



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON
July 12, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARIES, ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, OTHER
KEY OFFICIALS, AND FIELD FACILITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

In July 2000, the Federal Government issued Executive Order (EO) 13163, which established a goal of hiring 100,000 individuals with disabilities. To assist with meeting this goal, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) plans to hire 17,700 individuals with disabilities by October 2005.

I am proud of VA's record as a leader in employment of individuals with disabilities, including many disabled veterans. Since EO 13163 was issued, VA has hired 4,703 individuals with disabilities. However, we need your participation in a concerted effort over the next few years to not just equal, but to surpass our goal. We anticipate high VA workforce staffing demands in the years to come due to retirements and other expected losses of VA employees. Managers can meet these demands by hiring individuals with disabilities who will help VA continue to provide the quality service our Nation's veterans so richly deserve.

To connect persons with disabilities to active vacancies, I ask you to expand recruitment outreach efforts that achieve results. VA and state vocational rehabilitation staff are good sources for candidates, as well as job fairs and outreach to concerned public and private organizations. Fortunately, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations contain special, excepted service hiring authorities that allow expeditious placements once you have identified job matches. OPM coordinates this special hiring initiative and provides guidance and resource material on their Web site at www.opm.gov/disability/.

To assist you further, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (HR&A) will disseminate guidance on recruiting and employing individuals with disabilities. In addition, HR&A will publish a statistical report on a quarterly basis to monitor our progress.

I expect VA to remain a leader in hiring individuals with disabilities. I count on your active support of this initiative, and I look forward to seeing VA's progress toward achieving this worthy goal.


Anthony J. Principi