

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
CHARTER OF THE
NATIONAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: National Research Advisory Council
2. AUTHORITY: The Council was established by the direction of the Secretary, and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.
3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: The Council provides advice to the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health (USH) and makes recommendations on the nature and scope of research and development sponsored and/or conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to include: (1) the policies and projects of the Office of Research and Development (ORD); (2) the focus of research on the high priority health care needs of Veterans; (3) the balance of basic, applied, and outcomes research; (4) the scientific merit review process; (5) the appropriate mechanisms by which ORD can leverage its resources to enhance the research financial base; (6) the rapid response to changing health care needs, while maintaining the stability of the research infrastructure; and (7) the protection of human subjects of research.
4. DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL: The Council advises the Secretary and the USH on all matters related to the research and development program, and conducts analyses and develops reports or other materials as necessary. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the Council is encouraged to review deliberations of other committees or entities, and may incorporate or otherwise use the results of deliberations of such entities. As a part of its function, the Council may accept for consideration suggestions for research and development from Congress, VA and non-VA scientists, Veterans and their representatives, and the general public.
5. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COUNCIL REPORTS: The Council reports to the Secretary through the USH.
6. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL: VHA is responsible for providing support to the Council.
7. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF YEARS: The estimated annual cost for operating the Council is \$115,000 and 0.3 full-time equivalent staff. All members will receive travel expense reimbursement and per diem in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the Council.

8. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER: The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee will approve the schedule of Council and meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when she or he determines it is in the public interest to do so.

9. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: The Council will meet four times or more per calendar year.

10. DURATION: There is a continuing need for the Council to provide advice to the Secretary, through the UDH, on the research and development program until a periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed.

11. COUNCIL TERMINATION DATE: None.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION: The Council will be comprised of not more than 12 members. Members will be selected from knowledgeable VA- and non-VA experts, and Veterans' community representatives with special qualifications and competence to deal effectively with research and development issues in the VA. Appropriate categories of primary expertise that may be represented include: (1) basic biomedical research; (2) rehabilitation research and development; (3) health services research and development; (4) clinical research; (5) geriatric care; (6) primary care; (7) special Veterans population health issues; (8) occupational and environmental health research; (9) mental health and behavioral research; and (10) surgery. In addition, the Council will have at least one Veteran as a member to ensure an important perspective on the health problems of Veterans.

The Secretary will appoint members for overlapping 2-year terms of service and may reappoint members for additional terms. The Secretary will appoint the Chair for a term of not more than 3 years and may reappoint the Chair for additional terms. Several members may be regular government employees, but the majority of the Council's membership will be special government employees.

13. SUBCOMMITTEES: The Council is authorized to establish subcommittees, with the DFO's approval to perform specific projects or assignments as necessary and consistent with its mission. The Council chair shall notify the Secretary, through the DFO, of the establishment of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Subcommittees will report back to the Council.

14. RECORDKEEPING: Records of the Council shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26 or other approved agency records disposition schedules.

Those records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

15. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved: 
Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date: 6/21/15