**January 28, 2010** 

## THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN VA COMMUNITY LIVING CENTERS

- **1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice announces the establishment of the Under Secretary for Health's Award for Innovation in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Living Centers (CLCs).
- **2. BACKGROUND:** This annual award honors a VA CLC interdisciplinary team and a single individual who exhibit the highest standards of excellence, dedication, and accomplishment in transforming the culture of a VA CLC.
- a. VA CLCs have a long standing history of providing excellent quality of care to Veterans and being a national leader in transforming the culture of care in nursing homes. VA's commitment to patient-centered care and the evolving challenges facing CLCs provide an opportune time to engage in a deliberative effort to move this initiative even farther.
- b. This annual award recognizes the efforts of one VA CLC interdisciplinary team and one individual who demonstrate innovation in the approach to care that stewards human and financial resources responsibly, nurtures the spirit of the Veterans served, and improves the quality of care and quality of life provided in a VA CLC.
  - c. Nominations for both interdisciplinary team and individual awards are solicited annually.
- d. A committee, appointed by the Chief Consultant, Geriatrics and Extended Care, reviews all nominations to determine eligibility and recommends a selection for an individual and group award to the Under Secretary for Health. *NOTE:* Facilities are encouraged to nominate non-traditional leaders and direct care providers for the individual award.
  - d. The award for the individual recipient is a plaque and a personal cash award of \$2,000.
- e. The award for the team recipients is a team plaque and a cash award of \$10,000 to go toward further efforts to improve the care of Veterans in the awarded facility.
  - f. Facilities may nominate both a team and an individual for this award.
  - g. All current VHA CLC care units and staff are eligible for this award.
- **3. AREAS OF RECOGNITION:** Contributions may be in one or more of the following areas.
- a. <u>Workplace Practices.</u> Workplace practices includes activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, and individuals whose labor and efforts impacts:
- (1) The relationships between all people related to the CLC (including management, staff, professional disciplines, Veterans, and families); or

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- (2) The way staff perform, conceptualize, or manage their work.
- b. **Environment of Care.** Environment of care includes decoration, construction, and renovation or design of space or environment that creates:
- (1) A true home environment honoring the human need for connection, privacy, and decision making by the Veteran; and
- (2) A forward-looking, innovative environment that informs and guides staff towards the patient-centered care delivery system.
- c. <u>Care Practices.</u> Care practices includes activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, and individuals whose labor and efforts impacts:
  - (1) The Veteran's choice and decision-making ability over their own care; and
- (2) Innovations in clinical practice in all aspects of medical care, routines, and operational functions.
- d. <u>Leadership Practices.</u> Leadership practices includes activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, and individuals whose labor and efforts impact:
- (1) The sharing of power and decision-making responsibilities among different staff and disciplines;
  - (2) The empowerment of non-traditional leaders;
  - (3) The opportunity for all staff to develop leadership and management skills; and
- (4) The transformation from a silo, hierarchical management structure to a flat, innovative, management structure where all employees are invested and empowered.
- e. <u>Government and Community Relationships</u>. Government and community relationships include activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, and individuals whose labor and efforts impact the promotion of valuable partnerships between government or community agencies and the VA CLC.
- **4. CRITERIA:** The criteria to be considered in competing for each year's award includes, but is not limited to:
- a. The significance, originality, effectiveness, approach, and applicability of contributions in the transformation of the culture of VA CLC care;
  - b. The scope of contributions, and
  - c. The impact of contributions on CLC residents, families, and staff.

- **5. NOMINATION PACKAGE:** The nomination package must include the following for both the interdisciplinary team and individual award:
- a. A letter of nomination from a supervisor, co-workers, or VHA colleagues including a detailed summary of the nominee(s) contributions and the impact of those contributions.
  - b. Concurrence by the immediate Supervisor, facility Director, and Network Director.
- c. A description of the nominee(s) current job duties and responsibilities, or other summary of education, training, and work history.
  - d. A completed nomination application.

**NOTE:** Employees may obtain a copy of the Nomination Application and Package Checklist from the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, or download these from the GEC Web site, <a href="http://vaww.va.gov/gec">http://vaww.va.gov/gec</a>

## 6. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

- a. The original copy of the complete nomination package must be sent to: The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (114), Veterans Health Administration, 810 Vermont Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20420.
  - b. The nomination package must be received by March 15 of each year.
- c. The nomination package may be submitted by interoffice mail, regular mail, express mail or electronically. *NOTE:* Facsimile submissions will not be accepted.
- **6. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care in the Office of Patient Care Services is responsible for the contents of this Notice. For additional information, contact the GEC office at 202-461-6750.
- **7. RESCISSION:** This VHA Notice expires the last day of January 2015.

Gerald M. Cross, MD, FAAFP Acting Under Secretary for Health

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