

VAVS RECOGNITION FOR STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEERS

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook sets forth how Department of Veterans Voluntary Service (VAVS) recognizes volunteers in State Veterans Homes (SVH).
- 2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** This revision of VHA Handbook 1620.03 is a re-certification of the existing handbook. No policy revisions were necessary. The Handbook number was changed to correctly reflect 1620.03 instead of 1620.3.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES.** VHA Directive 1620, and VHA Handbook 1620.01.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) is responsible for the contents of this Handbook. Questions may be directed to (202) 273-8952.
- 5. RECISSIONS.** VHA Handbook 1620.3, dated November 23, 2001, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION.** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for re-certification on or before the last working day of November 2012.

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VAVS RECOGNITION FOR STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEERS

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Offices at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities in recognizing volunteers for their service to veterans receiving care at State Veterans Homes (SVHs).

2. BACKGROUND

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 a SVH. Although volunteers at SVH are not VAVS volunteers because they are not assigned or supervised by a VA employee, SVH volunteers are allowed to receive VAVS recognition. The SVH is responsible for the management and legal liability of the SVH volunteers. All SVH administrators, VA Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), and VA facilities of jurisdiction for a SVH are to be notified of the recognition opportunity for SVH volunteers.

3. AUTHORITY

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has given VAVS the authority for SVH volunteers to be recognized for their service to veterans.

4. DEFINITIONS

a. **SVH Volunteer.** A SVH Volunteer is an individual who volunteers at a SVH under the management and supervision of SVH personnel.

b. **VAVS Volunteer.** A VAVS volunteer is an individual who volunteers in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled (RS) assignment under the management and supervision of VA personnel, and who is appointed as a without compensation (WOC) employee.

c. **Dual-Appointment (SVH-VA) Volunteer.** A dual-appointment volunteer is an individual who volunteers both at a SVH and at a VHA facility.

d. **VA Volunteer Assigned to SVH.** An individual in the VAVS program whose VA assignment is located at a SVH and who is considered under the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) and injury compensation laws (see Title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 81).

e. **Recognition.** Recognition consists of the following: *NOTE: Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgment and the sense of belonging to the health care team.*

(1) **Certificates.** Certificates used to recognize SVH volunteer hours for the current award year.

(2) **VAVS Awards.** Dual-appointment volunteers will be recognized for the cumulative hours served at both the SVH and VA.

NOTE: Credit toward Certificates and VAVS Awards will not be awarded for service prior to the date of the MOU between the SVH and the VA medical center.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY VAVS

It is the responsibility of VAVS to:

- a. Establish a local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SVH and the VA medical center of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see App. A).
- b. Utilize the appropriate assignment code(s) for volunteers in SVH (found in the Voluntary Service System (VSS) Timekeeping Computer System; use 270A, B, C, D, or E).
- c. Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into the VAVS timekeeping system.
- d. Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.
- e. Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS awards system, combining these SVH hours with VAVS hours.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SVH

It is the responsibility of the SVH to:

- a. Establish a local MOU between the VA facility of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see App. A).
- b. Inform SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by VA. If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information (see App. B).
- c. Forward a copy of required information to the facility VAVS Program Manager.
- d. Provide timekeeping data to the facility VAVS by the first work day of each month, i.e., name, date the volunteer worked, number of hours on each date, and affiliated organization.
- e. Develop a mutually-agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

7. SVH VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

8. 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. VA will, however, enter both SVH and dual-volunteers into its timekeeping system using the appropriate codes for SVH volunteers or dual-appointment volunteers respectively (see App. B). This requires , at a minimum, the following information:

- a. The volunteer's name,
- b. The volunteer's address, and
- c. The volunteer's organizational affiliation, if any.

**SAMPLE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN A STATE
VETERANS HOME (SVH) AND A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS (VA) FACILITY**

1. Purpose. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the responsibilities of the _____(Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Facility)_____ and ____ (Name)____ State Veterans Home, for recognition of State Veterans Home (SVH) volunteers who provide volunteer service to veterans receiving care in SVH.

2. Responsibilities of SVHs. The SVH is responsible for:

a. Informing SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information (see App. C).

b. Forwarding a copy of this information to the facility VAVS Program Manager.

c. Providing timekeeping data to the facility VAVS by the first work day of each month, i.e., dates the volunteer worked and the number of hours on each date.

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

3. Responsibilities of VAVS. It is the responsibility of the facility VAVS staff to:

a. Utilize the appropriate assignment code(s) for volunteers in SVH (found in the VSS Timekeeping Computer System; use 270A, B, C, D, or E).

b. Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into the VAVS Timekeeping System (VSS).

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

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

