



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**Veterans Health Administration**  
**Washington DC 20420**

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**March 13, 2012**

**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER**

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S AWARD  
FOR INNOVATION IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) COMMUNITY  
LIVING CENTERS**

1. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Information Letter announces that nominations are being solicited for the annual Under Secretary for Health's Award for Innovation in VA Community Living Centers (CLC). Each year, one individual and one interdisciplinary team are recognized for exhibiting the highest standards of excellence, dedication, and accomplishment in transforming the culture of a VA CLC.
2. VA CLCs have a long standing history of providing excellent quality of care to Veterans and for being a national leader in transforming the culture of care in nursing homes. VA's commitment to resident-centered care and the evolving challenges facing CLCs provide an opportune time to engage in a deliberative effort to move the CLC cultural transformation initiative even farther.
  - a. The award for the individual recipient is a plaque and a personal cash award of \$2,000. The award for the interdisciplinary team recipients is a team plaque and a cash award of \$10,000 to go toward further efforts to improve resident-centered care in the CLC of the awarded facility.
  - b. Facility staff may nominate both a team and an individual for this award. All current VHA CLCs and staff are eligible for this award. Nominees must be employed in a CLC.
  - c. An evaluation committee, appointed by the Chief Consultant for Geriatrics and Extended Care will review all nominations. The evaluation committee recommends final nominees through the Chief Consultant for Geriatrics and Extended Care to the Under Secretary for Health, who approves the final selection.
3. The attachment to this Information Letter lists the criteria for nominations and package submission. Inquiries may be directed to Dr. Christa Hojlo, Director, VA Community Living Centers, at (202) 461-6769.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

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ATTACHMENT A

CRITERIA FOR NOMINATIONS

**1. AREAS OF RECOGNITION:** Contributions may be in one or more of the following areas.

a. **Workplace Practices.** Workplace practices includes activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, consistent assignment, and individuals whose labor and efforts impact:

(1) The relationships between all people related to the CLC (including management, staff, professional disciplines, Veterans, and families); or

(2) The manner in which 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. **Care Practices.** Care practices includes activities, procedures, work designs, training, education, systems, and individuals whose labor and efforts impact:

(1) The Veteran's choice and decision-making ability over their own care; and

(2) Innovations in clinical practice in all aspects of medical and nursing care, routines, and operational functions.

d. **Leadership Practices.** 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. **Government and Community Relationships.** 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 VA CLCs.

**2. 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.

**3. NOMINATION PROCESS:**

a. The nomination must include the following for both the interdisciplinary team and individual award:

(1) 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, not to exceed three pages. Do not include attachments or addendums. A description of the nominee(s) job duties and responsibilities is not a requirement.

(2) A completed nomination application is available on the VA CLC SharePoint at <http://vaww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/geriatrics/CLC/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fsites%2fgeriatrics%2fCLC%2fShared%20Documents%2fUSH%20Award%2for%20Innovation%20in%20VA%20CLC&FolderCTID=&View=%7b69FC5291%2dDDA7%2d4357%2dB0E7%2d492F63408674%7d>. **NOTE:** *This is an Internal Web site and is not available to the public.*

b. Nominations must be sent through the facility Director and endorsed by the respective Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director. The nomination must be received by the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care by April 16, 2012.

c. Nominations sent through interoffice mail, regular mail, or express mail should be addressed to: Chief Consultant, Geriatrics and Extended Care, ATTN: Dr. Christa Hojlo (10P4G), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Nominations sent by email are preferred. Nominations should be sent to Dr. Christa Hojlo at [christa.hojlo@va.gov](mailto:christa.hojlo@va.gov). **NOTE:** *Facsimile submissions will not be accepted.*