

APPENDIX G2. PHYSICIAN QUALIFICATION STANDARD
Veterans Health Administration

1. COVERAGE. Following are the overall requirements for appointment as a physician in VHA.

2. SECTION A. BASIC REQUIREMENTS

a. **Citizenship.** Citizen of the United States. (Noncitizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with chapter 3, section A, paragraph 3g, this part.)

b. **Education.** Degree of doctor of medicine or an equivalent degree resulting from a course of education in medicine or osteopathic medicine. The degree must have been obtained from one of the schools approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the year in which the course of study was completed. Approved schools are:

(1) Schools of medicine holding regular institutional membership in the Association of American Medical Colleges for the year in which the degree was granted.

(2) Schools of osteopathic medicine approved by the American Osteopathic Association for the year in which the degree was granted.

(3) Schools (including foreign schools) accepted by the licensing body of a State, Territory, or Commonwealth (i.e., Puerto Rico), or in the District of Columbia as qualifying for full or unrestricted licensure.

(4) For residents, graduation from an approved medical school as described above is required except as provided in M-8, part II, chapter 1.

NOTE: *The Under Secretary of Health or designee in Central Office may approve the appointment under authority of 38 U.S.C. 7405 of a physician graduate of a school of medicine not covered above if the candidate is to be assigned to a research or academic position with no patient care responsibilities. The appointment will be made only in exceptional circumstances where the candidate's credentials clearly demonstrate high professional attainment or expertise in the specialty area. (See chapter 3, section B, paragraph 14 of this part, on waiver of licensure provisions.)*

c. Licensure and Registration

(1) **Physicians (Except Residents).** Current, full and unrestricted license to practice medicine or surgery in a State, Territory, or Commonwealth of the United States, or in the District of Columbia. The physician must maintain current registration in the State of licensure if this is a requirement for continuing active, current licensure. The facility Director may waive this licensure requirement if the physician is to serve in a country other than the United States and the physician has licensure in that country.

(2) **Residents.** Current, full and unrestricted license to practice medicine or surgery in a State, Territory or Commonwealth of the United States, or in the District of Columbia before the second year of VA residency, or meet any licensure, registration or other equivalent requirements established for residents of non-VA hospitals with which the VA facility is affiliated for training purposes. The resident must maintain current registration in the State of licensure if this is a requirement for continuing active, current licensure.

(3) **Impaired Licensure.** A physician who has, or has ever had, any license(s) revoked, suspended, denied, restricted, limited, or issued/placed in a probationary status may be appointed only in accordance with the provisions of chapter 3, section B, paragraph 14 of this part.

(4) **Waiver of Licensure.** Licensure may be waived by the Under Secretary for Health or designee in Central Office for individuals in research or academic assignments involving no direct patient care responsibilities in accordance with current regulations.

d. **First-Year Residency (Internship).** Completed a first-year residency, or its equivalent, approved by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the year in which it was completed. For a VA resident, the appropriate Deans Committee and Resident Review Board may recommend appointment on the basis of the candidate's acceptability for residency training. Approved residencies are:

(1) Those approved by the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals, American Medical Association, in the list published for the year the residency was completed, or

(2) Other residencies or their equivalents which the Professional Standards Board determines to have provided an applicant with appropriate professional training. The Board may determine that the residency requirement has been met if the candidate has completed 1 year of postgraduate education.

e. **Physical Standards.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019.

f. **English Language Proficiency.** Physicians, including residents, appointed to direct patient-care positions must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. 7402(d) and 7407(d).

3. SECTION B. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

a. **Associate Grade.** Meet basic requirements. The individual qualifies to perform general duties under supervision.

b. **Full Grade.** Meet the requirements for Associate grade and have completed additional training, such as the second year of an accredited residency, and/or experience which has qualified the individual to perform general duties without supervision.

c. **Intermediate Grade.** Meet the requirements for Full grade, and have completed additional training, such as an accredited residency in an area not directly related to the specialty area to which the individual is being assigned, and/or experience which has qualified the individual to perform general duties and some specialized functions and procedures without supervision.

d. **Senior Grade.** Meet the requirements for Intermediate grade and have demonstrated recognized professional attainment such as:

- (1) Past or present faculty appointment in an approved medical school or
- (2) Completion of an accredited residency in the specialty area to which the individual is being assigned or in a related area, or
- (3) Current eligibility to sit for the board certification examination in the specialty area to which the individual is being assigned or in a related area, or
- (4) Comparable achievements in clinical, educational, administrative or research activities.

e. **Chief Grade.** Meet the requirements for Senior grade plus attainment of additional recognition in clinical, administrative or research areas. Such recognition may be demonstrated by:

- (1) Certification by an American Specialty Board, or
- (2) Significant accomplishments in clinical practice, educational activities, research or administration which clearly distinguish the physician as having the highest professional qualifications in the specialty area to which assigned, such as:

- (a) Past or present faculty appointment at the professional level in an approved medical school, or
- (b) Completion of an accredited residency in the primary specialty area or in a related area to which the individual will be assigned and unusual professional accomplishment such as:

1. Publication of articles in nationally recognized professional journals, or
2. Officer in a State or National professional medical organization, or
3. Directorship of a hospital or large clinic.

f. **Executive, Director and Medical Director Grades**

(1) **General.** The use of Executive grade is restricted to the position of Chief of Staff or comparable positions; Director grade, to the position of facility director; and Medical Director grade, to selected positions in Central Office, Distinguished Physicians, and Senior Medical Investigators. Positions are approved for these grade levels based on the scope and complexity of the assignment and the level of responsibility.

(2) **Executive Grade.** Requirements for assignment as a Chief of Staff are contained in M-2, part I. An individual assigned to a position comparable to Chief of Staff must be similarly qualified.

(3) **Director Grade.** An individual assigned as Director must meet the requirements specified in appendix II-GI, Director Grade Qualification Standard.

(4) **Medical Director Grade.** An individual assigned at this level will be a recognized expert in the specialty area with demonstrated leadership ability. A Distinguished Physician will be nationally and internationally recognized for scientific, academic and administrative medicine expertise. (See M-2, pt. 1). A Senior Medical investigator will be an outstanding scientist whose research contributions have a far-reaching clinical effect. (See M-3, pt. II.)

g. **Resident.** Meet requirements specified in section A of this appendix. Postgraduate will be based on the period of time completed by the candidate in approved residency training in the specialty of its creditable equivalent as accepted by the appropriate specialty board. (See M-8, pt. II.)

h. Attendings

(1) Meet basic requirements specified in section A of this appendix.

(2) Possess demonstrated ability in the individual field of medicine; be capable of assisting in maintaining accepted standards of professional care in VA facilities; and be capable of accepting full responsibility as chief of the service or the proper care and treatment of assigned patients.

(3) Be capable of giving adequate training to residents assigned to the service in facilities with residency training programs. An attending should be acceptable to the appropriate specialty Review Committee for direction of residency training. An attending not holding a faculty appointment in an associated medical school should be an outstanding member of the profession of the caliber of a faculty member.

i. Consultants

(1) Meet basic requirements specified in section A of this appendix.

(2) Possess outstanding professional ability in the particular field of medicine; be capable of affording the Director and service chief or equivalent the benefits of professional experience and counsel; and be capable of providing required professional services to maintain the highest possible level of medical care in VA facilities.

(3) Be capable, in facilities affiliated with approved medical schools, of accepting the responsibility for and direction of the educational training of residents in the appropriate specialty.

(4) A physician who represents a specialty for which no specialty board exists may be appointed as a consultant if the individual possesses outstanding ability in the particular field of specialization.

4. SECTION C. DEVIATIONS. The appointing official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade requirements in section B of this qualification standard when the candidate's composite record justifies this action. An applicant will not be given a grade commitment until this is received.

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7304, 7402.