



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 9, 2019

Five VA employees named as finalists for Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals

WASHINGTON — Five employees from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) were recently announced as finalists for the annual [Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals](#), or Sammies, and will be recognized May 9 during a breakfast on Capitol Hill, as part of [Public Service Recognition Week](#).

The nonprofit [Partnership for Public Service](#), which created the awards program to highlight excellence in the federal workforce, honored the following VA employees for their noteworthy accomplishments: [Dr. Ann McKee](#), chief of Neuropathology at [VA Boston Healthcare System, Boston](#); [Victoria Brahm](#), medical center director at [Tomah VA Medical Center](#) (VAMC) in Wisconsin; and the [Veterans Benefits Administration](#) (VBA) team of [Paul Shute](#), VBA Chief of Operational Innovation in Washington, D.C., [Christopher Aragao](#), a supervisory Veterans service representative in Providence, Rhode Island, and [David Enright](#), a management analyst in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

“These great people, who benefit Veterans on a daily basis are rightly recognized as being among America’s best in government,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, who is scheduled to make remarks at the breakfast. “VA is humbled to have five employees who are being celebrated for their important achievements as part of the nation’s outstanding federal workforce.”

McKee is a Paul A. Volcker Career Achievement finalist. The Volcker medal recognizes a federal employee for leading significant and sustained accomplishments throughout a federal career of 20 or more years. McKee is highlighted for revolutionizing scientific research and understanding of the long-term effects of concussions, including chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

A Management Excellence Medal finalist, Brahm is cited for her work to improve the quality and safety at the Tomah VAMC by minimizing the number of unsafe medical practices, decreasing improper opioid use and improving the work environment.

Shute, Aragao and Enright, also Management Excellence Medal finalists, are being acknowledged for their teamwork in dramatically cutting the time and manpower needed to make decisions on service-related mental health claims for Veterans, helping tens of thousands of individuals each year receive their benefits faster.

The Management Excellence Medal recognizes a federal employee or team for a significant accomplishment that exemplifies efficient, effective and results-oriented government.

Each finalist is a contender for one of seven Service to America Medals. Recipients will be announced and honored Oct. 16 during an awards gala at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

###