



Leadership and Governance

VA senior leadership makes policy decisions through internal governing bodies including those cited below.

Governance	Major FY 2007 Actions
Strategic Management Council	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Membership</u></p> <p>The Strategic Management Council (SMC) is chaired by the Deputy Secretary and includes VA's seven Assistant Secretaries; the Deputy Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits, and Memorial Affairs; the Deputy General Counsel; Chair for the Board of Veterans' Appeals; Chief of Staff; Counselor to the Secretary; and the Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>The SMC serves as a collaborative and deliberative body that provides oversight and guidance on key strategic and operational issues that confront VA decision-makers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved VA's IT Governance Plan in support of the realigned Office of Information and Technology. The Governance Plan included the establishment of three boards: Information Technology Leadership Board; Business Needs and Investment Board; and Planning, Architecture, Technology and Services. • Reviewed and provided policy direction on a Department-wide effort to (1) identify criteria at the Department level for use in evaluating future medical facilities proposals for joint ventures and (2) develop a communications strategy for use during negotiations. The SMC reviewed and approved the products of a VA working group, including a draft VA Handbook, a communications strategy, and a new process for review and approval of future joint venture proposals between VA, DoD, academic affiliates, or other suitable public or private entities. • Reviewed and provided policy direction on distribution and next steps for research reports including <i>Employment of Recently Separated Servicemembers</i> and the results of the <i>Analysis of Differences in VA Disability Compensation</i>. • Reviewed VA's Regional Data Processing/National Data Program Migration Strategy and Telecommunication plan. • Reviewed the status of VA's labor agreements and pending negotiations.
Monthly Performance Reviews (MPRs)	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Membership</u></p> <p>MPRs are chaired by the Deputy Secretary and are attended by principals from every VA organization.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>MPRs focus on financial and program performance. In this context, the leadership discusses and makes decisions on mission-critical issues within the context of performance, budget, and workload targets and associated results. Necessary corrective actions are identified and implemented to help ensure program goals and objectives are accomplished.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each VA administration and staff office reported on progress in meeting established monthly and/or fiscal-year-to-date financial and performance goals. In this context, for 2007, more analytical depth was required and provided as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Created "special focus area" modules where program offices report on critical areas requiring the Deputy Secretary's near-term attention. ◦ Provided a more specific "budget object class" breakout of expense reporting allowing for more substantive discussions of VA expenditure patterns and potential transfer or reprogramming needs. ◦ Added detailed reporting on staff turnover in potential critical shortage areas and on IT project management and funding status.



Performance Overview

Purpose of This Report

VA's FY 2007 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) describes VA's accomplishments and progress during FY 2007 toward fulfilling its mission. The report is designed to enable Department management, our stakeholders, and our employees to assess VA's program and financial performance as compared to its goals and to use this information to make necessary improvements.

How We Measure Performance

VA employs a five-tiered performance management framework to measure performance.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	The Department's long-term outcomes as detailed in its Strategic Plan and articulated through four strategic goals and one enabling goal.
<i>Strategic Objectives</i>	Broad operational focus areas designed to achieve strategic goals. The Department has 21 strategic objectives.
<i>Performance Measures</i>	Specific measurable indicators used to measure progress towards achievement of strategic objectives. The Department uses different types of measures (i.e., outcome, output, and efficiency) to evaluate performance and progress.
<i>Performance Targets</i>	Associated with specific performance measures, these are quantifiable expressions of desired performance/success levels to be achieved during a given fiscal year.
<i>Strategic Targets</i>	Also associated with specific performance measures, these are quantifiable expressions of optimum success levels to be achieved; they are "stretch goals" that VA strives for in the long-term.

VA's strategic objectives are supported by 130 performance measures, 23 of which were identified by VA's senior leadership as **mission critical**. The Department's performance measures are a mix of program outcomes that measure the impact that VA programs have on the lives of veterans and their families, program output that measure activities undertaken to manage and administer these programs, and program efficiency that measures the cost of delivering an output or desired outcome.



Improvements to the FY 2007 Report

This year's PAR includes several improvements designed to give our stakeholders more complete information on VA's performance.

<i>Improvement</i>	<i>Benefit to VA's Stakeholders</i>
<i>Cost Per Measure Data</i>	Consistent with the President's Management Agenda, the Department is furthering its integration of performance and budget information. As part of this effort, this year's PAR includes information on the cost of achieving performance targets for four measures. This is in addition to cost estimates provided by strategic goal and objective. We will expand our presentation of the cost to achieve individual performance goals in future reports.
<i>Major Management Challenges</i>	This year's report improves how major management challenges are presented. For each challenge, in an easy-to-read tabular format, there is an estimated resolution date, a summary of actions taken, the next steps planned, and anticipated impacts of actions. Together these elements provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing the Department and what VA is doing to address them.
<i>Performance Trends With Targets</i>	For key and other important measures, in addition to the past five years' results (where available), we have added performance targets to provide the reader with a fuller context of progress. These data are accompanied by short narratives describing how management uses performance data to make operational program improvements and information on how performance results impact the veteran.

2007 Performance -- A Department-Level Summary

Key Measures -- Continuity and Type: Key measures are those that measure mission-critical activities. As of FY 2007, 19 of VA's 23 key measures have been in place for at least 4 years. This provides the Department's leadership with the ability to track significant performance trends over time and to make strategic adjustments when necessary. In addition, as shown in the chart below, VA has maintained a focus on the use of outcome and efficiency measures to assess mission-critical performance.

