responsible for:

(1) Marketing leadership development opportunities co-sponsored by WMC and VALU.

(2) Nominating experienced staff to serve as mentors.

(3) Ensuring certification of VHA Mentor Coach.

(4) Nominating senior staff to serve as faculty and project champions for LEAD programs.

h. **VISN Directors.** The VISN Directors are responsible for:

(1) Designating a point of contact, known as the VISN LEAD Coordinator to administer the VISN LEAD Program and coordinate distribution of program objectives and national guidance to Facility LEAD Coordinators.

(2) Ensuring the national criteria for VISN and Facility LEAD programs are met.

i. **VISN LEAD Coordinators.** VISN LEAD Coordinators are responsible for:

(1) Annually evaluating, the administration of a VISN LEAD Program to ensure compliance with nationally-approved criteria.

(2) Serving as the VISN's point of contact for Facility LEAD Coordinators, ensuring alignment of core learning objectives between VISN and Facility LEAD programs.

(3) Serving as the point of contact for communication between the VISN and the VHA HTM Office.

(4) Serving as the Sub-Administrator for VHA Leadership and Workforce Development (VHALWD) systems, CMS, and PDP applications.

(5) Ensuring that all VISN LEAD participants are entered into and maintained in CMS.

(6) Coordinating the provision of VHA's Mentor Coach Training for LEAD mentors, and encouraging VHA Mentor Coach Certification.

(7) Requesting 180 and/or 360 assessments through NCOD for each VISN LEAD class.

j. **Facility Director.** Each facility Director is responsible for:

(1) Designating a point of contact, known as the Facility LEAD Coordinator to administer the LEAD Program.

(2) Ensuring the national criteria for Facility LEAD programs are met. **NOTE:** *Nationally-approved criteria are categorized as: Strategic Needs Assessment; Program Design; Selection Process; Program Evaluation; Leadership Support; and Reward and Recognition, and are defined at <http://vaww.htm.wmc.va.gov/Programs/lead/default.aspx>. This is an internal Web site and is available only to program participants.*

k. **Facility LEAD Coordinator.** The Facility LEAD Coordinator is responsible for:

(1) Evaluating, annually, the administration of the facility LEAD Program in compliance with nationally-approved criteria.

(2) Communicating with the VISN LEAD Coordinator ensuring alignment of core learning objectives between VISN and Facility LEAD programs.

(3) Serving as the point of contact for communication between the VISN and the VHA HTM Office.

(4) Serving as the Sub-Administrator for the VHALWD, CMS, and PDP systems.

(5) Ensuring that all Facility LEAD participants are entered into and maintained in CMS.

(6) Coordinating the provision of VHA's Mentor Coach Training for LEAD mentors, and encouraging VHA Mentor Coach Certification.

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(7) Requesting 180 and/or 360 assessments through NCOD for each Facility LEAD class, if appropriate.

l. **Facility Core Mentor Coach Facilitator.** The facility Core Mentor Coach Facilitator is responsible for:

(1) Providing VHA's core apprentice level mentor coach training to perspective mentors in workforce development programs.

(2) Reporting scheduled "Core Training" sessions to the HTM office at the following e-mail address: [VHAMentorCertificationProgramManager@va.gov](mailto:VHAMentorCertificationProgramManager@va.gov).

(3) Downloading and reproducing the participant manual and other class materials using the Core Mentor Coach Trainer Curriculum SharePoint:  
[http://vaww.succession.va.gov/Employee\\_Development/MC/MC\\_Cert\\_Curr/default.aspx](http://vaww.succession.va.gov/Employee_Development/MC/MC_Cert_Curr/default.aspx).

(4) Regularly checking Mentor Coach SharePoint site for updates.

(5) Maintaining local participant records.

(6) Serving as the liaison to the local education team (i.e., DLO, Education Council, Education Contacts, etc.) to schedule training events.

(7) Evaluating training.

(8) Providing certificates or proof of course completion to participants.

m. **Facility Workforce Planner.** The facility Workforce Planner is responsible for:

(1) Monitoring strategic leadership development needs.

(2) Reporting actions taken to enhance the leadership succession pipeline to the appropriate VISN LEAD Coordinator.

## 5. REFERENCES

a. U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) Human Capital: Selected agencies have Opportunities to Enhance Existing Succession Planning and management Efforts (June 2005 Publication No. GAO-05-585).

b. LEAD Program Criteria and Resources found at:  
<http://vaww.htm.wmc.va.gov/Programs/lead/default.aspx> **NOTE:** *This is an internal Web site and is available only to program participants.*

c. Core Mentor and/or Coach Certification Program:  
[http://vaww.succession.va.gov/Employee\\_Development/MC/default.aspx](http://vaww.succession.va.gov/Employee_Development/MC/default.aspx) . *NOTE: This is an internal Web site and is not available to the public.*

**6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** VHA WMC (10A2A) is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to [VHALEADProgramManager@va.gov](mailto:VHALEADProgramManager@va.gov) or 412-954-4934.

**7. RESCISSIONS:** None. This VHA Directive expires May 31, 2017.

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Under Secretary for Health

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