

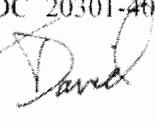


The Director

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

June 10, 2008

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

Dear Dr. Chu: 

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has approved your request for Direct-Hire Appointing Authority (DHA) for positions at The Department of the Army's Walter Reed Medical Center (WRAMC) for certain patient care positions. The Department of the Army may use this authority to fill positions as described in the attachment.

Your request meets the definition and requirements in 5 CFR 337, subpart B for a critical hiring need as explained below:

- (1) *Identification of the positions that must be filled.* WRAMC has a critical need to fill 82 positions related to direct patient care services in health system administration, health aid, and pharmacy groups. The attachment details the position title, series, grade levels and total number of positions that must be filled.
- (2) *Description of the event or circumstance that created the need to fill the positions.* WRAMC continues to provide health care services to wounded warriors returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The number of injured soldiers continues to grow and affects WRAMC ability to provide quality medical care. In addition, WRAMC continues to staff the new Warrior Transition Units at WRAMC and throughout the Army, further straining your patient care resources. These factors make it important that WRAMC hire qualified candidates rapidly, as they present themselves. WRAMC continues to compete with the entire nation for medical skill shortage occupations within the labor market.
- (3) *Specification of the duration for which the critical hiring need is expected to exist.* Direct-Hire Authority is requested to be extended through the base realignment closure of WRAMC in 2011.

(4) *Evidence that demonstrates why the use of other hiring authorities is impracticable or ineffective.* As noted above, speed is of the essence in order to serve increased need for medical services as a result of ongoing war efforts. WRAMC used their previous DHA to fill 69 positions. In addition, WRAMC hired 49 individuals through the use of veterans' appointment authorities, the Student Career Experience Program, and the Federal Career Intern Program. While WRAMC continues to experience an increased patient population, continued turnover rates, and projected increases as the date nears for the Base Closure Realignment, recruitment and retention at WRAMC has become significantly difficult. The entire nation is experiencing medical skill shortages.

The competition with the region's other employers of medical personnel makes it difficult to meet the increased health care needs at WRAMC and throughout the Army. WRAMC conducted rigorous recruitment and continued to make good usage of the Veteran's Recruitment Appointment Authority, and the Veteran's Employment Opportunity Act appointments. Due to the prolonged nature of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and increased patient population, WRAMC must continue to hire additional health care providers, support staff, and address staff turnover quickly. Normal competitive hiring will not suffice for filling medical positions at WRAMC because you are required to provide medical support for wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as those soldiers that are placed in a medical hold status. You must also continue to fill positions for the new Warrior Transition Units at WRAMC and throughout the Army.

Based on the above, your authority reads:

DoD-009 extended on the date of this letter to fill 82 positions as described in the attachment 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 **December 31, 2009**.

Using this DHA:

WRAMC may give individuals in the occupational series shown above 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 332.402. In addition, you must 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). I recommend that you take particular care in conducting pre-employment background and security clearance investigations to ensure clearance and security requirements. Further, you must continue to make employment offers to qualified candidates with veterans' preference as such candidates present themselves.

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 the authority without requiring agency reports. On a periodic basis, OPM will determine if continued use is supportable. DoD may request an extension by providing information that demonstrates continued or additional mandates.

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.

Attachment

Sincerely,



Linda M. Springer
Director

The Department of the Army Walter Reed Medical Center
5 CFR 337.205(b)(1) – Attachment

Title	Grade/Series	Total Positions
Health Aid and Technician	GS-0640-5/6/7/9	14
Medical Technologist	GS-0644-11/12	13
Medical Technician	GS-0645-5/7	01
Medical Instrument Technician	GS-0649-5/7/8	05
Health System Administration	GS-0670-12	01
Health System Specialist	GS-0671-9/11	12
Medical Records Technician	GS-0675-5/6/7/8	08
Medical Support Assistant	GS-00679-5/6	26
Pharmacy Technician	GS-0661-6	02
Total		82