
Appendix 4

Stakeholder Consultation and A More Future-Oriented Perspective

VA is fully committed to including its stakeholders in its decisionmaking process. VA provides the opportunity to stakeholders and veterans to voice their views on issues facing the Department as part of the environmental scan process. VA has also developed a process that provides for consultation with stakeholders on a regular basis, every 2 to 3 months in a non-adversarial, open-discussion forum.

VA believes it is essential that its stakeholders understand VA's future direction and have input into shaping that direction. Beginning in July 1999, VA has held five, day-long, *Four Corners* stakeholder meetings to discuss the Strategic Plan, long-term outlook for delivery of VA benefits and services, and types of benefits and services that will best serve future veterans. These *Four Corners* meetings include representatives from the veteran service organizations, Congressional staff, OMB, and the VA leadership. Representatives of GAO have also attended more recent meetings.

In the last two meetings, VA enlisted its stakeholders in developing key variables that were used to frame the beginning of its scenario-based planning process. At a subsequent meeting, the four scenarios that were developed from these key variables were presented to the stakeholders, and the stakeholders were asked to provide further comments and feedback on these initial scenarios. The *Four Corners* stakeholders meetings have been very productive in eliciting the viewpoints of stakeholders, and they will most likely be used in the future as a sounding board for VA policy and planning issues.