

POSITION DESCRIPTION (Please Read Instructions on the Back)

1. AGENCY POSITION NO. **1433A**
 6. OPM CERTIFICATION NO.

2. REASON FOR SUBMISSION <input type="checkbox"/> REDESCRIPTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> REESTABLISHMENT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER EXPLANATION (Show any positions replaced)		3. SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/> HQTRS. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FIELD	4. EMPLOYING OFFICE LOCATION VISN 7 facilities	5. DUTY STATION VISN 7	7. FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT <input type="checkbox"/> EXEMPT <input type="checkbox"/> NONEXEMPT	8. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REQUIRED <input type="checkbox"/> EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS	9. SUBJECT TO IA ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
10. POSITION STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMPETITIVE <input type="checkbox"/> EXCEPTED (Specify in Remarks) <input type="checkbox"/> SES (Gen.) <input type="checkbox"/> SES (CR)		11. POSITION IS: <input type="checkbox"/> SUPERVISORY <input type="checkbox"/> MANAGERIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEITHER		12. SENSITIVITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 - NON-SENSITIVE <input type="checkbox"/> 3 - CRITICAL SENSITIVE <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - NON-CRITICAL SENSITIVE <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - SPECIAL SENSITIVE		13. COMPETITIVE LEVEL GO X22	14. AGENCY USE

15. CLASSIFIED/GRADED BY	OFFICIAL TITLE OF POSITION	PAY PLAN	OCCUPATIONAL CODE	GRADE	INITIALS	DATE
A. U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT						
B. DEPARTMENT, AGENCY OR ESTABLISHMENT						
C. SECOND LEVEL REVIEW						
D. FIRST LEVEL REVIEW	Patient Representative	GS	0301	11	<i>kg</i>	4/10/08
E. RECOMMENDED BY SUPERVISOR OR INITIATING OFFICE	Patient Rep. (Veteran Advocate)	GS	0301	11		

16. ORGANIZATIONAL TITLE OF POSITION (if different from official title)
Veteran Advocate

17. NAME OF EMPLOYEE (if vacant, specify)

18. DEPARTMENT, AGENCY, OR ESTABLISHMENT Department of Veterans Affairs	C. THIRD SUBDIVISION Office of the VISN Director
A. FIRST SUBDIVISION Veterans Health Administration	D. FOURTH SUBDIVISION
B. SECOND SUBDIVISION VISN 7	E. FIFTH SUBDIVISION

19. EMPLOYEE REVIEW - This is an accurate description of the major duties and responsibilities of my position.

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE (optional)

20. SUPERVISORY CERTIFICATION: I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of this position and its organizational relationships, and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds, and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statutes or their implementing regulations.

A. TYPED NAME AND TITLE OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR Robin Anderson, Health System Specialist	B. TYPED NAME AND TITLE OF HIGHER-LEVEL SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER (optional) Lawrence A. Biro, Network Director (VISN 7)
SIGNATURE 	SIGNATURE
DATE APR 3 2008	DATE 4-6-08

21. CLASSIFICATION/JOB GRADING CERTIFICATION: I certify that this position has been classified/graded as required by Title 5, U.S. Code, in conformance with standards published by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or, if no published standards apply directly, consistently with the most applicable published standards.

22. POSITION CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS USED IN CLASSIFYING/GRAADING POSITION

TYPED NAME AND TITLE OF OFFICIAL TAKING ACTION
Kevin Jones, VISN 7 HR Officer

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES: The standards, and information on their application, are available in the personnel office. The classification of the position may be reviewed and corrected by the agency or the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Information on classification/job grading appeals, and complaints on exemption from FLSA, is available from the personnel office or the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

23. POSITION REVIEW	INITIALS	DATE	INITIALS	DATE	INITIALS	DATE	INITIALS	DATE	INITIALS	DATE
A. EMPLOYEE (optional)										
B. SUPERVISOR										
C. CLASSIFIER										

24. REMARKS
Full performance level.

25. DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (See Attached)

POSITION DESCRIPTION
Patient Representative, GS-0301-11
(VISN 7 Veteran Advocate)

Organizational Location: This position is a Veteran Advocate. The position is assigned to the VISN office and is directly supervised by the Network 7 Leadership. The position is directly linked to the Office of the Network Director as concerns addressed by the advocate may require the involvement of multiple services, crossing broad organizational lines typically associated with a Medical Center.

MAJOR DUTIES: The incumbent serves as the Network Director's liaison between the medical centers, the patients, employees of the medical centers and the community regarding patients' rights and advocacy. Advocate provides Customer Care training to medical center staff relating to the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and their families. Initiates service recovery to mitigate and/or eliminate veteran dissatisfaction. As the liaison the Veteran Advocate acts as a "Life Coach," communicator, facilitator and problem solver to the veteran population it serves. Administrative, organizational and educational skills will be utilized. The Advocate will serve as Life Coach to veterans on the general conditions and transitions in the patient's personal life, relationships or profession by examining what is going on right now, identifying challenges to specific goals, and offering courses of action to the veterans.

Activities will cross all lines of authority and responsibility and encompass all medical centers, services within a medical center and throughout the VISN. Participation in related community activities will also be required. The Advocate will serve as the point of contact to assist transitioning veterans and their families. Many of these veterans are seriously ill/injured, suffer from multiple complex health and mental health problems, including traumatic brain injury, amputations, burns, combat stress and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and this position is dedicated to ensuring severely injured service members and veterans have a personal advocate as they move through the VA system.

Incumbent independently handles a wide range of difficult contacts and complex situations, including eligibility determination on all types of patients. As directed by supervision, the Advocate contacts the gaining or appropriate nationwide VAMC facility for the given Veteran and transfers enrollment and clinical records as part of the transition assistance. Incumbent utilizes Appointment Management in VISTA and the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) on a routine basis to monitor appointment timeliness and ensure care is not lost to follow-up. The Veteran Advocate is to act on behalf of the patient and on the family's behalf on a variety of questions and issues involving problem resolution and patient advocacy.

The Advocate will travel to medical treatment facilities and will introduce themselves to veterans and at times will personally escort disabled veterans to a VA Medical Center. Incumbent provides coordination of care, advisory and technical assistance to seeking medical care. Incumbent is responsible to provide advice on eligibility in the VA system and assist with facilitating all aspects of care required/requested by the veterans in collaboration with Social Work and Nursing Case Managers.

The incumbent interprets the facilities and VISN mission, purpose, philosophy, policies, procedures and services to the patient and/or family members and presents the patient's problems, opinions and needs to the appropriate staff and to management for resolution. The incumbent assists patients in understanding their rights in addition to their responsibilities. Incumbent is responsible for safeguarding and insuring statutory and constitutional rights of patients and protecting the patients from other kinds of system abuses.

The Advocate provides information and assistance to veterans and family members regarding benefits, entitlement and eligibility to health care and veteran benefits; and assists, when necessary, with completion of administrative tasks in conjunction with the application of benefits. Identifies the elements of clinical or administrative practices that contribute to or cause an atmosphere for patient dissatisfaction which lead to patient complaints and recommends to the Network Director changes that will reduce or eliminate justified complaints; and assists patients, their families and the facility staff members in recognizing and removing institutional obstacles to providing optimum quality health care.

Develops rapport and maintains effective relations with medical center personnel at all levels, i.e., management, supervision, professional staff, technicians, administrative and clerical staff. Ability to communicate with individuals of different education, environmental, ethnic and cultural backgrounds is essential. Maintains close liaison with congressional office and responds to their staff directly on matters involving patient dissatisfaction. This relationship creates an atmosphere for resolution at an informal level before potential controversial issues are taken further. Performs analytical and evaluative work associated with line and/or program activities. Performs analytical and evaluative work associated with program activities. Advocate provides Customer Care training to medical center staff relating to the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and their families.

Organizational Analysis 10 percent

The Advocate evaluates, processes, or makes recommendations for effective organizational changes and performs organizational analysis for stable, traditionally structured organizations. Performs duties involving or staff administrative services but does not involve responsibility for establishing and implementing overall clinical policies and priorities. Assures they are in compliance with Veterans rights. The incumbent plays a critical support role in developing and coordinating internal review systems to assure that both clinical and administrative activities are in compliance with agency and accrediting and regulatory requirements especially as they pertain to Patient Rights and Responsibilities.

Evaluates Programs/Monitors Data 10 percent

The Advocate maintains program requirements/validation criteria for assigned organizations. Prompts staff members to participate in cyclic or special evaluations. Incumbent will act as a quality assurance specialist, helping assure accuracy of patient care data. Incumbent prepares and monitors evaluation data, analyzes data, identify discrepancies, make corrections, and recommend a course of action to assure accuracy and timeliness of future data input. The incumbent collects, analyzes, and evaluates data generated and produces meaningful reports based on that data as it relates to quality and customer service standards. The incumbent will also generate reports on the status and effectiveness of Medical Center program of Veteran Advocacy.

Incumbent must be able to visualize needed changes and improvements in the management process and be capable of originating new and different solutions to problems. The incumbent must be able to comprehend, interrelate, evaluate facts, distinguish between causes and effects, understand fundamental problems and be able to develop solutions logically and systematically.

Reports Results/Monitors Remedial Actions 10 percent

The incumbent compiles final reports of evaluation efforts and notes discrepancies and the

planned initiatives for effecting remedial actions. Establishes administrative controls aimed at ensuring remedial actions are completed as proposed. Incumbent provides input into the conduct of, and is responsible for the maintenance of files and records pertaining to patient satisfaction surveys or other evaluative information. Documents all findings derived from the information after thorough analysis of data in order to identify trends and patterns and compiles data for inclusion in comprehensive analysis. Participates in Network wide quarterly reports, assisting in analyzing the data from a Network perspective for process improvement. Monitors action items to promote satisfactory progress towards remedy. Leads process improvement teams under supervision and provides a channel through which Veterans can seek solutions to problems, concerns, and unmet needs. Incumbent works with health care providers and administrative support staff throughout the medical center in preventing and resolving patient complaints.

Veteran Entitlements 25 percent

Assists Veterans in understanding their rights, in addition to their responsibilities. Maintains liaison with veteran's service organizations, community groups, and others whose interest is in helping and protecting veterans, their families, and their representatives. The Incumbent interprets the Medical Center's mission, policies, procedures, and available resource/services to the patient and presents the patient's problems, opinions and need to appropriate staff and management. Explains entitlements to patients and their families. May assist with congressional and/or patient inquiry letters as requested by the Office of the Director. May be called upon to provide information with which to answer these inquiries and/or complaints.

Clinical Liaison 45 percent

Assists Veterans, their families and representatives, and facility staff members in recognizing and removing institutional barriers to the provision of optimum health care to veterans. Identifies existing and potential problem areas, suggests solutions or alternatives to existing procedures which contribute to these problems. Acts to resolve problems, expedite services, or implement necessary corrective measures within established facility policies and where appropriate, through committee participation. Has the authority to review any files or records, and discuss with personnel or witnesses regarding any practice that appears to violate Veteran's rights or which causes unnecessary discomfort or embarrassment to Veterans, their families, or the health care facility and reports such findings with recommendations for improvements to the facility Director. The Advocate accesses and utilizes a variety of information systems (i.e., CPRS, Veterans Tracking Application (VTA); Patient Complaint Tracking System (PCTS), etc.) in the accomplishment his/her daily work. Has overall responsibility for the resolution of patient problems which arise. Serves as an "advocate" for assigned patients throughout the facility. Receives and listens to complaints and grievances from patients or from individuals on behalf of patients. Makes inquiry into patient complaints, initiates action, or changes necessary to correct problem situations, and reports on corrective measures taken. Acts as an advocate for patients using seasoned judgment to resolve problems.

The incumbent is authorized to directly contact any member of the hospital staff concerning any matter for problem relating to patient care which has not been resolved by other services and to seek a resolution, whenever possible, within the full resources of the medical center and VA system. When a problem area or complaint is identified, the incumbent is expected to explore all avenues, crossing all lines of authority and responsibility within the medical center, in order to properly identify the nature and scope of the problem and to initiate appropriate action to expedite a resolution. Identifies existing/potential problems areas and suggests solutions or alternatives to existing procedures which contribute to these problems.

Acts on behalf of the Network and facility Director to resolve problems, expedite services, or implement necessary corrective measures within established facility policies and where appropriate, through committee participation. Provides input into the conduct of, and may be responsible for the maintenance of the files and records pertaining to patient surveys. Documents all findings derived from these surveys after thorough analysis of data in order to identify trends and patterns.

Factor 1 Knowledge Required by the Position FL 1-7 1250 Points

The Veteran Advocate must have a thorough knowledge of Federal Laws, VA regulations and directives governing veterans' medical benefits; facility policies, procedures and organizational structure; medical terminology; available services; capability of clinics and must be aware of changes which affect veterans' benefits. Thorough knowledge of various public laws as well as the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, Advance Directives Act and others is required. This knowledge is necessary to answer questions for Veterans, their families or their representatives in order to perform the duties of the position. The Advocate must have knowledge of and skills in working with combat veterans and seriously injured veterans who have special needs.

The Advocate must possess knowledge of the duties, priorities, commitments and program goals of both administrative and clinical services in order to respond to concerns expressed by patients and their families relative to health care services. The incumbent must possess knowledge and skills to discuss and negotiate with the family and to help determine what course of actions are in the best interest of the patient. The work requires a high degree of skill in oral and written communication as well as interpersonal relations. The representative must possess skill in interviewing; knowledge of the process of inquiring; knowledge of counseling principles and record keeping techniques. The utilization of analytical ability is required in reviewing policies, identifying existing problems and potential problem areas and suggesting solutions or alternatives to existing procedures which may contribute to those problems. The tracking, trending and interventions that are effective are examples of this skill and knowledge.

The patient representative must possess knowledge of medical terminology and VA nomenclature used with a variety of administrative diagnostic and treatment procedures provided to all categories of patients. The ability to effectively review and interpret information contained in medical and administrative records is essential.

This position requires routine travel which may extend overnight. The incumbent must safely operate a Federal Government vehicle and possess and maintain a valid Driver License issued by one of the fifty (50) United States.

Advocate must possess the practical knowledge of methods of instruction as well as the ability to provide instruction on the subject of Customer Care to medical center staff in relation to the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and their families.

Factor 2 Supervisory Controls FL 2-4 450 Points

The incumbent works directly with Facility leadership and reports to the Office of the Network Director. The supervision of the incumbent establishes the overall objectives of the Veteran Advocacy Program. The incumbent performs duties and responsibilities independently with the authority to operate within broad general guidelines established by the Network to ensure

optimum support to the medical centers and to promote efficient dissemination of services to veterans.

Knowledge is used to plan, schedule, and accomplish work and to evaluate and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of processes that contribute to informing and providing services to veterans. The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact.

Completed work is reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives. Completed work is also reviewed critically outside the employee's immediate office by staff and line management officials whose programs and employees would be affected by implementation of the recommendations.

Factor 3 Guidelines FL3-3 275 Points

Guidelines consist of legislative and regulatory requirements that establish benefits and entitlements for veterans, agency and VISN policies and procedures, medical terminology, established medical center organizational functions and processes, and accepted analytical methods.

Guidelines are not always directly applicable to specific work assignments. However, precedents are available for reference. The employee uses judgment in choosing, interpreting, or adapting available guidelines to specific issues or subjects. The employee analyzes the subject and the current guidelines and makes recommendations for changes.

Included are work assignments covered by a wide variety of administrative regulations and procedural guidelines. In such circumstances the employee must use judgment in researching regulations and in determining the relationship between guidelines and organizational efficiency, program effectiveness, or employee productivity.

Factor 4 Complexity FL 4-3 150 Points

The work of the Veteran Advocate involves many aspects of patient treatment that is unique to the patient because of serious and disabling injury caused by combat. The Advocate must be responsive to new and different requests associated with each unique veteran condition and situation to facilitate prompt treatment.

The position is also complicated by severe medical conditions that may require the patient to receive treatment at multiple facilities. The Veteran Advocate is responsible for ensuring a smooth and seamless flow from one treatment facility to another. The Veteran Advocate is responsible for following the patient from the time he/she enters the VA system until they are discharged. This includes working closely with family members to ensure they are kept informed and are available to explain unique issues of the Veteran.

The Veteran Advocate must work closely with the Network 7 Office as well as the respective Medical Facilities where patients receive treatment to ensure continuity of care. The work involves advising and assisting veterans to obtain benefits and entitlements and resolve problems in obtaining needed services. It includes identifying and recommending changes in medical center processes to facilitate providing service to veterans. This requires establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with veterans and their families and medical center staff, analysis of operating and administrative processes, and working to resolve

problems and improve operations. This involves interpersonal relations, data gathering and analysis, and problem solving.

Factor 5 Scope and Effect FL5-3 150 Points

The purpose of the work is to function as a liaison between veterans and their families and the medical center staffs to ensure veterans receive prompt appropriate medical care. The Advocate will have access to their full entitlement of benefits and to resolve problems that arise. The work may impact several medical centers and networks. The work impacts the care veterans receive and the ability to provide seamless care across Agencies and facilities within VA.

Factor 6 Personal Contacts FL 6-3

Contacts are with veterans and their families, VISN, medical center staff, other Federal Agencies and veteran and community organizations. Contacts require developing trust and good working relationships with all parties.

Factor 7 Purpose of Contacts FL 7-3 180 Points

Contacts are to gather and disseminate information, share findings, resolve problems, and recommend changes to improve processes. Contacts require establishing and maintaining good working relationships with veterans and their families, VISN and medical center staff, and members of veteran and community groups. Contacts involve working with veterans and their families who may be dissatisfied, to mediate problem resolution, and involve convincing management to accept recommendations.

Factor 8 Physical Demands FL 8-1 5 Points

A high level of physical energy is requiring, as the incumbent will be expected to meet with many people in many different locations in the course of a workday.

Factor 9 Work Environment FL9-1 5 Points

The incumbent will have an office within the VISN 7 servicing area. However, it is expected that a major portion of the services provided will be conducted away from the office, in the office of other agencies, and in Non-Traditional setting and in military, reserve and National Guard facilities. The nature of the job requires travel throughout an assigned geographical area away from the work setting.

ADP Security

Protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHA policy. Protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion. Follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc., as set out in the computer access agreement that the employee signs.