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INTRODUCTION

To All Employees:

The Veterans Bio-Medical Research Institute, Inc. will be referred to hereafter as "VBRI" and "the Institute" in this handbook. The purpose of the Employee Handbook is to bring together in a single convenient place a summary of the policies and procedures that affect you as an employee. If you have not yet read through the handbook, please do so now. During the course of your employment, refer back to it when you have questions. Be sure to note changes and updates as they are posted and distributed. Any questions that arise should be directed to the administrative staff at VBRI.

It is important to begin by describing what this Employee Handbook is, as well as what it is not. It...

- **IS a summary of our Institute's employment policies and procedures.** It revokes and supersedes any prior summaries or statements of employment policies and procedures and will control in case of any inconsistency with other written materials or unwritten practices.
- **IS an evolving document which we expect to revise and update.** We reserve the right to add, modify, or delete any or all policies, practices or procedures at our sole and absolute discretion. We will keep you advised of changes in policies and procedures covered in this Employee Handbook through notices with employee earnings statements, circulation of revised pages and/or a later edition.
- **IS NOT your only source of information on employment-related issues.** Although this Employee Handbook will usually be the best place to start in finding answers to questions, you may have questions that it does not answer. In such cases, you should talk with your supervisor or the Executive Director of VBRI.
- **IS NOT a contract of employment.** We hope that our employment relationship with you will be ongoing and rewarding for you and us. However, your employment is "at will" and may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, by either you or us. No one in the Institution has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for a specified period of time, or to make any other representations or agreement inconsistent with this policy, unless it is in writing and signed by the Executive Director.

Mission Statement—General Information

Our mission is to facilitate the medical research and education programs conducted at the VA New Jersey Health Care System, East Orange and Lyons Divisions. The VBRI strives to provide outstanding support to VA staff in their research, education and training endeavors to foster progress in biomedical, clinical, rehabilitative and health care services programs that benefit the nation's veterans and the general public.

VBRI was formed under Public Law 100-322, which authorized the establishment of a non-profit research corporation to receive and administer non-VA appropriated funds in support of the research mission of the affiliated VA health care system. VBRI was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in the State of New Jersey on October 12, 1989, and obtained IRS tax exemption under 501(c)(3) on March 11, 1991. In the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, PL106-117, passed on November 30, 1999, Congress expanded the authority of the VA affiliated non-profit corporations to administer approved education and training activities. The legislation enabled the creation of such corporations to provide a flexible mechanism for the administration of funds in support of research, education and training at the affiliated VA. The Public Laws authorizing and regulating the non-profit corporations are codified at 38USC§7361-7368.

VBRI may exercise all rights and powers conferred on non-profit public benefit corporations under the laws of New Jersey. VBRI may receive funds from gifts or grants from voluntary health organizations or charitable foundations, federal agencies, professional societies, for-profit companies, other non-profit entities, and individuals. All funds expended by the Institute directly or indirectly support the research mission and the approved research projects or the approved educational and training activities of the VA New Jersey Health Care System. All results from VA approved research are in the public domain.

The Institute is governed by a ten-member Board of Directors, four of whom are designated by public law to be the VA New Jersey Health Care System Chief Executive Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Director Research and Development and Director Center for Education and Development. Among the other six elected members are two members who are not employees or officers of the federal government. The Directors do not receive compensation for their service. The Board of Directors has appointed an Executive Director to develop and implement policy and manage operations of the Institute.

EMPLOYMENT BASICS

Employee Requirements

Applicants for employment by VBRI will not be hired without a completed employment packet. This packet needs to be completed prior to or on the first day of employment. This will include, but is not limited to:

- ◆ Employment Application
- ◆ IRS Form W-4, a copy of which will be sent to the State of New Jersey to comply with the New Hire Reporting requirements.
- ◆ Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. The Form I-9 is to be signed by the supervising VBRI member or authorized VBRI official after review of appropriate identification
- ◆ Conflict of Interest Form
- ◆ Standards of Ethical Conduct Form

All VBRI employees must also secure status as a Without Compensation (WOC) Employee to work at the VA NJHCS. This requires the Optional Application for Employment – OF 612 and the Declaration for Federal Employment. WOC status awards the employee of VBRI some of the benefits and responsibilities of employment at the VA NJHCS. Please contact VBRI if there is a question as to the applicability of any requirement or policy at the VA NJHCS, which is not covered in this handbook.

If the VBRI employee is to engage in direct patient care activities, the securing of WOC status requires verification of professional credentials for nurses and obtaining of clinical privileges from the VA NJHCS for physicians and ARNPs. Physicians and ARNPs need to contact Credentialing at X2276 for license verification and clinical privileging. No patient contact is allowed until license verification by Nursing is complete or clinical privileges are granted by the VA NJHCS. Equivalent permission and/or clinical privileging must be obtained from other institutions if such work is to be performed at these sites.

A new VBRI employee who is not conducting such patient care activities should apply for WOC status by providing the necessary completed documents to the VBRI office. When VBRI employees work at the VA NJHCS or at other institutions they are required to follow the host institutional policies relating to personal conduct, safety and the conduct of research activities.

Reference Checks

Satisfactory reference checks are a condition of employment. The hiring VBRI member is responsible for verification of the applicant's background and credentials. Prior to making an offer, the hiring VBRI member should contact at least two of the applicant's references. Areas that may be discussed include: job knowledge, work habits, productivity, independent thinking, attendance, and motivation.

Probationary Period

Your first three months of employment are termed the Probationary Period, during which your supervisor will evaluate your job performance. If your supervisor signs off on an acceptable standard for your performance, you will be considered as having completed your probationary period and will participate in the annual Performance Review process. If your performance does not meet the standard performance level, your employment will either be terminated or the probationary period extended.

Separate Employers

VBRI employees are not UMDNJ or Federal employees, but often work side by side with employees of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey and the VA NJHCS. Work policies of these employers differ slightly from VBRI policies. All persons who are paid wages and salary directly from VBRI are employees of VBRI. If questions arise in the course of your employment because of differences in treatment of employees, please refer these questions to the VBRI Administrative Office. VBRI employment policies will apply to your appointment, not the policies of the VA NJHCS or the UMDNJ.

Classifications of Employees

VBRI has several classifications for employees.

1. **Full-Time Employee:** An employee who is hired to work at least 30 hours per week and whose appointment is expected to exceed 1000 hours per year. Full-time employees with an appointment expected to continue for a year are eligible for all VBRI benefits.
2. **Part-Time Employee:** An employee who is hired to work less than 30 hours per week and whose appointment is expected to exceed 1000 hours per year. Part-time employees are eligible for all or some VBRI benefits (see benefits section).
3. **Intermittent Employee:** An employee who is hired to work on an intermittent or as-needed basis. These employees are not eligible for any VBRI benefits.
4. **Temporary Employee:** An employee who is hired with the expectation that he or she will be needed for a specified period of time of less than 12 months and less than 1000 hours. Temporary employees are not eligible for most VBRI benefits, but may be eligible for leave accrual (see benefits section).
5. **Exempt Employee:** An employee who is paid on a salaried basis and who regularly works in certain executive, administrative, or professional positions as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is an exempt employee. Exempt employees are paid on a salary for completion of their job and are not eligible for overtime.
6. **Non-exempt Employee:** An employee, whether paid on a salaried or hourly basis, who

is covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay and certain rest and meal breaks (see below).

Most VBRI employees are non-exempt. Each employee's status under FLSA will be determined upon hiring. See the Executive Director for any questions regarding your status.

Workweek and Scheduling

For payroll and accounting purposes, the workweek normally begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight the following Saturday. Each employee may have a different work schedule. VBRI may establish other workdays or workweeks for individual employees or certain positions.

The supervisor establishes work schedules for each position. Employees are expected to work all the hours and days assigned. Requests for scheduling changes or for particular days off must be made ahead of time and approved by the employee's supervisor.

Rest and Meal Periods

All non-exempt employees receive a 10-minute paid rest break for each four hours of working time. Ideally, a break will occur near the midpoint of each four-hour work period, but the supervisor will approve scheduling. Break periods should not be used to extend a lunch period, work overtime, arrive or leave early.

Non-exempt employees working more than five hours in a day are required to take a meal break two to five hours into their shift. The normal meal break is a 30-minute unpaid period. Employees who work three or more hours beyond an 8-hour shift will have an additional unpaid meal period before or during the overtime period.

Overtime and Time Reporting

Non-exempt employees will be paid at an overtime rate when they work in excess of forty hours per week for VBRI.

The employee's supervisor must authorize any overtime work in advance. The overtime rate is one and one-half times the regular rate of pay for all hours **actually** worked over 40 hours in one workweek. Vacation, holiday, and sick leave hours **do not** count as hours worked for the purpose of determining overtime.

Accurate records of the hours worked ensure that you will be paid correctly. The employee is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information on his or her records.

Each employee must fill out and sign a time sheet for the actual hours worked, and submit it with their signature and the signature of the PI of the project being charged. Falsification of a timesheet may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Time sheets are due on the Tuesday of the week following each bi-weekly pay period. The schedule and a blank timesheet are available on the VBRI website, www.vbri.org.

COMPENSATION

Employees of VBRI are paid on a bi-weekly basis. Payday is scheduled to be the second Tuesday following the end of each bi-weekly pay period. If the Tuesday falls on a holiday, payday will be the preceding Monday.

Electronic transfer will issue paychecks to the financial institution designated by the employee. The employee will be issued their first paycheck directly from the VBRI office pending initiation of the electronic transfer. Employees are required to provide necessary private account information to VBRI administration within one week of employment in order to initiate action in time for the second paycheck to be paid electronically.

Payroll Deductions

The following deductions from your paycheck are required: FICA (Social Security), Medicare, Federal income tax, and state disability/unemployment insurance. Other deductions require your authorization. Examples of such deductions include your 401k plan contributions or deductions for your portion of any insurance premiums.

Performance Reviews

VBRI sends notices to supervisors prior to the anniversary date of each employee who has not been reviewed in the preceding 12 months. Performance evaluations should be conducted in the anniversary month of the employee.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Equal Employment Opportunity

VBRI is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate against any person in any matter of employment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era or on any basis prohibited by federal, state or local law.

This policy applies to all staff levels within the organization and includes but is not limited to the following: (1) recruiting and solicitation for employment; (2) hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, and demotion; (3) employment training or selection for training; (4) pay rates, compensation, and benefits; (5) termination. All selection methods and criteria shall be based on job-related criteria and individual merit.

Every employee has the right to work in surroundings that are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination. We will not engage in nor tolerate unlawful discrimination on any basis prohibited by local, state or federal law.

Please report any unlawful discrimination to either the Executive Director or the President of VBRI.

Personal Information and Personnel Records

Your personnel records are confidential. Occasionally, we receive requests for information from your personnel records as part of court proceedings or government activities. It is our policy to respond to all such requests to the extent we are required to do so. We will generally provide only your job title, salary, and verification of employment dates.

When you move, change your telephone number, or have other changes in your personal information, please keep the VBRI office informed of such changes so we may keep your personnel records accurate and up-to-date. It is your responsibility to see that we have your current address and phone number, so that we can communicate with you as needed.

You may review your personnel records at any mutually convenient time. If you wish to do so, please notify the administrative staff of VBRI so that a specific time may be scheduled when appropriate personnel will be available to answer your questions. Any concerns regarding the completeness or accuracy of the information contained in your files should be taken up with the VBRI Executive Director. Examination of personnel files will generally be limited to normal business hours.

Sexual and Other Harassment

VBRI expects all employees to accomplish their work in a professional and businesslike manner. Harassment of employees by fellow employees, supervisors, or non-employees in the workplace is a form of unlawful discriminatory behavior and is not permitted regardless of working relationship. Specifically forbidden is harassment based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

Harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures, or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials, e-mail or pictures derogatory to either gender or to racial, ethnic, or religious groups; or basing personnel decisions on an employee's response to sexually-oriented requests.

Engaging in any act which discriminates against another employee because of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, creed, marital or veteran's status, age, the presence of a disability or any other basis prohibited by local, state, or federal laws will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is improper and illegal and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Any employee who experiences conduct of this sort, or feels that his or her work environment has become a hostile or offensive place to work, should immediately bring the matter to the attention of his or her manager, the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Trustees. Do not wait for the harassment to become severe or pervasive. Please be assured your concerns will be investigated promptly and you will not suffer retaliation for reporting them. VBRI will protect the confidentiality of any complainant to the extent possible. It is important to our organization that all claims of discrimination or sexual harassment be thoroughly reviewed and investigated so appropriate steps are taken as necessary.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Attendance and Tardiness

Regular attendance is essential to your job performance. If you will be unable to report to work or will be late, you must let your supervisor know as soon as possible, and always before your scheduled starting time. If your supervisor is unavailable, leave a message on voice mail, stating your reason for being late or absent and a telephone number where you may be reached.

If your absence or tardiness is due to an emergency, please call in as soon as possible, or have someone call in for you.

If you fail to report to work for three consecutive days without notification to your supervisor, you will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned your position. In the event you are out ill three consecutive days, a doctor's note must be provided upon your return. Failure to do so may result in loss of pay.

Attendance or tardiness problems, including failure to call in, may result in discipline up to and including termination.

For more information on leave, see the Benefits section.

Smoking

Smoking by employees is permitted only during rest or meal periods and only in outdoor areas designated by the VA NJHCS.

Conflict of Interest

We expect employees to avoid situations that might cause their personal interests to conflict with the interests of our Institute or to compromise its reputation or integrity. A conflict of interest, or the appearance of one, occurs when you or a member of your immediate family uses your position with us for personal benefit through an investment, association, or business relationship that interferes with your ability to exercise independent judgment on our behalf.

Employees are discouraged from accepting meals or other gifts of more than a nominal value from salespeople, vendors, suppliers, or any other solicitors. Your supervisor may approve exceptions to this rule. Also refer to standards of conduct and discipline in the following section.

Employment of Relatives (Nepotism)

Employment of relatives is permitted, except in circumstances where an appointment places related people in supervisory and subordinate roles, or in a situation where influence could be exerted, directly or indirectly, on future decisions concerning the status of employment, promotion, or compensation.

Confidential Information

As a VBRI employee you will at some time or another come to possess or have access to confidential information. This may include study data, patient identifiers, results, access to VA computer records or databases or another company's proprietary information. It is your responsibility to keep this information confidential even if you are no longer employed at VBRI. An employee who discloses confidential information will be disciplined up to and including termination and may expose himself or herself to legal action. If inquiries are made from outside VBRI/VA NJHCS you should direct all questions to your supervisor or the Executive Director of VBRI or the Administrative Officer of R&D.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Abuse of alcohol or any other drug is a serious threat to both personal health and job performance. In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, VBRI has adopted the following drug-free workplace policy. All employees of VBRI are expected to comply with this policy as a condition of their employment.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace. Violators are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees should determine with their physician or pharmacist whether any prescription drugs being taken might impair their ability to perform their jobs safely and effectively. If your performance might be so impaired, you should not report to work and you should discuss the issue with your supervisor to determine whether some accommodation may allow you to perform the essential functions of the position safely and effectively.

Any employee convicted of a violation of a criminal drug statute, which occurred in the workplace, must notify the supervisor and the Executive Director of VBRI in writing within five days of the conviction. VBRI is then required by law to notify all federal agencies providing funds to VBRI of the infraction within ten days after receiving notice from an employee.

In support of this policy, information is available in the VBRI office regarding the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace and information about recognizing and obtaining treatment for chemical dependency problems.

Standards of Conduct and Discipline

We expect each employee to contribute to the quality and reliability of the Institute within the scope of his or her job responsibilities. Failure to meet this standard of performance may be the basis for adjustment in compensation or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

We will take appropriate action based on the seriousness of the situation and the circumstances. Discipline less than termination may take the form of an oral warning, a written warning, probation, or suspension and will be documented in the employee's personnel file. Which of these options is chosen, or whether any of them is used prior to termination, will depend on the situation. Supervisors in consultation with the Executive Director will make the evaluation of the facts as appropriate.

In addition, 38 U.S.C. § 7366 (c)(2) requires that each employee must certify that he or she will comply with the federal laws and regulations applicable to Federal employees with respect to conflicts of interest. The Standards of Ethical Conduct are codified in 5 CFR Part 2635.

EMPLOYEE SEPARATION

Termination

In order to maintain the staffing flexibility that is essential to the successful management of our Institute, as well as to protect the options of each employee, it is understood that the employment relationship with us is "at will." It can be terminated, with or without cause, at any time by either employer or employee. The provision of benefits does not constitute a promise that employment will last one year or longer. No agreement inconsistent with this policy is valid, unless it is in writing and signed by the Executive Director. The Request for Personnel Action does not constitute an exception to the "at will" policy.

The employee's final paycheck will be paid on the next scheduled payday. The employee must turn in all keys, badges, lab coats with cards, and other property of VBRI or the VA prior to his or her departure. You must complete the WOC termination checklist prior to leaving. Please see the Executive Director for a copy of this form.

If you voluntarily terminate your employment, please try to give at least two weeks notice to your supervisor, stating the reason for the resignation.

Exit Interviews

An exit interview will be scheduled prior to an employee leaving the employment of VBRI by the administrative office. The purpose of an exit interview may include:

- Reviewing the reasons for the termination, layoff, or resignation; and
- Reviewing financial arrangements, including the amount of the employee's final paycheck, accrued vacation, and similar items.

References

VBRI Administration will confirm dates of employment, positions held, and final rate of pay. Additional information may be shared with prospective employers on a case-by-case basis. Former employees can facilitate the sharing of additional information by signing authorizations to release information to their prospective employers. VBRI, however, reserves its rights to share information concerning former employees whenever it determines the requester has a legitimate need to know information about a former employee.

Communications

As your employer, we want to keep you well informed. Please help accomplish this by keeping us up-to-date on your address and telephone number, and by reading all memos and announcements you receive.

Other information will be distributed through mailings to your home address and to your mail stop at work. It is important that you read the information sent to you. If you are not receiving mailed information, contact the Executive Director.

Facilities

Employee Parking - Employees who drive to work will be assigned a parking permit by the VA NJHCS, which must be displayed in their vehicle while it is parked on VA property. Employee parking spaces are provided in the parking lot. General parking for employees in these parking spaces is on a first-come, first-served basis. A number of parking spaces are reserved for patients, carpools, disabled employees/visitors, and others. Always lock your car while it is parked. **We do not assume responsibility for vehicles or their contents in these parking areas.**

Personal Mail - You may not use the Institute's name, address, envelopes, or letterhead for personal correspondence; this includes correspondence of a political nature.

Personal Possessions - We do not assume responsibility for any theft or damage to the personal belongings of employees. Please lock office doors if you are leaving a room unoccupied.

Long Distance Phone Calls - Long-distance phone calls made for personal reasons are prohibited except in the case of emergency.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety

VBRI functions within the VA NJHCS facilities. The VA NJHCS provides a clean, healthy, safe environment in which to work in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. Employee safety depends on the safety consciousness of everyone. As a VBRI employee and a VA NJHCS WOC employee, you are expected to take an active part in maintaining this environment. Always observe the special safety rules applicable in your work area, adhere to all safety instructions provided by your supervisor and use safety equipment where required. Each employee working in a laboratory will have available the R&D Laboratory Safety Manual and Radiation Safety Plan. Each employee should be aware of and have read the plan. Attendance to the annual safety meeting and other mandatory trainings are required for all VBRI employees.

Your work place should be kept neat, clean and orderly. It is your responsibility to learn the location of all safety and emergency equipment, as well as the appropriate safety contact phone numbers.

VBRI or the VA NJHCS will provide all safety equipment, and employees will be responsible for the reasonable upkeep of this equipment. Any problems with or defects in, equipment should be reported immediately to the Research and Development Administrative Officer.

No minors (under 18) are allowed in the laboratories of the VA NJHCS. This includes both the East Orange and Lyons campuses and any other space that is designated a laboratory.

As an VBRI employee, you have a duty to comply with the safety rules of the VA NJHCS; to assist in maintaining the hazard free environment; to report any accidents or injuries - including any breaches of safety - and to report any unsafe equipment, working condition, process or procedure, at once to your supervisor.

Employees may report safety violations or injuries anonymously to the Safety Committee, if they are not the injured or violating party. **NO EMPLOYEE WILL BE PUNISHED OR REPRIMANDED FOR REPORTING SAFETY VIOLATIONS OR HAZARDS.** However, any deliberate or ongoing safety violation, or creation of hazard, by an employee will be dealt with through disciplinary action by VBRI, up to and including termination.

Accidents and Accident Reports

You must notify your supervisor immediately if you are injured on the job. It is your supervisor's responsibility to help you evaluate the situation and assist you in obtaining appropriate medical assistance, should that be necessary.

You are an employee of VBRI and insured under VBRI's Worker's Compensation policy. This insurance covers medical expenses and lost pay in cases of accidental injury or

occupational illness on the job. In order to file for benefits you must complete the appropriate Worker's compensation claim forms. These forms can be obtained from the Executive Director, who will initiate the claims process upon your request. You must bring the complete form back to the VBRI Executive Director for approval.

As soon as practical, but in no case later than 24 hours following your injury or suspected injury, you must complete a VA NJHCS accident report, online on the VA intranet, describing the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Failure to report the accident to VBRI may result in a claim denial. This report will permit us to better assist you in obtaining insurance benefits if you qualify for them.

Please note that this accident report form is an internal requirement of working at a VA NJHCS facility, and does not register a claim for workmen's compensation.

Snow / Inclement Weather

If there is snow or other inclement weather VBRI will follow the closure decisions of the VA NJHCS. Please listen to the radio or the TV broadcast to find out if the VA NJHCS will be closed for all but essential personal. Please use your best judgment in your decision to come to work or not. Do not put yourself at risk. Please call your supervisor or the VBRI office to confirm or leave a message regarding your absence.

BENEFITS

Group Health Plan

Medical insurance is available through VBRI's group benefit plan. Employees are covered on the 1st day of the month following your employment date, the only exception to this rule is if you are employed on the 1st day of the current month, then your benefits are effective immediately in the Institute's medical insurance program. Eligibility for participation in VBRI's group benefit plans is based on a normal schedule of 25 hours or more per week, expected to continue for one year or more. The copay for employee health insurance is \$10.00 per office visit. Healthcare coverage will be paid 67% by VBRI and 33% by the covered employee. Your signature on the enrollment forms constitutes authorization for any payroll deduction. Cost breakdowns for insurance premiums are available from the VBRI office.

We intend to continue our group benefit plans indefinitely, but we reserve the right to amend or even discontinue all or some of them at any time, subject to government laws and regulations. If a plan is terminated and not replaced with comparable benefits, participants will be notified. Participants will be given information on how to convert group insurance to individual policies whenever conversion privileges apply. Please remember that actual benefits provided, as well as eligibility requirements, are determined by the plan documents. For information on these, consult the applicable benefits booklet or contact the administrative staff at VBRI.

State Continuation of Health Coverage

An employee may be eligible for continuation of benefits upon voluntary or involuntary job loss through the State of New Jersey. Qualified individuals may be entitled up to 12 months of coverage for themselves and their dependents and may be required to pay the entire premium for coverage up to 102% of the cost of the plan.

Retirement Plan

Eligibility requirements for participation in the TIAA-CREF Group Retirement Annuity (GRA) plan are discussed in the Summary Plan Description. The Summary Plan Description is available in the VBRI office. Generally, eligibility is based on a regular full-time or part-time appointment expected to exceed 1000 hours per year. The employee may participate in the retirement plan at the beginning of the seventh month of employment, at which time he or she must complete the appropriate application materials to begin participation. If your immediately preceding employer was an organization that met the eligibility requirements of IRS Code Section 501(c)(3), that period of service may be counted towards this waiting period.

When an eligible employee begins participation in the retirement plan, VBRI will pay into the plan an amount matching the employee's deduction up to 5.0%. That is, the employee can choose to contribute up to 5.0% of his or her gross pay to the plan and that amount will be matched by VBRI. The maximum combined amount contributed by the employer and employee to the retirement plan is therefore equal to 10% of the gross monthly pay (5.0% employee pay reduction and 5.0% VBRI contribution and match). A signed wage and salary reduction plan is required for employee contributions and the VBRI match. This reduction plan must be turned into VBRI in the month prior to the effective date of the requested change.

Any employee may participate in a TIAA-CREF Supplemental Retirement Annuity (SGRA) plan, a tax-deferred annuity plan. The SRA plan is strictly an employee contribution, and no employer contribution is made. The SRA plan does not have a waiting period.

Disability Insurance

Short and long-term disability policies are provided to employees working at least 30 hours per week on an appointment expected to last one year or longer. Disability insurance premiums are paid by VBRI.

Other

VBRI employees will be covered by unemployment insurance from the State of New Jersey.

Holidays

VBRI observes the following paid holidays. Part-time employees receive pay only for those holidays falling on work days in their scheduled tour of duty, and only for the number of hours which they would have been scheduled to work had the holiday not fallen on that date. Intermittent employees and those who work on an unscheduled number of hours per week or month will receive no holiday pay.

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Columbus Day
Presidents' Day	Veteran's Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be recognized as the holiday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday will be recognized as the holiday. The VBRI observed holidays are consistent with the VA NJHCS calendar.

In order to receive holiday pay, you must:

1. Have worked the last scheduled workday before and the first scheduled workday after the holiday, unless on approved absence (which includes annual and sick leave), and
2. Normally be scheduled to work on the day in question if it were not a holiday.

If a holiday falls during your vacation, the holiday will not be considered a day of your paid annual leave. Only the non-holiday period will be charged to annual leave.

Annual Leave

Annual leave will be authorized upon appointment for non-intermittent employees in positions having an expectation of continuing more than 90 days. When approved by VBRI, employees will earn 1 hour paid annual leave for every 20 regular, holiday, or sick hours paid. For employees with 3 to 15 years of continuous service, annual leave accrues at the rate of 1 hour paid annual leave for every 13 regular, holiday, sick or annual leave hours paid. For employees with more than 15 years of service, annual leave will accrue 1 hour for every 10 hours worked. Annual leave does not accrue on overtime.

Example: Hire date January 1, 1998

- **January 1, 1998 - January 1, 2001**
0-3 years of service, annual leave entitlement is 13 days
- **January 1, 2001- January 1, 2013**
3-15 years of service, annual leave entitlement is 20 days
- **January 1, 2014**
15+ years of service, annual leave entitlement is 26 days

The supervisor should approve annual leave, at least two weeks in advance. However, supervisors may grant leave with shorter notice in certain circumstances. Supervisors must consider workplace coverage in approving leave.

Annual leave can accrue to a maximum carry-over of 240 hours per calendar year. At termination of employment, unused annual leave will be paid to the employee. Annual leave may not be used during the first thirty days of employment and unused annual leave will not be paid to employees terminating after less than six months of employment. Your supervisor must approve annual leave, unauthorized time off will not be paid.

Sick Leave

Sick leave will be authorized upon appointment for non-intermittent employees in positions having an expectation of continuing more than 90 days. When approved by VBRI,

employees will earn 1 hour paid sick leave for every 20 regular, holiday, or sick hours paid. Sick leave does not accrue on overtime.

At termination of employment, unused sick leave will not be paid to the employee.

Bereavement Leave

An employee is permitted to use a reasonable amount of accrued sick or annual leave when an absence is due to the death of a family member.

Military Leave

Employees who are required to attend annual military reserve training or other active military duty are granted leave with regular pay for up to 15 working days per year. Leave for additional military service may be taken as regular vacation or as unpaid leave. Employees who take military leave are entitled to return to their jobs as provided under federal and state laws. Employees should bring their orders to the attention of their supervisor on the first working day after receiving the notice. A copy of the orders must be supplied to the VBRI Administrative Office.

Jury Duty

Performance of jury duty is part of a person's responsibilities as a citizen. Unless your job responsibilities require it, we will not ask or encourage you to request to be excused from or postpone a call to jury duty. If you are required to perform jury duty, you will be paid your regular pay up to a maximum of 10 days for regular full-time or part-time employees. You will be expected to work your regular schedule on any day you are not required to be present in court.

In order to receive compensation during jury duty, you must provide us with a letter or other confirmation from the court clerk indicating the time you served.

Court Appearances

You may take annual leave to appear in court as a witness. You are responsible for notifying your supervisor immediately after receiving the summons to appear for a court appearance during scheduled work hours. A copy of this notice should be given to the Executive Director with your timesheet.

Voting

We encourage each employee to exercise the right to vote. In most situations, a person

should be able to vote before or after work or by absentee ballot. If you are unable to vote during these times due to your work schedule, you may take up to 2 hours off work with pay to vote. You must request this time off in advance from your supervisor, and must have a valid reason why you cannot vote by absentee ballot or during non-working hours. You will be expected to take the time off at the time of day that will require the least time missed from work, usually at the beginning or end of the workday.

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)

The Family and Medical Leave Act applies to all public agencies and private sector employers who employ **50** or more employees within a 75-mile radius in 20 or more workweeks during the current or preceding calendar year.

Other Unpaid Leaves of Absence:

Unpaid leave of absences may be granted under certain conditions, for a specified period of time. Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on your work record, your department's staffing needs, and your reason for requesting the leave. Circumstances will determine the length of leave granted. During an unpaid leave of absence, you may be required to pay your full group health premiums. Employees returning from a personal leave are *not guaranteed* a return to their former job. Where possible, you will return to your prior job or a similar position. If a position is available for which you are qualified, you may be considered for that opening.

The supervisor must approve all unpaid leaves of absence. Leave taken without supervisor approval may be considered abandonment and resignation of your job.

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

This confirms that I:

- have received and read the Employee Handbook dated January 1, 2003; and
- understand its contents; and
- understand that the Employee Handbook is not an agreement or contract for employment and that my employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, by either myself or my employer; and
- understand that the policies and procedures contained in the Employee Handbook may be changed by my employer at any time; and
- understand that this Handbook supersedes any prior handbooks or policy manuals issued by VBRI.

(Signature)

(Print Name)

Date of Signature: _____

Employee Handbook of
Veterans Bio-Medical Research Institute, Inc. (VBRI)
<http://www.vbri.org>

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