

**VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (VHA)
FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2014
INTEGRATEDETHICS® MEASURES IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE TEMPLATE
October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014**

CE 2a: Demonstrates VA Core Values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (“I Care”): The Senior Executive will make I CARE relevant, meaningful, and actionable for all VA employees and assures these values are reflected in service to Veterans. The Senior Executive lives the I CARE values and creates an organizational environment that ensures all employees clearly understand VA’s Core Values and feel connected to the mission and vision with regular demonstration of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (“I CARE”).

ACTIVITIES:

- Celebrate National Compliance and Ethics Week, April 28 – May 2, 2014. The purpose of the week is to highlight the essential connection between business integrity and ethics quality in providing the best care to our nation's Veterans. It is co-sponsored in VHA by the Compliance and Business Integrity (CBI) program and the National Center for Ethics in Health Care (NCEHC) through the [IntegratedEthics®](#) (IE) program. IE staff and others can celebrate this important week by conducting activities for employees that raise awareness of ethics and VA core values. Several activities are designed for leadership participation.

RESOURCES:

- Multiple resources are available to help you plan your local activities including marketing resources, posters, logos and other outreach materials. New tools and materials will become available in Q2. To access existing tools and materials including planning documents, go to the National C&E website: <http://vaww.cbi.va.gov/ceweek.asp>. IE materials to support C&E Week are located here: http://vaww.cbi.va.gov/ceweek_3.asp. Additional ICARE materials are available at: <http://www.va.gov/ICARE/Index.asp>.

CE 2e: Promoting Organizational Health: To support the VHA goal of health care delivery by engaged, collaborative teams in an integrated environment that supports learning, discovery, and continuous improvement, the Senior Executive will ensure that appropriate progress continues to be made on programs and plans that address organizational health, healthy communication, and healthy partnerships in a healing organization while creating trust, flexibility, resilience, and a meaningful experience and outcome for staff. The Senior Executive will continually monitor workforce and organizational effectiveness using the All Employee Survey, Learning Organization Survey, IntegratedEthics (IE) Staff Survey, and The Voice of VA. The Senior Executive will ensure the assignment of individualized requirements in programs and areas where specific actions or improvements are needed, based on results in these surveys.

ACTIVITIES:

- The IntegratedEthics® Staff Survey (IESS), last conducted in 2012, measures perceptions of what staff have observed and experienced related to ethics in health care. Use IESS data and tools to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, set goals, and develop quality improvement plans to improve ethics quality in health care. Details are being finalized for the next administration of the survey. Refer to existing resources for examples of EL improvement projects that promote organizational health.

RESOURCES:

- Visit the IESS webpage <http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/IESS.asp> for the following 2012 IESS tools and materials:
 - Background, use, and validity testing is described in [The IntegratedEthics Staff Survey: A Tool to Evaluate and Improve Ethical Practices in Health Care](#)
 - [2012 IntegratedEthics Staff Survey Results Dashboard](#)
 - [2012 IntegratedEthics Staff Survey Facility Summary Reports](#)
 - [2012 IntegratedEthics Staff Survey - Survey Instrument](#)

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- [Technical Description: About the 2012 Integrated Ethics Staff Survey](#) - This document contains background information about the IESS. It discusses what ethics quality is, why it matters, and the role of the IESS in assessing health care ethics quality throughout VHA. It also contains technical information about the IESS, including how it was developed, how the results are disseminated, and how the data obtained may be used.
- [Integrated Ethics Staff Survey Multi-Year Report 2010-2012](#)
- Visit the IE VISN and Facility SharePoint Site, PE Storyboards and Improvement Documents folder, for examples of EL improvements (search for EL Improvements under document type): <http://vawww.infoshare.va.gov/sites/IntegratedEthics/default.aspx>.

CE 5e Performance Requirement: Promoting Effective Governance, Integrity, and High Reliability Organizations

In accordance with the June 2012 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report (“A CEO Checklist for High-Value Health Care”), visible and determined leadership by Senior Executives and governing boards is a foundational element of successful healthcare organizations. The “Center for Healthcare Governance” defines high performing governing boards as being accountable while earning and maintaining trust; building and maintaining a proactive culture; laying a foundation for effective decision-making; and clarifying key governance priorities, authority and responsibility. The IOM and others have stressed the urgency of transforming health care systems into places where each patient receives the best quality care, every single time. In conversations with leaders of hospitals with national reputations for their accomplishments in the areas of patient safety and quality, one recurring theme emerged: the need to change systems and processes to achieve substantial increases in integrity and reliability over present levels. This is also consistent with guidance to embrace an organizational business climate that energizes business integrity and just accountability for the revenue and purchased care patient financial environment.

Expectation: The Senior Executive is responsible for the effective governance of the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), Program Office or facility which he or she leads. The Senior Executive explicitly acknowledges the journey toward high reliability and strategically directs the culture change, re-engineering of health care systems, and workforce competencies including capability for analytics. The Senior Executive commits to ongoing, real-time learning and improvement to ensure the sustainability of quality efforts that are attentive to the business impact on the veteran experience and deliver an energetic commitment to business measurement and metrics.

Desired Result: Increase in the uptake of high performing, high reliability practices and principles in high priority settings resulting in sustained improvements in quality and safety as well as standardization and predictability in common work. In VHA, effective Veteran-centered governance is evidenced by strong, participative board and committee structures (including as appropriate Veterans as participating members) where key strategic planning, quality, safety, Veteran and employee satisfaction and financial stewardship data and decision-making flows from the Veterans we serve through the full leadership structure of the VISN or facility. Senior Executives demonstrate ethical decision making by identifying decisions that raise ethical concerns, addressing those ethical decisions systematically, and explaining their decisions. The Senior Executive has responded with a variety of initiatives, projects and events aimed at surmounting barriers, addressing challenges, and improving the culture and environment of care toward a high reliability organization.

Activities:

- Completion of the EL1 IE program quarterly achievement metric can satisfy this measure as it requires IE Councils to develop local annual performance and quality improvement plans for ethical leadership based on results from approved NCEHC tools (e.g., the EL Self-Assessment Tool; the IE Staff Survey, particularly questions in the domains of ethical practices in the everyday

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workplace and ethical practices in business and management; the IE Facility Workbook) or other relevant systematic evaluations of the EL function. Completion of the EL1 measure requires ELC/Facility Director input and approval of the action plan as well as ELC/Facility Director communication of improvement plan achievement and results to staff (e.g., through Town Hall meetings, newsletters, or facility e-mails). Examples of strong projects include projects that:

- Implement education and performance requirements to encourage leaders to regularly discuss ethical concerns
 - Establish regular leadership forums to enable staff to discuss ethical issues with leadership
 - Take leadership actions to publicize mechanisms for staff to report ethical concerns
 - Standardize consideration of ethics as a routine part of leadership decision making (e.g., ethics as a standing item on leadership agendas or executive decision memos) and leadership forums (e.g., resource management committee, executive leadership board)
 - Provide leaders with skill-building opportunities to practice ethical decision making
 - Publicize the local ethics and integrity programs (e.g., ethics and integrity series of fairs and events), and provide clear leadership commitment of resources to support these programs
- Leaders strongly influence the ethical environment and culture of health care organizations, which, in turn, influence employee behavior. The Ethical Leadership component of IE provides health care leaders with the practical tools and training they need to foster an ethical environment and culture that will make it easier for employees to "do the right thing." Use the variety of EL tools available on the EL webpage to support this measure:
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/elc.asp>.

RESOURCES:

- Visit the IE Program Reporting webpage for related tools and materials:
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/ieprogrpt.asp>
 - **Fiscal Year 2014**
 - [VA Memo \(Issued October 7, 2013\) FY14 IntegratedEthics Program Reporting Metrics and Technical Manual](#)
 - [FY14 IntegratedEthics Program Reporting Metrics and Technical Manual](#)
 - [FY14 IntegratedEthics Program Achievement Quarterly Reporting Planners for VISN and Facilities](#) - includes planners for both VISN IE POCs (VISN reporting) and IE Councils and function coordinators (facility reporting) to aid in advance planning and timely achievement of quarterly reporting goals
 - [FY14 Supplement to the IntegratedEthics Program Achievement: Goals and Reporting Requirements](#)
- Read this IE in Action article and consider adopting the EL improvement described within: *Embracing Procedural Justice: Durham VAMC Increases the Transparency of Leadership Decisions*. [Issue 26, September 2013](#)
- Tools to support development of leadership skills can be found on the EL webpage:
<http://vaww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics/elc.asp>.
 - Tools to support the development of ethical leadership skills:
[Ethical Leadership Bookmark 2in x 8in, 3in x 5in](#)
[Ethical Decision-making Quality Check](#)
[Ethical Leadership Self-Assessment Tool \(ELSA\)](#)
[Peer Feedback Activity on Leadership Behaviors and the Organization's Ethical Environment](#) - based on the ELSA, this 15-minute group activity allows leaders to obtain information from their peers on behaviors that have had positive and negative effects on their organization's ethical environment and culture

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[Value of the Month Ethical Leadership Activities](#) - a set of brief discussion activities that include value and discussion prompts, examples, and case studies. Intended for leaders at all levels, including committee chairs, to help employees articulate their individual values and improve mutual understanding of how values impact the work of the group or committee ([editable version](#))

[Value of the Day Discussion](#) - a week-long series based on the Value of the Month activity

[Value of the Day E-mail Activity](#) - e-mail activity based on the Value of the Day Discussion

[Ethical Leadership Curriculum](#) - based on the ethical leadership compass, this training curriculum is intended to help leaders develop new skills and behaviors consistent with ethical leadership. Includes slides, activities, and handouts for facilitators and participants.

[Ethical Leadership: Quick Activities](#) - a series of 15-minute activities that can be used to highlight and practice strong ethical leadership behaviors over a series of leadership meetings

[Talk About Ethics](#) - an activity and [activity guide](#) for all staff members to help them consider how they "talk about ethics" and to encourage discussion with their colleagues

Ethics Discussion Activities - using journal articles and media examples, activities prompt group discussion of ethical leadership concepts

Managing for Organizational Integrity - a March 1994 Harvard Business Review article by Lynn Sharp

[Leader Guide](#)

[Participant Guide](#)

Psychology of Fraud: Why Good People Do Bad Things - a May 2012 presentation on NPR by Chana Joffe-Walt and Alix Spiegel ([NPR article and presentation](#))

[Leader Guide](#)

[Participant Guide](#)

- Tools to improve plans to strengthen an organization's environment and culture:
 - [Ethical Leadership Improvement Plan Checklist](#) - two-page checklist to guide design and implementation of strong EL improvement projects
 - [Ethical Leadership Improvement Plan Summary](#) - two-page worksheet to capture a concise snapshot of a completed EL improvement plan
 - [Guidance for Strong Ethical Leadership Projects](#)