

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE.** To prescribe policy for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) governance structure.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.** This directive establishes the VA governance structure, and sets forth related policies, roles and responsibilities.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The Office of Policy and Planning (008) is responsible for the contents in this Directive.
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK.** None.
5. **RESCISSIONS.** None

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Stephen W. Warren
Executive in Charge and
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**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
Robert D. Snyder
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1. PURPOSE. This Directive establishes VA's governance structure, and related policies, roles, and responsibilities.

2. POLICY.

a. General. Governance is the process by which VA Senior Leadership makes decisions, provides strategic direction, and maintains accountability in a transparent and collaborative manner. This process enables informed decision-making based on current strategic objectives, VA's risk appetite, and responsible resource allocation.

(1) VA's principal governance bodies are the VA Executive Board (VAEB) and Senior Review Group (SRG). These bodies may formally charter other standing and ad-hoc cross-Department governance bodies, as needed. All VA governance bodies are intended to enable efficient decision-making and to promote the timely sharing of information on matters of mutual interest between and among VA's Administrations and Staff Offices.

(2) Through its role as the principal advisor to the Secretary on policy and strategy, the Office of Policy and Planning (OPP) will serve as the secretariat for the VAEB and SRG. The secretariat will establish standard operating procedures, request agenda items for consideration (see Appendix A for the agenda setting process), and prepare and transmit meeting materials.

b. VA Executive Board (VAEB).

(1) *Role of the VAEB.* The VAEB is the final decision making body for VA. The VAEB reviews and evaluates data and information to determine VA's strategic direction, oversee the Department's Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process, and other activities by which it serves as the senior decision-making body for Department-wide decisions. The VAEB approves the Department's Strategic Plan, Agency Priority Goals, Multi-Year Program, Budget, Annual Performance Plan, and Annual Performance Accountability Report. The VAEB serves as the Department's Risk Governance Board. The VAEB also addresses any issues that are elevated from the Monthly Performance Review (MPR), Operational Management Review (OMR), Joint Executive Council (JEC) or Senior Review Group (SRG). As needed, the VAEB may direct the creation of additional Department governance bodies.

(2) *VAEB Membership.* The VAEB is chaired by the Secretary of VA (SECVA). The VAEB consists of: the Deputy Secretary of VA (DEPSEC); the Chief of Staff of VA (COSVA); the Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits and Memorial Affairs; all Assistant Secretaries and equivalents; the General Counsel; and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Appeals. Members of the VAEB serve as senior advisors to the SECVA. At the request of the SECVA, other representatives (e.g. OSVA's Special Program Directors) may attend the meetings.

c. Senior Review Group (SRG).

(1) *Role of the SRG.* The SRG ensures VAEB decisions and direction are implemented across the Department; serves as the senior decision-making body for operational and administrative matters that do not require a decision by the VAEB; and acts as the de-facto steering committee for standing and ad-hoc cross-Department governance bodies created by the VAEB. The SRG also serves as a forum for reviewing proposed agenda items for VAEB and SRG meetings.

(2) *Membership.* The SRG is chaired by the COSVA. The SRG consists of: the VA Deputy Chief of Staff ; the Principal Deputy Under Secretaries for Health, Benefits, and Memorial Affairs; all Principal Deputy Assistant Secretaries and equivalents; the Principal Deputy General Counsel; the Vice Chairman for the Board of Veterans' Appeals, OSVA's Special Program Directors (Center for Women Veterans (CWV), Center for Minority Veterans (CMV), Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (CFBNP), Office of Survivors Assistance (OSA), and Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU)). SRG members serve as advisors to the Chair. At the request of the COSVA, other representatives may attend the meetings.

d. Other cross-Department governance bodies. Standing and ad hoc cross-Department governance bodies are established at the direction of the SECVA, DEPSEC or COSVA. Reporting procedures are assigned by the VAEB and/or SRG.

(1) *Standing cross-Department governance bodies.* Standing cross-Department governance bodies include those bodies that are statutorily required and/or created at the direction of the VAEB, chaired by a Deputy Assistant Secretary or higher, and will be comprised of Senior Executive Service (SES) representatives from across the Department. These bodies meet on a recurring basis to provide input to strategic direction, ensure strategic objectives are achieved, manage risk, manage resources, or manage organizational design and reporting structures. See Appendix B for a list of current standing cross-department governance bodies.

Standing cross-Department governance bodies are required to develop a charter, which includes purpose and function, membership, roles and responsibilities of members, and a process for reporting status updates to VA Senior Leadership. The chair of each body is responsible for ensuring a charter is developed and approved, and the governance body is included in the VA Functional Organization Manual (FOM).

(2) *Ad hoc cross-Department governance bodies.* Ad hoc cross-Department governance bodies are created at the direction of the SECVA, DEPSEC, and COSVA, and consist of representatives from across the Department selected to address a short-term issue, challenge, or opportunity. These bodies accomplish a specific set of activities within a specified timeframe.

Ad hoc cross-Department governance bodies are required to develop a work plan, which includes purpose, scope and objectives, projected timeframe of activities, milestones and deliverables, resources required, and a process for reporting status updates to the SRG.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Equivalents. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Equivalents will:

- (1) Ensure attendance and participation in VA governance bodies in which their organization is a member.
- (2) Establish internal processes to elevate status, issues, or decisions to the SRG and/or VAEB, and to respond to requests for agenda items.
- (3) If applicable, ensure standing cross-Department governance bodies, which they chair (or co-chair), are formally chartered, have processes in place to efficiently and effectively report status, include members that have decision making authority for their organizations, and have a mechanism to note the chairmanship of the governance bodies in the VA FOM.
- (4) If applicable, ensure ad hoc cross-Department governance bodies, for which they are responsible to chair (or co-chair), have a work plan, and processes are in place to efficiently and effectively report status.
- (5) Elevate issues for decision to the VAEB and SRG as needed.

b. Office of Policy and Planning (OPP). OPP will:

- (1) Serve as the secretariat for the VAEB and SRG.
- (2) Establish standard operating procedures for VAEB and SRG.
- (3) Prepare and transmit meeting materials for the VAEB and SRG.

4. REFERENCES

- a. 38 U.S.C. Chapter 5
- b. VA Directive 0211, Functional Organization Manual Management

5. DEFINITIONS.

a. Ad hoc cross-Department governance body. A body created at the direction of the SECVA, DEPSEC, COSVA, consisting of representatives from across the Administrations and Staff Offices, and whose purpose is to accomplish a specific set of activities within a specified timeframe.

b. Administration. A generic term used to identify one of the three major VA operational elements:

- (1) Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
- (2) Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
- (3) National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

When VHA, VBA and NCA are referred to as a group, the term “Administrations” may be used.

c. Department. A generic reference to the entire Department of Veterans Affairs which includes VA Central Office and all field facilities.

d. Staff Office. A generic term used to identify one of the offices included under VA Central Office. This does not refer to VHA, VBA, and NCA, nor does it refer to medical facilities, regional offices or cemeteries.

e. Standing cross-Department governance body. A body created at the direction of the VAEB, chaired by a Deputy Assistant Secretary or higher, comprised of SES representatives from across the Administrations and Staff Offices that meets on a recurring basis, and whose purpose is to provide strategic direction, ensure strategic objectives are achieved, manage risk, manage resources, or manage organizational design and reporting structures.

AGENDA SETTING PROCEDURES

Each quarter, OPP will:

1. Issue a formal agenda item call letter to VAEB and SRG members and the chairs of standing and ad-hoc cross-Department governance bodies.
2. Consolidate agenda items into a proposed three-month schedule and present the document to the SRG for review.
3. Present the proposed three-month schedule to the Chairs of the VAEB and SRG, or their designees, for approval.
4. Disseminate the approved three-month schedule to the VAEB, SRG, and chairs of standing and ad-hoc cross-Department governance bodies.

*Given changing priorities and emergent issues that may arise during the year, the Chairs of the VAEB and SRG, or their designees, will consider adding items to the agenda outside of the formal process on a case-by-case basis. VAEB and SRG members who want to add an agenda item outside of the formal process should contact OPP for further guidance.