

Date: NOV 12 2019

From: Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N)
Acting Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Workforce Services (10A2)

Subj: Authorization of One-Time Modification to Leave Conversion Rates Based on Policy
Revision in VA Handbook 5011/32, Daily to Hourly Leave (VIEWS # 01538211)

To: Network Directors (10N1-23), Network Chief Medical Officers, Medical Center
Directors, Chiefs of Staff, Chief Officers, and Human Resource Officers

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to authorize a one-time modification of the annual and sick leave conversion rates for full-time employees transitioning from a daily to hourly leave system as a result of the policy change in VA Handbook 5011/32 on September 15, 2019. The authorization only applies to full-time employees on established and approved work schedules in VATAS as of September 14, 2019. This modification is not authorized for leave conversions that are effective on a date other than September 15, 2019, or for other leave conversions that are effective on September 15, 2019.

2. VA Handbook 5011/32, Hours of Duty and Leave, dated July 26, 2018, established the variable work schedule (VWS) for full-time physicians and changed the leave charge, leave accrual rate, and maximum carryover for full-time physicians, dentists, chiropractors, podiatrists, and optometrists from days to hours. The policies, however, were placed on hold pending the updating of Information Technology systems (i.e., VA Time and Attendance System (VATAS), HR Smart, and Defense Civilian Pay System) required to accommodate the policy changes. On August 28, 2019, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), Worklife and Benefits Service, issued a policy update notice that the policy and system changes to leave, but not the VWS, was to be implemented as of September 15, 2019.

3. The conversion of leave balances on the employees being converted from the daily to the hourly leave system was eight hours per one day of annual leave and eight hours per one day of sick leave. The annual and sick leave conversion rate was the same for employees on compressed work schedules as employee on regular work schedules.

4. This memorandum authorizes a one-time modification to the annual leave conversion for affected employees on regular work schedules (i.e., ten eight-hour tours per pay period). Annual leave will be converted at a rate of eight hours per one day of leave, but frozen annual leave will be implemented for the hours of leave that exceeds 685 hours. The frozen annual leave may be used until an employee separates or retires and is not subject to the maximum leave accumulation policy. Any unused leave balance at the time of separation or retirement will be paid out at a reduced rate using the computation for frozen annual leave payments. For example, an employee with an

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annual leave balance of 100 days will have 685 hours of regular annual leave and 115 hours of frozen annual leave.

5. This memorandum authorizes a one-time modification of the annual leave conversion rate for affected employees on compressed work schedules. These employees will have their annual leave converted as provided below. The conversion rate of the annual leave balance will be the dominant (mode) number of hours scheduled per day for the pay period per one day of annual leave. For example, an employee on a work schedule in VATAS of six ten-hour tours, two eight-hour tours, and one four-hour tour would have an annual leave conversion rate of ten hours (dominant/mode) per one day of annual leave. The converted annual leave will be separated into two categories: 1) Regular annual leave; and 2) Frozen annual leave.

a. Annual leave will be converted at a rate of the dominant (mode) hours per one day of leave. Regular annual leave includes all leave up to and including 685 hours.

b. Frozen annual leave will be implemented for the hours of annual leave that exceeds 685 hours. The frozen annual leave may be used until an employee separates or retires and is not subject to the maximum leave accumulation policy. Any unused leave balance at the time of separation or retirement will be paid out at a reduced rate using the computation for frozen annual leave payments. For example, an employee with an annual leave conversion rate of ten hours per one day of annual leave with 86 leave days will have 685 hours of regular annual leave and 175 hours of frozen annual leave.

6. This memorandum authorizes a one-time modification of the sick leave conversion rates for employees on compressed work schedules. These employees will have their sick leave converted as provided below. The conversion rate of the sick leave balance will be the dominant (mode) number of hours scheduled per day for the pay period per one day of sick leave. For example, an employee on a work schedule in VATAS of six ten-hour tours, two eight-hour tours, and one four-hour tour per pay period would have a sick leave conversion rate of ten hours (dominant/mode) per one day of sick leave. The converted sick leave will be separated into two categories: 1) Regular sick leave; and 2) Conversion sick leave.

a. Regular sick leave is converted at a rate of eight hours per one day of leave.

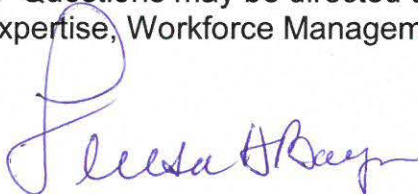
b. Conversion sick leave will be implemented for the hours of sick leave that exceeds the eight-hours of regular leave. The conversion sick leave may be used until an employee separates or retires. However, the conversion sick leave may not be used in calculating an employee's retirement benefits or paid out upon retirement

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or separation from VHA. The conversion sick leave is forfeited upon retirement or separation from VHA, to include appointment or movement into Federal positions in non-VHA organizations and will not be recalculated or restored if the employee leaves and then returns to a new position within VHA. For example, an employee with a sick leave conversion rate of ten hours per one day of sick leave will have eight hours of regular sick leave and two hours of conversion leave.

7. This memorandum permits the authorization of this one-time modification of the annual and sick leave conversion rates for affected full-time employees on work schedules at the time of transition from the daily to hourly leave system effective September 15, 2019.

8. Questions may be directed to Lauren Kuiper-Rocha, Director, HR Center of Expertise, Workforce Management and Consulting, at Lauren.Kuiper-Rocha@va.gov.



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Attachment: Leave Administration for Physicians