



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

March 29, 2007

The Honorable David S.C. Chu
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel
4000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-4000

Dear Dr. Chu:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is pleased to announce the approval of a direct-hire appointing authority (DHA) for positions at The Department of the Army's Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC).

By regulation, OPM may decide independently that a critical hiring need exists. The situation at WRAMC meets the criteria of 5 CFR 337.205(b) as explained below:

- (1) *Identify the positions that must be filled.* WRAMC has a critical need to fill 115 positions related to direct patient care services in the psychology; biological sciences; and medical, hospital, dental, public health occupational groups. The attachment details the positions, series, and grade levels for which this DHA is authorized.
- (2) *Describe the event or circumstance that created the need to fill these positions.* WRAMC is operating in a competitive labor market which exhibits nation-wide medical skills shortages. In addition the increased number of WRAMC's wounded warrior population due to the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has jeopardized WRAMC's ability to continue to provide quality care to injured soldiers.
- (3) *Specify the duration for which the critical hiring need is expected to exist.* OPM anticipates this critical hiring need will exist through March 31, 2008.
- (4) *Evidence that demonstrates why the use of other hiring authorities is impracticable or ineffective.* DoD has been using traditional hiring authorities to fill these positions that historically have taken between a low of 40 to a high of 147 days, with an overall average fill-time of 77 days. These authorities have now become impractical due to the increased demands on the Center's services due to the growing patient population. The timeframes that it has taken to fill the positions in the past using traditional hiring authorities are no longer acceptable in meeting the Center's immediate patient care needs.

In addition, WRAMC has made use of the appointing authority granted under the annual DoD Appropriations Act to fill certain healthcare occupations as listed under 38 U.S.C. 7403(a)(2). Although this authority provides some hiring flexibility, it is limited to specific occupations not included in this approval.

WRAMC has also made wide use of the Veterans' Recruitment Authority, the Student Career Experience Program, the Federal Career Intern Program, existing governmentwide direct hire authorities, and Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act appointments. Despite the use of these hiring authorities, WRAMC still faces a critical hiring need with respect to these patient care positions.

Effective immediately you may appoint individuals to the positions and numbers of positions listed on the attachment, in the Washington, D.C. area only based on a critical hiring. I recommend that you take particular care in conducting pre-employment background and security clearance investigations to ensure clearance and security requirements are fully met.

Your authority reads:

DOD-006 issued on the date of this letter to fill 115 positions at various grade levels located at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. to provide timely and effective medical care for wounded soldiers. This authority is based on a critical hiring need to fill vacancies quickly during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. This authority expires effective **March 31, 2008**.

Using this DHA:

WRAMC may give individuals in the occupational series shown on the attachment competitive service career, career-conditional, term, or temporary appointments, as appropriate, without regard to provisions of 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318 or 5 CFR part 211 and part 337, subpart A. These appointments are subject to public notice requirements in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330 and 5 CFR 330, including the displaced employee procedures found at 5 CFR part 330, subpart G, and requirements in 5 CFR 332.407. In addition, you are encouraged to comply with all relevant laws to the extent that they are not exempted from such laws pursuant to 5 U.S. C. 3304(a) (3). Further, I ask that you continue to make employment offers to qualified candidates with veterans' preference whenever possible.

OPM Oversight

You must use two authority codes when documenting personnel actions using this direct-hire authority. The first code "AYM" automatically fills in "Reg. 337.201" on the Notification of Personnel Action, Standard Form 50. The second authority code "BYO" identifies your use of this agency-specific authority. Using these two authority codes will help us evaluate the use of authority without requiring agency reports. On a periodic basis OPM will determine if continued use is supportable. We will monitor your use of this authority as well as the continued need for it, and may modify or terminate the authority as appropriate.

The Honorable Dr. Chu

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We are confident this authority will help you to fill these critical positions. If you have questions about this direct-hire authority, please contact Darlene Phelps on (202) 606-1730 or e-mail at Darlene.phelps@opm.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'LMS', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Linda M. Springer
Director

Attachment

**DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY
BASED ON CRITICAL HIRING NEED
FOR
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER**

PP	Job Series	Job Title	Grade	# of Vacs
GS	180	Psychologist/Clinical Psychologist	13	2
GS	403	Microbiologist	13	2
GS	601	Patient Safety Mgr	11/12/13	3
GS	603	Physician Assistant	12	1
GS	621	Nursing Asst/Psychiatric Nursing Asst	5/6/7/8	11
GS	630	Dietitian	11/12	2
GS	631	Occupational Therapist/Child Life Spec/Voc Rehab Spec	11/12	5
GS	633	Physical Therapist	11	6
GS	636	Rehabilitation Therapist Asst	6	1
GS	638	Art Therapist	11	1
GS	640	Health Tech	5/6/7/9	4
GS	642	Nuclear Medicine Tech	10	1
GS	644	Medical Technologist	11/12	3
GS	645	Medical Technician	5/7	3
GS	646	Pathology Tech	6/7	10
GS	648	Therapeutic Radiological Tech	8/9	5
GS	649	Medical Instrument Tech	5/7/8	7
GS	651	Respiratory Therapist	7/8	3
GS	661	Pharmacy Tech	6	3
GS	662	Optometrist	12	2
GS	665	Audiologist/Speech Pathologist	12/13/14	3
GS	667	Orthotist/Prosthetist	7/9	2
GS	669	Med Records Administration Spec	9/11	2
GS	670	Health Systems Administration	12	1
GS	671	Health Systems Specialist	9/11	7
GS	675	Medical Records Technician	5/6/7/8	3
GS	679	Medical Support Asst	5/6	11
GS	680	Dentist	12/13/14	4
GS	681	Dental Asst	4/5/6	3
GS	682	Dental Hygienist	6/7	2
GS	683	Dental Lab Tech	7/8/9	3
GS	690	Industrial Hygienist	12	1