

October 16, 2017

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S LINDA H. DANKO
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) notice announces the acceptance of nominations for the 2017 Under Secretary for Health's Linda H. Danko Award for Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control. Established in 2016, this award program recognizes and honors Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) employees who have demonstrated adherence to the highest standards of infection prevention and control in practice.

2. BACKGROUND: This award series was established to honor Linda H. Danko, RN, MSN, who dedicated 47 years of service to VHA's veteran population. Ms. Danko began her career as a staff nurse on the tuberculosis ward at the Cincinnati VA Medical Facility in 1965. From 1988 to 2013, Ms. Danko served as VHA's first National Clinical Programs Coordinator in the VHA National Infectious Diseases Service (NIDS). In this role, she was at the forefront of developing and championing VHA's infection prevention and control policies, guidance, outreach, and practice to improve the quality of care that VA medical facilities provide to Veterans. Ms. Danko's vision, commitment, and dedication were noteworthy during her tenure at VHA.

3. AWARDS: Three award categories were established in June 2016. This notice calls for nominations for one of the awards: Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control Award. **NOTE:** *The other two awards, Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control Frontline Practice Award and Lifetime Achievement Award in Infection Prevention and Control, are not slated for distribution this year.* The Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control Award honors a current VHA employee who functions in infection prevention and control (e.g., Infection Prevention and Control Professional or Multi-Drug Resistant Organism Prevention Coordinator) who has been actively engaged in the program either at the VA medical facility, Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN), or VHA Program Office level, and has demonstrated excellence as to garner recognition from his or her peers. **NOTE:** *More recent accomplishments are preferred. An individual may receive this award only once.*

4. AWARDS PRESENTATION: The individual selected for the Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control Award will receive a cash award of \$2,500.

5. SELECTION COMMITTEE: Each year, a selection committee, appointed by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, selects the award recipients.

a. The selection committee is comprised of at least a representative from the National Infectious Diseases Service, a representative from a non-affiliated program office within the Office of Specialty Care Services, a representative from the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services, a VA medical facility Director selected by the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management and who is not the Director at any of the nominees' duty stations; and, if available, the prior year's award recipient (after the first year the award is presented).

b. This selection committee is responsible for:

(1) Reviewing all nominations received and making a final recommendation to the Under Secretary for Health; and

(2) Recommending, at its discretion, appropriate recognition, such as letters congratulating nominees who were not chosen as the award recipient.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **The Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services will appoint a multidisciplinary evaluation committee to review all nominations for determination of suitable winners for each award.

b. **The Office of the National Infectious Diseases Services (NIDS).** The Office of NIDS is responsible for ensuring the following:

(1) Appropriate announcements calling for nominations for the award are distributed;

(2) This award is considered for announcing annually to honor and recognize those individuals for their excellence during the previous fiscal year;

(3) Confirmation is sent to the nominator upon receipt of each submission; and

(4) The names of suggested members for the multidisciplinary selection committee are provided to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Policy and Services for appointment to the selection committee.

7. NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES: Nomination and selection procedures for the Excellence in Infection Prevention and Control Award can be found in Appendix A. Network Offices and VHA Program Offices should submit an electronic copy of the nomination package to the National Infectious Diseases Service at DANKOAWARD@va.gov within 60 days after the issuance of this notice.

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8. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Director, National Infectious Diseases Service, is responsible for the content of this notice. Questions may be directed to the National Infectious Diseases Service by phone at 513-246-0270 or email at DANKOAWARD@VA.GOV.

9. RESCISSION: None. This VHA notice will expire on October 31, 2018. However, the information will remain in effect.

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Executive in Charge

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on October 19, 2017.

**NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE IN INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

1. Definition of Award: Annually honors an individual who functions in infection prevention and control at the VHA medical facility, Veteran Integrated Service Network (VISN) or Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Program Office level.

2. Eligibility: Any Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employee who functions in infection prevention and control (e.g., Infection Prevention and Control Professional or Multi-Drug Resistant Organism Prevention Coordinator) at a VHA medical facility, VISN or VHA Program Office is eligible to be nominated for this award.

3. Criteria: Each nominee must have demonstrated excellence in all of the following criteria:

a. **Strategic Planning.** Evidence that the nominee has significantly contributed to improving infection prevention and control, either locally, throughout the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), or throughout the VHA.

b. **Professional Development.** Evidence that the nominee has established and maintained a personal development plan to support professional career growth. Examples of this could include professional degrees, professional certifications, or participation in other educational activities.

c. **Interpersonal Effectiveness.** Evidence that the nominee has collaborated effectively with other health care colleagues, front line staff members, and is recognized by internal and external customers as a person who exemplifies the ability to build relationships with others either through trust, respect, or knowledge.

d. **Creative Thinking.** Evidence that the nominee has implemented evidence-based practice to adhere to infection prevention and control standards and improve health care outcomes, while also finding creative and innovative approaches to promote infection prevention and control practices by frontline staff members.

e. **Community Involvement/Service.** Evidence that the nominee has promoted the practice of infection prevention and control within the community by establishing relationships with non-VA counterparts (e.g., leadership in local, regional or national non-VA professional organizations or committees).

4. Nomination Procedures:

a. Any VA employee may nominate a current VHA employee who functions in infection prevention and control (e.g., Infection Prevention and Control Professional or Multi-Drug Resistant Organism Prevention Coordinator) by a written narrative to either the VA Medical Facility Director (for local VA medical facility nominees), the VISN Director (for VISN nominees), or VHA Program Office Director (for Central Office nominees) summarizing the basis of nomination. The narrative is limited to no more

than three single-spaced typed pages, using at least Arial 11-point font, and one inch margins. Each criterion listed in paragraph 3 of this Appendix must be addressed and stated as a header for each section. **NOTE:** *Do not use abbreviations, and define acronyms the first time they are used.*

b. The VA Medical Facility Director reviews all nominations and selects one nominee to forward to the VISN Director. **NOTE:** *This is only for local VA medical facility nominees.*

c. The VISN Director reviews all VHA medical facility and VISN nominations and selects one nominee to represent the VISN. For VHA Program Office nominations, the Program Office Director reviews all Program Office nominations and selects one nominee.

d. Each VISN Director and VHA Program Office Director forwards the nomination package for their selected nominee to the National Infectious Diseases Service, as specified in paragraph 7 of this notice. The nomination package shall include all of the following elements:

(1) A letter from the VISN Director or VHA Program Office Director summarizing the basis for the nomination.

(2) A written narrative of the nominee's achievements. The narrative is to conform to the requirements set forth in paragraph 3 and subparagraph 4a of this Appendix. **NOTE:** *VISN Director or VHA Program Office Director may choose to use the original nominating document submitted to him/her.*

(3) The nominee's current curriculum vitae, resume, or other summary of education, training, and work history.

(4) Letters of support (no more than three) outlining the nominee's contributions.