



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

November 4, 2009

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.  
Chair  
Blue Ribbon Panel on VA Medical School Affiliations  
The George Washington University Medical Center  
2300 Eye Street, NW  
Ross Hall 713 West  
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Dr. Cohen:

Thank you for meeting with me on September 29, 2009 to review the major findings and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)-Medical School Affiliations. I am pleased to accept the Panel's report and have directed the Veterans Health Administration to develop an implementation plan addressing the Panel's recommendations. I am especially pleased to support two of the Panel's most important recommendations: (1) the formation of a standing Federally Chartered Advisory Committee to realize the full potential of VA's partnerships with the Nation's health professional schools; and (2) the need to examine and, wherever possible, streamline policies and procedures that presently impede these partnerships.

The academic community has been an important and essential partner with VA in caring for Veterans for more than 60 years. Working together we have significantly improved health care delivery while at the same time enhancing the clinical and research workforce so necessary for our Nation's future. I am confident that our past successes will continue. I commend you and the Panel members for your diligent and thoughtful work.

Thank you for your continuing support of our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Eric K. Shinseki", is positioned above the printed name.

Eric K. Shinseki