



GENERAL ACUPUNCTURE

The VA Recognizes "Certified" Acupuncturists

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

In a recent update to the Department of Veteran Affairs Handbook 5005/100 (an employee handbook) the VA not only opens the door to new opportunities for acupuncturists, but also declares acupuncture as a "profession" rather than a "modality" which has been the case in previous years.¹⁻² Within Section 4 of the handbook, "Grade Requirements" are listed (GS 9-12), which determine the pay scale for civilian government employees. Acupuncturists have the opportunity to make up to \$61,486 - \$79,936 with a GS-12 classification.³⁻⁴

However, the most notable passage in the handbook is in Section 3, "Basic Requirements" that indicates appointment as an acupuncturist for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) requires certain certification. "Acupuncturists hired in the VHA must be board certified through the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM). The board certification must be current and the acupuncturist must abide by the certifying body's requirements for continuing education."³



In response to the update of the VA Handbook 5005/100, Dr. Kory Ward-Cook , CEO of the NCCAOM, said, "This exciting news from the VA comes at a crucial time when the U.S. is facing a national opioid epidemic and acupuncture has emerged as a safe, cost effective and evidence-based, medicine suitable to treat pain and has also been shown effective for reduce the use of opioids as the opioid epidemic has significantly affected many of our veterans," stated Dr. Kory Ward-Cook, NCCAOM Chief Executive Officer. "This new government occupational standard will establish NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturists to provide acupuncture services to the thousands of veterans who are suffering from debilitating pain and addiction to overprescribed opioids at the many Veterans hospitals and medical centers."

To read the full updated VA Handbook 5005/100 please click [here](#).

References

1. Weeks J. VA respectfully recognizes acupuncture professionals as GS 9 to GS 12 in new employment handbook. *Integrative Practitioner*, March 1, 2018.
2. FY 2015 VHA Complementary & Integrative Health (CIH) Services. *Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (VHA)*, May 2015:6.
3. VA Handbook 5005/100. *Department of Veterans Affairs*, 7 February 2018:9.
4. GS-12 Pay Scale General Schedule 2018. *FederalPay.org*, 2018.

MAY 2018