

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

APR 12 2019

Memorandum

Date:

From: Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/Operations,
Security, and Preparedness (006)

Subj: Special Emphasis Program Observances Tool Kit (VIEWS 194643)

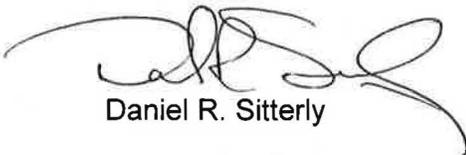
To: Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials

1. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) commemorates designated days, weeks, and months as reflected in the attached VA schedule of Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Observances for fiscal year (FY) 2019. Observances are held each year in compliance with Executive Order 11478, 29 CFR Part 1614.102(b)(4), joint Congressional Resolutions, Presidential Proclamations, and the VA's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) goals as articulated in the VA's D&I Strategic Plan for FY 2017-2020.

2. I strongly encourage all managers and supervisors to be on the forefront of these invaluable outreach and retention SEP observances by supporting activities and establishing strategic partnerships focused on addressing identified challenges faced by the group(s) the specific observance is focused on. The Department will benefit through participation by helping to address specific challenges, leading to increased participation in groups with historically low participation in the VA's workforce, higher retention of talented staff, and increased positive outcomes for Veterans health and benefits services. These activities directly support the goal to attain and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce. As leaders, we model the VA's Core Values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence through participation in activities related to these observances, in addition to demonstrating our commitment and belief in the value that each employee brings to the Department. Attached you will find a tool kit that will give guidance on preparing and planning a SEP and a SEP Event checklist.

3. Information about SEP observances may be found on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Web site at: <http://www.diversity.va.gov/calendar/default.aspx>. Each SEP has an ODI designated program manager who can answer your questions about specific observances and activities. These individuals may be contacted via email, at ODI's Web site or (202) 461-4131.

4. Thank you for your continued support towards SEP Observances.



Daniel R. Sitterly

Attachments