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VA Secretary recognizes six nationwide for dedication, service to Veterans

WASHINGTON — Five nurses and a medical center director from across the Department of Veterans Affairs received top awards for their outstanding work advancing nursing programs.

VA Secretary Denis McDonough, in conjunction with National Nurses Month, awarded the following employees the [Secretary's Award for Excellence in Nursing and Advancement of Nursing Programs](#) for their dedication and work to improve health care services for Veterans:

- Maria VanHart, RN, CEN, [VA Southern Nevada Health care System](#), Las Vegas, Nevada – recognized for outstanding leadership, patient-centered care and cost-efficiency skills.
- Victoria Church RN, MS, CNS-BC, [VA Portland Health Care System](#), Portland, Oregon – recognized for her work on VA's [Office of Electronic Health Record Modernization](#) council.
- Nicole Snow, LPN, [VA Pittsburgh Health Care System](#), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – recognized for her work to improve the delivery of patient care and services.
- Jonathan Lowman, HT, [Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System](#), Little Rock, Arkansas – recognized for his work to reduce fall-related injuries among Veterans.
- Kelly A. Irving, MSN, RN, nurse executive, [Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center](#), Houston, Texas – recognized for her leadership skills, patient safety and quality promotion, and her work to improve nursing staffing shortages in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- John Rohrer, MHA, medical center director, [William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital](#), Madison, Wisconsin – recognized for the infusion of evidence-based practice initiatives in his organization.

“Over the past year, our incredible professionals have answered the call to serve,” said McDonough. “Our teammates, who have displayed superior performance throughout this challenging pandemic, not only cared for Veterans enrolled in our system, but stepped up to support [VA's Fourth Mission efforts to care for civilian patients in communities across the nation](#). In the face of uncertainty, they cared for our most vulnerable and saved lives.”

VA established the award in 1984 to honor its nurses and executives across the country. Learn about [VA career nursing opportunities](#).

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