

**THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART
OF THE U.S.A., INC.**



Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service

**VAVS MOPH Handbook
2007-2008**

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Purpose and Scope

This handbook is based on VA regulations governing implementation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program in effect throughout the VA medical center system. VAVS operates the largest volunteer program in the Federal Government, supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support. As a VAVS Representative, or Deputy Representative, you assume the responsibility of being knowledgeable about the rules, regulations, policies and programs of the VA Health Care System.

The guidelines contained herein are intended to assist those individuals serving as volunteers to supplement the essential personnel, equipment, facilities and programs for the direct and indirect care, treatment and welfare of veteran patients. Specific problems relating to details of volunteer work site must be discussed with the Chief of Voluntary Service at the VA medical center.

A comprehensive list of References (to VA rules and regulations) governing VAVS policies and procedures is included in the handbook appendix.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized to accept uncompensated services of persons, as deemed appropriate. VAVS volunteers are covered under this provision, and are considered WOC (without compensation) employees, which precludes monetary payments, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy. Volunteers (individuals or groups) are not permitted to participate in, or conduct a program for, patients in a VA facility independent of VA direction, control and supervision.

Regularly scheduled volunteers participate in a VAVS program on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision. Acceptance of volunteers into the program is determined by meeting criteria established by the facility. Frequency of volunteer service is determined locally.

Volunteer service by physicians, dentists, nurses and other professionally licensed persons to assume full responsibility for professional services in their respective fields may be accepted under certain circumstances. All such volunteer services must be approved in advance by the facility Chief of Staff, subject to applicable credentialing and privileging procedures as set forth in VHA Handbook 1100.19.

VA-compensated employees may serve as VAVS volunteers, if their volunteer assignments are unrelated to their employment assignments, and are outside their normal working hours.

Compensated employees of non-VA organizations may also serve as volunteers. Veterans Service Officers representing veterans' claims, however, are prohibited from serving as VAVS volunteers.

The Voluntary Service Program manager may remove a VAVS volunteer for unsatisfactory performance, or violation of established policy and/or procedures. Volunteers serving on a WOC basis are within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act when working within the scope of their assignments. They are also subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (Title 5, USC 552a, 38 USC, Sections 5101 and 7332).

Recruitment of Volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers is the responsibility of the participating organizations, and each MOPH member should work at it on a daily basis through their VAVS representatives. Volunteers can be from all walks of life, and are not limited to our members. We should look to youth groups, i.e., Boy Scouts and 4H groups, as a great resource for volunteers. VA staff also has the responsibility to assist the organizations in their recruitment efforts. Representatives will provide volunteers through their organizations, according to the needs of VA staff.

Voluntary Service staff members effectively assist organizations' recruitment efforts by determining worthwhile volunteer assignments, preparing effective volunteer assignment guides and utilizing the media to enhance recruitment efforts of the organizations.

Classification of Volunteers

RS volunteers are those volunteers with a specific assignment who serve on a regularly scheduled basis. A formal orientation is required for these volunteers, who are considered "without compensation" employees. Their hours of service are recorded, and service awards are presented, accordingly.

All other volunteers, serving either through VAVS organizations or independently, are designated occasional volunteers. Their organization receives credit for service given, rather than individually, as are RS volunteers.

Training of Volunteers

Voluntary Service staff will provide a formal orientation to all individuals wishing to become regularly scheduled (RS) volunteers. This process includes an orientation film or an overview provided by VA staff, and a personal interview to determine a mutually satisfactory volunteer assignment. The assignment supervisor will provide additional orientation in the specific assignment to which the volunteer has been assigned, and necessary on-the-job instruction.

Supervision of Volunteers

The regularly scheduled volunteer receives multiple, but not conflicting, supervision. There is the supervision exercised by the VAVS Representative of the parent organization, as well as general supervision by the Voluntary Service staff. Finally, there is supervision by the VA staff in the work assignment area.

Recognition of Volunteers

Every April, during National Volunteer Week, each VAHCS medical center sponsors a Volunteer Recognition and Awards Ceremony to reward the volunteers for their crucial service. Individual awards are based on the number of cumulative hours each recipient has served through the preceding fiscal year. Following is a list of established VAVS awards that may be earned by a volunteer:

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| 50-Hour Youth | Pin | 3,750-Hour Award | Pin |
| 100-Hour Award | Pin | 5,000-Hour Award | Pin |
| 150-Hour Youth | Pin | 6,250-Hour Award | Pin |
| 300-Hour Award | Pin | 7,500-Hour Award | Pin |
| 300-Hour Youth | Pin | 8,750-Hour Award | Pin |
| 500-Hour Award | Pin | 10,000-Hour Award | Pin |
| 750-Hour Award | Pin | 12,500-Hour Award | Pin |
| 1,000-Hour Award | Pin | 15,000-Hour Award | Pin |
| 1,750-Hour Award | Pin | 17,500-Hour Award | Pin |
| 2,500-Hour Award | Pin | 20,000-Hour Award | James H. Parke Achievement Award (Silver Tray) |
| 20,000 Hours Plus | VA Secretary's Volunteer Service Award (Certificate and Pin with Diamond) | | |
| 25,500-Hour Award | Certificate | | |

Volunteers who have previously earned the 1,000-Hour Award Pin, and have served at least 100 hours during the current fiscal year, will be issued the Certificate for Hours and Years, which will show the total number of hours and years served. This award will not be given during the years in which the volunteer qualifies for an already established award.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart, U.S.A., Inc., has a National Award Certificate for Outstanding Volunteers. The Department and/or Chapter Commander should forward recommendations for this award to the National VAVS Director/Representative no later than 1 June of each year.

Services and Benefits Available to Volunteers

Meals may be furnished without charge to volunteers, provided their scheduled assignment is at least four hours long, and/or the value of the service is commensurate with the value of the meal. Meals may be provided to others at the discretion of the facility director.

Temporary available quarters may be furnished to volunteers at no charge, in case of an emergency. Facilities will make every effort to provide parking without charge for regularly scheduled volunteers.

Transportation for volunteers, whose presence at the VA facility is considered necessary for complete medical and hospital service, may be provided by the facility. Necessary transportation can be furnished by means of commercial or government conveyance.

Identification badges must be issued to all volunteers by the VA facility.

Medical Treatment: Volunteers are considered WOC employees, and are provided health services in accordance with established policy for employees, as outlined in MP-5, Part 1, and Chapter 792.

Use of VA Facility Services by volunteers is determined locally.

Compensation Benefits: All VAVS volunteers are considered employees for the purpose of compensation benefits, as provided under the injury compensation laws (see Title 5, U.S.C, Chapter 81). Any volunteer injured in the course of his/her assigned duties will be authorized medical services by the Office of Workmen's Compensation (see MP-5, Part 1, Chapter 810).

Recognition: It is the policy of the VAVS to provide appropriate recognition for contributions of the VAVS volunteers, and their organizations, to the VAVS program.

Volunteer Transportation Network

The Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) was established to provide needed transportation for veterans seeking services from a VA facility and/or authorized facility. VTN guidelines permit volunteer participation in providing transportation to veterans, using a volunteer's privately-owned conveyance or a government-owned vehicle, including donated vehicles, county vehicles, DAV Department (State) or Chapter (local) vehicles, public transportation and contracted transportation.

The VA authorizes volunteer participation in providing transportation to veterans seeking VA services at VA medical facilities and offices for veterans and caregivers, when medically indicated, who have no other means of transportation. VTN drivers are regularly scheduled volunteers whose assignment is specifically stated as providing transportation to veterans in the community. A VTN driver may utilize his/her personal vehicle in the process of escorting

veterans to and from VA facilities, and provide this service without compensation from the VA, the veteran patient and/or a service organization, with the possible exception of out-of-pocket expenses.

Transportation Volunteer Drivers must meet the following criteria:

- a) Provide proof of safe driving record, a valid driver's license, and current motor vehicle bodily injury liability and property damage, or personal insurance. The volunteer must inform the Hospital Service coordinator of any moving violations, traffic accidents, expiration of automobile insurance, and/or any other pertinent information throughout the volunteer's term of service.
- b) Sign the waiver of compensation on the VA Form 10-7055, Application for Voluntary Service.
- c) Receive required employee physicals and health screenings that parallel the standards of wage-grade van drivers at the local facility.
- d) Complete a volunteer orientation with the Chief of Volunteer Service.
- e) Receive all training required by the Voluntary Service, Engineering Service, Police and Security Service, Health Administration Service [or an equivalent office], Fiscal Service, Social Work Service and other services deemed appropriate.
- f) Provide a vehicle in good working condition (with proper vehicle registration and up-to-date state inspection, wherever applicable), when using a personal vehicle to transport VA patients.

Detailed information regarding responsibilities of, and benefits available to, the volunteer driver, and governmental liability in this program, is found in VA Handbook 1620.2, Appendix E.

The VAVS Committee

Each VA medical facility has a VAVS Committee made up of organizations whose members participate in the VAVS for the benefit of veteran patients. Each member organization may certify one representative, and up to three deputy representatives, to serve on the medical facility's VAVS Committee. When an organization has out-of-state members serving as volunteers in a VA medical facility, one VAVS associate representative and one VAVS associate deputy representative may be certified from that outside state.

The VAVS representative/deputy certification is the responsibility of the National Certifying Official, the MOPH and National VAVS Director/Representative for our organization, based on local, chapter and department officials' recommendations. (See sample request letter enclosed.) The chosen representatives must live within commuting distance of the medical facility. If the organization is not represented by the VAVS representative and/or a deputy representative, at three consecutive meetings, that organization will be deleted from the rolls of the VAVS committee.

VAVS Representative Responsibilities

- a) Know the purposes, policies, operating procedures, resources and capabilities of his/her organization, and interpret them to VA staff and other committee representatives
- b) Be able to interpret to his/her organization the purpose of the VAVS program, and the role of the organization in carrying out that purpose
- c) Be able to devote sufficient time and effort to carry out his/her share of committee work
- d) Be recognized by the organization as its official liaison with the medical facility in all aspects of the VAVS program

VAVS Deputy Representative Responsibilities

Working as a full service partner of the VAVS representative, the deputy acts for the representative in the latter's absence. As a full working partner, the deputy

- a) Attends all meeting of the VAVS Committee
- b) Participates in committee discussions
- c) Assists in the completion of the Annual Joint Review
- d) Serves on subcommittees, as requested by the VAVS Committee Chair. The deputy representative does not have a vote on the committee unless acting for, and in the absence of, the representative.

Out-of-state VAVS Representatives

An organization with an associate representative and a deputy associate representative (out-of-state VAVS members participating at a medical facility) depend upon them to develop and coordinate the volunteer service of members from the adjoining state. The associate representative is a full-voting member of the VAVS Committee, and the deputy associate representative is authorized to act in the associate representative's absence.

VAVS Committee Membership, Meetings and Minutes

It is VHA policy that each fiscal year all VHA facilities with VAVS Committees must have a minimum of four scheduled meetings. The Facility Director, or designee, is responsible for calling a minimum of four scheduled meetings each fiscal year. The VAVS Committee Chairperson may schedule additional meetings. *NOTE: Volunteer recognition programs or ceremonies are not to be counted as a meeting.*

A printed agenda will be prepared for each meeting. Minutes will be recorded for each meeting as a narrative summary. Succinct headings and subheadings will be used throughout the minutes to facilitate future reference to subject matter discussed at the meeting. Verbatim minutes are not necessary; however, committee notions adopted or rejected should be

accurately stated. When members pass a motion requiring approval of the Facility Director, any appropriate follow-up needed, or accomplished, by the chairperson must be noted.

The header of all minutes will include the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility name and number, mailing address, zip code and date of meeting. It will also list the direct commercial telephone numbers (including the extension number) of the Voluntary Service Office and fax machine; the name of the Facility Director, and the name of the Voluntary Service Program Manager, if available.

The opening paragraph must contain the name and title of the VA official chairing the meeting, and should be followed by a listing of the names and titles of VA staff members present. The last narrative item is to be a statement of the date of the next meeting. The minutes are to be signed by the VAVS Committee Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

The first attachment to the minutes is to be an organizational Cumulative Attendance Listing. This listing has a cumulative basis, and is to reflect each member organization's attendance percentage (not the individual person's attendance percentage) based upon the actual number of local meetings held to-date during the fiscal year. **NOTE:** *An organization is counted as attending a meeting if certified representation is present, or if their representatives received an excused absence when the VAVS Committee meeting conflicts with their presence at their affiliated organization's state or national convention.*

Organizations are removed from the cumulative attendance listing after three consecutive meetings occur with no certified representation present. Individual representatives will likewise be removed from the listing after being absent for three consecutive meetings. Because honorary representatives do not have voting authority, their attendance does not accrue to organizational attendance.

Within 30 workdays of the meeting, one copy of the minutes must be mailed to each of the VAVS Committee and appropriate staff, and one copy to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2). Activity schedules, subcommittee reports or other attachments may accompany the minutes as attachments. The Voluntary Service Office will also ensure that the National VAVS certifying official receives a copy within 30 days. The local MOPH VAVS representative will ensure a copy is sent to his chapter commander and department commander, or VAVS officer.

It is the responsibility of the Director, Voluntary Service Office, to ensure the stipulations of this VHA Directive (2001-043) are met.

Annual Joint Review Process

The Annual Joint Review Process is conducted to assess an organization's participation in the VAVS programs during the preceding year, and to develop plans and goals for the next year. It is VHA policy that VAVS provide and document an annual opportunity for the organization's representatives and the Voluntary Service Program Manager to develop plans

that ensure active participation by the organization in programs for the welfare of veteran patients.

VHA Central Office Voluntary Service Office (10C2) periodically provides Voluntary Service Program Managers with updated listings of months that VAVS Advisory Committee member organizations are due for reviews. The review team consists of the organization's representative, deputy representative(s) and the Voluntary Service Program manager. A mutually agreeable date and time will be set during the month scheduled.

VA Form 10-1240, "VAVS Summary of Annual Joint Review," is used to summarize the work of the review team. All AJR summaries must be prepared, signed and distributed within 15 working days following completion of the review. The Voluntary Service Program Manager retains the original VA Form 10-1240. A photocopy must be sent to the VAVS National Representative, attached with VA Form 10-1240a, "Response to VAVS Summary Annual Joint Review." A second photocopy must be given to the local representative. *NOTE: VHA Central Office Voluntary Service (10C2) does not require a copy.*

If neither the Voluntary Service Program Manager, nor the organization's representatives, is able to schedule and complete an AJR within the designated month, the Voluntary Service Program Manager on VA Form 10-1240 to that effect must submit a report to all recipients cited in the preceding paragraph. *NOTE: This request for information is exempt from a Report Control Symbol (RCS) number under MP-1, Pt II, and Chapter 26.*

It is the responsibility of the Director, Voluntary Service Office, to ensure the stipulations of this VHA Directive (2001-040) are met.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart Report is due during the month of October. The MOPH representative should keep his copy of the report, and ensure that the Department Commander, or his staff officer, and the MOPH National VAVS Director and representatives receive a copy of the report.

When these reviews are completed, the VA Medical Center VAVS Representative and the Voluntary Service Chief, Manager or Specialist will sign them. The original will be sent to VA Central Office in Washington, D.C., with a copy sent to each organization's National VAVS certifying official, and to each Representative and Deputy. The National VAVS official will sign the bottom portion of the Annual Joint Review and return it. The final copy will be placed on file in the Office of Voluntary Service.

In instances when the Office of Voluntary Service is unable to arrange a meeting with the VAVS Representative, reviews can be conducted by telephone or mail. If Annual Joint Reviews are not completed, a negative report will be prepared.

VAVS Recognition for State Veterans Home Volunteers

In May 2001, the Executive Committee to the VAVS National Advisory Committee concurred with the recommendation of a VAVS *ad hoc* committee to develop procedures to formally recognize volunteers who provide service in SVHs. Although volunteers at SVHs are not VAVS volunteers, because they are not assigned or supervised by a VA employee, SVH volunteers will be allowed to receive VAVS recognition. The SVH is responsible for the management and legal liability of the SVH volunteers. All SVH administrators, VA networks, and VA facilities of jurisdiction for an SVH are to be notified of the recognition opportunity for SVH volunteers, by authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Responsibilities of VAVS

Establish a local Memorandum of Understanding between the SVH and the VA medical center of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition.

Develop assignment code(s) for volunteers in the SVH.

Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into the VAVS timekeeping system.

Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS awards system, combining these SVH hours with VAVS hours.

SVH Responsibilities

Establish a local Memorandum of Understanding between the SVH and the VA medical center of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition.

Inform SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by VA. If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information.

Forward a copy of the required information to the VAVS Program Manager.

Provide timekeeping data to the VA by the first workday of each month, i.e., name, date the volunteer worked, number of hours on each date, and affiliated organization.

Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

SVH Volunteer Responsibilities

Dual-appointment volunteers must make a request to participate in this program, Provide necessary information and authorize the SVH to share this with VAVS.

SVH volunteers must make the request to participate in the VAVS program, and authorize SVH management to share all necessary information with the VAVS program of jurisdiction.

Timekeeping

The timekeeping process for tracking the service of both SVH volunteers and dual-appointment volunteers will be established between the SVH and the VA medical center. The VA will, however, enter both SVH and dual-volunteers into its timekeeping system, using the appropriate codes for SVH volunteer, or dual-appointment volunteer, respectively.


Gifts and Donations


All requests for, and acknowledgements of, gifts and donations should be cleared through the Voluntary Service Office. This procedure pertains to VA personnel, individual donors and all organizations. Gifts and donations accepted through VAVS channels will be for the sole purpose of meeting particular needs and requirements of veteran patients. Always consult the Voluntary Service Office before bringing any items to the medical center to be sure that they are needed and can be used.

An organization must thoroughly understand the scope, ramifications and responsibilities of the specific volunteer project[s] it undertakes at a medical center. First and foremost, the best interests of the veterans and the voluntary service organization are the main concerns.

General Post Funds are accounts established at the medical center to support the needs of the veteran patients through volunteer donations. All contributions to the General Post Funds should be made out to VAHCS, and earmarked at the bottom of the check to the appropriate medical center and the appropriate Post Fund code.


Henry J. Cook III
National Commander


Joseph W. Palagyi
National Adjutant


Del "Bulldog" Turner
National VAVS Dir/Rep

Sample Letter for Requesting Appointments of VAVS, Representatives and Deputies

DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD

From: Commander Department of _____

To: National Certifying Official, Patriot David Bowman, 17738 Eagletown Road Westfield, IN 46704

SUBJECT: Request for Appointment of VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative

It is requested that the following Patriot[s] be appointed to serve at the Andrew Jackson VAMC 100 main Street Hometown, MI. 00123-4567:

Patriot's Full Name {If replacing a former Rep/Dep, provide name}
Home Address and ZIP
Home Telephone number
MOPH Life Membership number
Chapter number

Yours in Patriotism,

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER {ONLY}

Signature
Home address
Telephone number

Change (1) April 15, 2007

VHA References

- 1) VHA Directive 1620 15 April 1999
- 2) VHA Handbook 1620.1 19 July 2001
- 3) VHA Handbook 1620.2 2 May 2001
- 4) VHA Handbook 1620.3 23 November 2001
- 5) VHA Directive 2001-040 13 July 2001
- 6) VHA Directive 2001-041 13 July 2001
- 7) VHA Directive 2991-043 19 July 2001
- 8) VHA Directive 2001-065 13 November 2001
- 9) VHA Directive 2001-078 14 December 2001

Legal References and VA Documentation Sources:

- a) Title 5 USC Chapter 81, Compensation for Work Injuries
- b) Title 5 USC Chapter 5, Subchapter II, Section 552a, Records Maintained on Individuals
- c) Title 28 USC, Sections 1346(b) and 2671-2680, Federal Torts Claims Act
- d) Title 38 USC Chapter 5, Section 513, Contracts and Personal Services
- e) Title 38 USC Chapter 57, Section 5701, Confidential Nature of Claims
- f) Title 38 USC Chapter 73, Section 7332, Confidentiality of Certain Medical Records
- g) Title 38 USC Chapter 83, Section 8301, Authority to Accept Gifts, Devices and Bequests
- h) Public Law 92-463, Federal Advisory Committee Act
- i) Public Law 102-86, Section 504, Expansion of Authority to Accept Gifts, Bequests and Devices
- j) FPMR, Subchapter H, Property Utilization and Disposal
- k) MP-1, Part II, Chapter 3, Subparagraph 1e(1) and (2), Meals for Volunteers
- l) MP-1, Part II, Chapter 26, Reports Management
- m) MP-3, Part III, Section 32.30, Motor Vehicle Safety Program
- n) MP-5, Part I, Chapter 792, Health Services
- o) VA Directive 5810, Managing Workers' Compensation Cases and Costs
- p) M-1, Part I, Chapter 2, Quarters and Subsistence
- q) M-1, Part I, Chapter 25, Beneficiary Travel
- r) M-2, Part II, Chapter 5, Chaplain Service Administrative Policies
- s) VHA Directive 4721, General Post Fund
- t) Volunteer Management User Manual
- u) Opinion of General Counsel 4-65 (13 Oct 1965), Transportation of Volunteers
- v) RCS-10-1, VHA Records Control Schedule
- w) VA Handbook 4010, Agent Cashier Procedures
- x) OF Bulletin 00GA2.05, Award Payments for Residents, Without Compensation, Fee Basis, and Purchase and Hire Employees
- y) Opinion of General Counsel 6-99 (15 Apr 1999), Applicability of the Employee Recognition and Awards Program to Residents, and to Fee Basis, Without Compensation, and Purchase and Hire Employees.