

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes the policy, assigns responsibilities, and specifies authority for ensuring that the contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to research are appropriately acknowledged and publicly disclosed.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES: VHA Handbook 1200.19, Presentation of Research Results, dated July 10, 2014, was formatted as a directive and responsibilities added to paragraph 5.

3. RELATED ISSUES: VA Directive 0005, Scientific Integrity, dated July 10, 2012 and VHA Directive 1200, Research and Development Program, dated May 13, 2016.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Office of Research and Development (10X2) is responsible for the contents of this VHA directive. Questions may be referred to 202-443-5600.

5. RESCISSIONS: VHA Handbook 1200.19, dated July 10, 2014, is rescinded.

6. RECERTIFICATION: This VHA directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working date of May 2024. This VHA directive will continue to serve as national VHA policy until it is recertified or rescinded.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE UNDER
SECRETARY FOR HEALTH:**

/s/ Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Deputy Under Secretary for Health for
Discovery, Education, and Affiliate
Networks

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NOTE: *All references herein to VA and VHA documents incorporate by reference subsequent VA and VHA documents on the same or similar subject matter.*

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed to the VHA Publications Distribution List on May 13, 2019.

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PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

1. PURPOSE

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and specifies authority for ensuring that the contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to research are appropriately acknowledged and publicly disclosed. **AUTHORITY:** Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1704, 7303, 7320, 7325, 7327, and 7328.

2. BACKGROUND

a. The VA Office of Research and Development (ORD) encourages the free exchange of scientific, technical, and medical information both inside and outside VA. The American public has a right to know how public funds are expended as well as the outcomes of funded research. Accordingly, VA investigators are encouraged to report their scientific work at professional meetings and in scientific, technical, and medical publications, and to participate in the activities of their professional organizations.

b. The nature of medical and scientific research and development (R&D) carries with it an enormous potential for media and public attention to the investigators and institutions involved, as well as general support for the agency. Occasionally, VA investigators have neglected to ensure proper identification of their employment by VA or the source of their research support. Consequently, both public attention and credit for research were inappropriately focused on organizations other than VA. Timely notification to local public affairs officers and ORD Communication staff about upcoming publications and presentations allows the preparation of effective communication products to highlight the contribution of VA research to the health and well-being of Veterans and the world at large.

c. VA expects its contributions to medical and scientific research to receive due credit. VA investigators are entirely responsible for complying with the policy to properly cite VA research support per this directive.

d. VA recognizes that public stakeholders have a keen and legitimate interest in accessing the results of federally-funded research. VA is committed to ensuring that the final study results of VA ORD-funded scientific research are made available to the scientific community, industry, and the public.

3. DEFINITIONS

a. **VA Investigator.** A VA Investigator is an individual who conducts research approved by the Research & Development Committee (R&D) while acting under a VA appointment on VA time, including full and part-time employees, without compensation (WOC) employees, and individuals appointed or detailed to VA under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) of 1970 (5 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.).

b. **VA Research.** VA Research is research conducted by VA investigators (serving on compensated, WOC, or IPA appointments) while on VA time or on VA property. The research may be funded by VA, by other sponsors, or be unfunded. The research must be approved by the R&D Committee before it is considered VA research and before it can be initiated.

4. POLICY

It is VHA policy that research publications and presentations directly or indirectly supported by VA ORD, in the form of research funding or the use of VA resources, or as a result of the investigator's VA appointment, be appropriately acknowledged and made available to the public.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Under Secretary for Health.** The Under Secretary for Health is responsible for ensuring overall VHA compliance with this directive.

b. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management is responsible for:

(1) Communicating the contents of this directive to each of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs).

(2) Ensuring that each VISN Director has sufficient resources to fulfill the terms of this directive in all the VA medical facilities that conduct research within that VISN.

(3) Providing oversight of VISNs to assure compliance with this directive, relevant standards, and applicable regulations.

c. **Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education & Affiliate Networks.** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education & Affiliate Networks is responsible for ensuring that the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO) has sufficient resources to fulfill the requirements of this directive.

d. **Chief Research and Development Officer.** The CRADO is responsible for:

(1) Allocating adequate resources to implement, manage, and administer the requirements of this directive.

(2) Overseeing the work of the ORD Communications staff.

e. **Office of Research and Development Communications Staff.** ORD Communications staff is responsible for coordinating research acknowledgment and publicity by:

(1) Providing advice and guidance to local research offices in developing procedures for ensuring compliance with this directive.

(2) As appropriate, informing the CRADO, the Director of the applicable research service within ORD, and the Office of the Under Secretary for Health of the research publication, presentation, media interview, or other activity.

(3) Working with the Office of Public Affairs and VA medical facility Public Affairs Officers to communicate with the press and other interested stakeholders regarding VA research advances.

(4) Making appropriate news media arrangements in concert with the VA investigator and appropriate Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (ACOS/R&D) or Coordinator for Research, if required.

(5) Facilitating communication of any embargoes or other restrictions placed upon a publication prior to its release.

(6) Preparing communication products to highlight the contribution of VA research to the health and well-being of Veterans and the world at large.

f. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Director.** Each VISN Director is responsible for ensuring that all research programs at VA medical facilities within the VISN comply with this directive.

g. **VA Medical Facility Director.** Each VA medical facility Director is responsible for ensuring that the contents of this directive are communicated to all VA investigators at the VA medical facility, and that the VA investigators comply with this directive.

h. **Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development.** The ACOS/R&D (or Coordinator for Research in a smaller VA medical facility) is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that VA investigators know the guidelines for how and when to notify ORD Communications staff (as noted in paragraph 5.i.(1) below).

(2) Ensuring that VA investigators know their responsibilities for acknowledging VA support in publications and presentations.

(3) Ensuring that VA investigators know their responsibilities to provide public access to publications (see paragraph 6 below). **NOTE:** *Procedures for providing notification, and required elements of information, can be found on the ORD Web site at: http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/pub_notice.cfm.*

i. **VA Investigators.** When VA Investigators are the first or primary author for a research publication, they are responsible for:

(1) Notifying ORD Communications staff through the PubTracker system at: <http://vaww.pubtracker.research.va.gov>. **NOTE:** *This is an internal VA Web site that is not available to the public.* Notification is required when:

(a) Research results are accepted for publication in a scientific journal;

(b) Presentations are scheduled involving a national venue or the media;

(c) Media interviews are scheduled; or

(d) Professional recognition for research accomplishments is scheduled to occur in a national venue or likely to receive local or national media attention.

(2) Acknowledging VA support in publications and presentations using the guidelines set forth in this directive (see paragraph 6).

(3) Making available to the public all peer-reviewed publications and reporting the results of ORD-funded research without restriction, in accordance with this directive (see paragraph 7). This includes:

(a) Depositing a manuscript in PubMed Central, operated by the National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine (NLM), upon the manuscripts' acceptance for publication. Specific procedures for depositing manuscripts are detailed at: <https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/guidance/Checklist-for-publishing-VAResearch.pdf>; or

(b) Ensuring that the journal posts a free access copy of the accepted manuscript into PubMed at the conclusion of its defined embargo period.

(4) When notification to ORD Communications staff in advance of the activity is not possible (e.g., selection for an interview at a national scientific meeting), providing PubTracker notification at the earliest possible opportunity.

(5) Ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this directive.

6. GUIDELINES FOR ACKNOWLEDGING VA RESEARCH SUPPORT AND VA EMPLOYMENT

a. **Acknowledgment of VA Research Support.** All publications and presentations of VA research results must contain the following acknowledgments:

(1) "This work was supported (or supported in part) by (type of award, e.g., Merit Review, Career Development Award, Pilot Project) Award # (award/project number, e.g., I01 RX000123) from the United States (U.S.) Department of Veterans Affairs, (as applicable, Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service, Clinical Sciences Research and Development Service, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, Health Services Research and Development Service, Cooperative Studies Program or Million Veteran Program)." The type of award and the electronic award/project number (e.g., I01 BX123456) must be included in the acknowledgment as indicated above unless prohibited by journal policy.

(2) If VA did not provide direct research funding, but the research was considered VA Research as specified by VHA Directive 1200.01, the publications or presentations

must contain a similar acknowledgment. For example, “This material is the result of work supported with resources and the use of facilities at the (name and location of VA medical facility).” If a dually appointed VA Investigator conducts all the work at the academic affiliate and there is no VA Research involved, the VA Investigator should not list the VA affiliation.

(3) Failure to acknowledge VA support or employment may result in discontinuation of current VA R&D funding or ineligibility to apply for future funding for the VA investigator. In extreme circumstances (e.g., the VA Investigator fails on multiple occasions to make the appropriate acknowledgements in publications), such failure may result in the revocation of the privilege to conduct research in VA. **NOTE:** *If a journal does not have an acknowledgement section in its published articles, this requirement does not apply.*

b. **Disclaimer Requirement.** Publications or presentations must include a disclaimer stating that the contents do not represent the views of VA or the United States Government.

c. **Acknowledgment of VA Employment.** Authors of research manuscripts, abstracts, books, book chapters, and presentations of VA research results must acknowledge their employment using the following format: “VA title, name of VA medical facility, city, and State.”

(1) When the author also holds a faculty appointment, the academic title and school also may be acknowledged.

(2) When the work was solely funded by VA, authors must list their VA affiliation first.

d. **VA Acknowledgment in Media Reports.** News media and other individuals outside VA may not understand the contributions and roles of VA in intellectual advances or VA’s collaborative relationships with universities and other affiliated institutions. Accordingly, when investigators with VA salaries or funding support are presenting or discussing their VA Research results with the news media, they must make a serious and good faith effort to obtain appropriate recognition for VA. A serious and good faith effort requires providing news media, prior to interviews when possible, a document on VA letterhead that:

(1) Contains the VA Investigator’s name, VA title, and VA medical facility;

(2) Explains the importance to VA of citing the investigator’s VA employment in any resulting feature (for example, “The Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to ensuring appropriate recognition and acknowledgement of its investigators and the research it supports and makes possible. As such, we at the [VA medical facility] ask that you make every effort to mention the VA affiliation(s) of [investigator’s name] in your coverage.”); and

(3) Expresses a preference that the investigator’s VA title be used when media time or space limitations permit the use of only one professional title.

NOTE: *The media's failure to acknowledge VA support despite a VA investigator's good faith effort to comply does not jeopardize the VA investigator's funding.*

e. **VA Acknowledgment During Other Professional Activities Scheduled to Occur in a National Venue or Likely to Receive Media Attention.** VA support and employment, as appropriate, must be acknowledged during professional activities in which VA Research results are being discussed or recognized. Acknowledgment may be oral or written, in accordance with the nature of the professional activity.

f. **Publications by Contractors.** Publication of research results by firms providing contracted services to VA is governed by the terms of the contract. The contract terms must be consistent with the provisions of this directive with respect to review and acknowledgment of VA support.

g. **Copyright.** Under 17 U.S.C. 105, copyright protection is not available for any work of the United States Government, but the United States Government is not precluded from receiving and holding copyrights transferred to it by assignment, bequest, or otherwise. In 17 U.S.C. 101, a work of the United States Government is defined as work prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of that person's official duties. Consequently, works prepared by VA employees as part of their official duties are not subject to copyright protection in the U.S. and they cannot assign a copyright in that work to another party. VA employees should decline to sign publishing agreements that do not provide specific language that addresses their contribution as a U.S. government work.

7. PUBLIC ACCESS TO PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

a. VA investigators must make available to the public all peer-reviewed publications and reporting the results of VA ORD-funded research without restriction, in accordance with this directive.

b. To meet this requirement, VA investigators are responsible for a) depositing manuscript in PubMed Central, operated by the NLM, upon the manuscripts' acceptance for publication, or b) ensuring that the journal posts a free access copy of the accepted manuscript into PubMed at the conclusion of its defined embargo period. Specific procedures for depositing manuscripts are detailed at: <http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/default.cfm> and <https://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/guidance/Checklist-for-publishing-VAResearch.pdf>.

(1) VA Investigators are responsible for ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this policy.

(2) The final peer-reviewed manuscript must include all graphics and supplemental materials that are associated with the article.

NOTE: VA investigators receiving research funds from entities external to VA (e.g., the National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense) may be subject to public access requirements specific to those funders.

8. TRAINING

There are no formal training requirements associated with this directive.

9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

All records regardless of format (paper, electronic, electronic systems) created in the requirements of this directive shall be managed per the National Archives and Records Administration approved records schedules found in VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1. If you have any question regarding any aspect of records management, you should contact your facility Records Manager or your Records Liaison.

10. REFERENCES

- a. Title 5 U.S.C. Section 3371, Government Organization and Employees.
- b. Title 17 U.S.C. Section 101, Copyrights: Definitions.
- c. Title 17 U.S.C. Section 105, Subject matter of copyright: United States Government works.
- d. Title 38 U.S.C. Section 1704, Preventive health services: annual report.
- e. Title 38 U.S.C. Section 7303, Functions of Veterans Health Administration: Research Programs.
- f. Title 38 U.S.C. Section 7320, Centers for mental illness research, education, and clinical activities.
- g. Title 38 U.S.C. Section 7325, Medical emergency preparedness centers.
- h. Title 38 U.S.C. 7327, Centers for research, education, and clinical activities on complex multi-trauma associated with combat injuries.
- i. Title 38 U.S.C. 7328, Medical preparedness centers.
- j. VA Directive 0005, Scientific Integrity, dated July 10, 2012.
- k. VHA Directive 1200, Research and Development Program, dated May 13, 2016.
- l. VHA Directive 1200.01, Research and Development Committee, dated January 24, 2019.
- m. Office of Research and Development, Publication Notification:

http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/pub_notice.cfm.

n. Office of Research and Development, Policies and Guidance Documents:
<http://www.research.va.gov/resources/policies/default.cfm>.