

**UNDER SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR
OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH**

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures related to nomination and selection for the "Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research."
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** None.
- 3. RELATED DIRECTIVES.** VHA Directive 1204.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The Office of Research and Development, Health Services Research and Development Service is responsible for the contents of this VHA Handbook. Questions may be addressed at 202-443-5790.
- 5. RESCISSIONS.** VHA Handbook 1204.4 dated September 11, 2008, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION.** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of August 2018.

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1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook describes procedures related to nomination and selection for the “Under Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research.” **AUTHORITY:** Title 38 United States Code 7303.

2. BACKGROUND: The “Under Secretary’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research” was established in 1998 in recognition of the importance of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Services Research Program and its vital link to the health care of Veterans and the public. VHA annually invites nominations for this award in recognition of the highest level of achievement in health services research. A committee convened by the Health Services Research and Development Service (HSR&D) reviews all nominations and recommends one VA investigator as the awardee to the Under Secretary for Health for approval.

3. HSR&D AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE: The HSR&D Award Review Committee is appointed by the Director, HSR&D and comprised of experienced health services researchers with and without a VA affiliation. The committee includes the chairman of HSR&D’s Scientific Merit Review Board, a member of HSR&D’s Career Development Review Group, and others familiar with health services research, VA priorities, and HSR&D goals.

4. AWARD CRITERIA: The HSR&D Award Review Committee receives and reviews the nominations, based on the following criteria:

a. The candidate’s research has led to a major improvement in the quality of Veterans’ health care or has added significantly to the understanding of factors that affect the health of America’s Veterans;

b. The candidate has made a substantive contribution to the future of VA health services research by inspiring a new generation of investigators and has demonstrated excellence in training and mentorship of new investigators; and

c. The candidate has enhanced the visibility and reputation of VA research through national leadership in the research community.

5. ELIGIBILITY: Each facility may nominate one candidate, who must be employed by VA with at least a 5/8 full-time equivalency appointment. The research contribution leading to the nomination must have been carried out in VA, and it must relate clearly to VA’s research mission. For additional information refer to:

http://www.hsr.d.research.va.gov/for_researchers/awards/under_secretary/.

6. DESCRIPTION OF AWARD: Awardees receive a \$5,000 cash award and an inscribed plaque commemorating the awardee’s achievement. In addition, the awardee’s facility receives \$50,000 per year for up to 3 years to support the awardee’s research, provided that the awardee is

the recipient of a currently-funded, nationally peer-reviewed research project (VA Merit Review, or non-VA research support). The award is presented at a national meeting.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH: The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for approving the nomination. At the national ceremony, the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, is responsible for presenting the award to the honored researcher and to the Director of the sponsoring VA facility.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHIEF R&D OFFICER (CRADO): The CRADO, or designee, is responsible for:

a. Approving the selection of the nominee and submitting VA Form 4659, Incentive Award Recommendation and Approval, to the Under Secretary for Health for approval.

b. Notifying, in writing, the nominee's VA facility Director, when the nomination is approved.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR, HSR&D: The Director, HSR&D, or designee, is responsible for:

a. Appointing the HSR&D Award Review Committee.

b. Reviewing and forwarding the nomination packet for the candidate selected by the HSR&D Award Review Committee to the CRADO for approval.

c. Ensuring presentation of the award at an appropriate national, and public venue.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HSR&D AWARD REVIEW COMMITTEE: The HSR&D Award Review Committee is responsible for evaluating all nominations and recommending one candidate, based on the specified review criteria, to the Director, HSR&D. If no candidate meets the established criteria for this award, no award will be given.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VA CENTRAL OFFICE (VACO) HSR&D PROGRAM COORDINATOR: The VACO HSR&D Program Coordinator is responsible for:

a. Announcing to the field the opportunity to nominate a candidate for the Under Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Services Research, specifying the due date for complete nomination packages, and identifying the alignment of this award program with the VHA Strategic Plan.

b. Providing guidance for preparing the nomination package.

c. Convening the HSR&D Award Review Committee.

d. Ensuring that all nominations receive both administrative and scientific review.

- e. Obtaining the appropriate concurrences and approvals.
- f. Arranging the presentation of the award.

12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY DIRECTOR: The facility Director is responsible for recommending the facility's candidate to the Director, HSR&D, through the Veterans Integrated Services Network Director.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (R&D) COMMITTEE: The facility R&D Committee evaluates the merits of all candidates proposed by the VA medical facility and recommends one candidate to the VA facility Director.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF STAFF (ACOS) FOR R&D: The ACOS for R&D is responsible for ensuring that all required documentation accompanies the nomination letter from the VA facility Director and that the complete nomination package is submitted to HSR&D for receipt by the due date specified in the call for nominations.

14 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (AO) FOR R&D: The facility AO for R&D, at the nominee's VA facility, facilitates payment of:

- a. A one-time cash award of \$5,000 to the honoree.
- b. \$50,000 per year for up to 3 years, as specified in the award, to support the awardee's research provided that the awardee is the recipient of a currently-funded, nationally peer-reviewed research project (VA Merit Review, or non-VA research support).