

Date: December 21, 2021

From: Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Operations (15)

Subj: Employee Deployment – Special Contribution Award (SCA) Guidance Update

To: Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors (10N1-23)

1. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employees continue to mobilize in support of COVID-19 response efforts across our Department of Veterans Affairs community and on Fourth Mission assignments with partners from our communities and other agencies. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide updated information for Special Contribution Awards (SCA) associated with employee deployments to support COVID-19 pandemic response efforts from December 20, 2021 – February 28, 2022, based on the current national COVID-19 conditions.
2. The current COVID-19 conditions include the detection of a new variant. The Omicron variant was identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The new variant has the potential for a rapid increase in infections in the United States. Individuals with Omicron infections can spread the virus, even if they are vaccinated and do not have symptoms. The Omicron variant is rapidly increasing the number of COVID-19 cases throughout the country.¹
3. As COVID-19 pandemic response efforts address these conditions, VHA will continue to recognize employees who complete physical deployments supporting the national response with awards of up to \$10,000, for a completed 14-day deployment, commensurate with employee contributions. The increased SCA amount is effective for deployments that occur between December 20, 2021 – February 28, 2022. The majority of the deployment must take place during these timeframes in order to be eligible for this level of award.
4. Award justifications must include the specific superior accomplishments or special acts or service in the public interest performed by the employee and the amount must be justified in accordance with VA Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards. Awards must be coded using appropriate reason codes.
5. Award amounts up to \$7,500 should continue to be processed by employee's servicing human resource office with approval from the appropriate level of authority, as specified in VA Handbook 5017 or appropriately delegated. Awards that exceed \$7,500, not to exceed \$10,000, must be written locally and recommended by Network Directors. Awards are then

¹ According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved December 21, 2021 from [Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know | CDC](#)

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submitted to WMC for technical review and approval by the Deputy Under Secretary for Health performing the Delegable Duties of the Under Secretary for Health by VISN DEMPS coordinators by emailing them to: OCCWFMPeformanceManagement@va.gov. Approved awards will be processed by WMC.

6. For policy-related questions and concerns, please contact your servicing human resources or WMC at wmc@va.gov.



for
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