DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
CHARTER OF THE
VETERANS' RURAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Veterans' Rural Health Advisory Committee.

2. AUTHORITY: The Committee was established by direction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) App. 2.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES: The Committee will advise the Secretary on health care issues affecting eligible Veterans residing in rural areas.

4. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: The Committee will examine ways to improve and enhance VA services for eligible Veterans residing in rural areas by evaluating current program activities and identifying barriers to providing services. The Committee will meet as necessary to discuss VA Office of Rural Health programs and policies that impact the provision of VA health care to Veterans in rural areas. The Committee may adopt recommendations designed to enhance or improve VA rural health care services for Veterans, and the Committee may submit such reports as it deems necessary to describe its activities, deliberations, and findings.

5. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COMMITTEE REPORTS: The Committee will report to the Secretary through the Under Secretary for Health.

6. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE: The Office of Rural Health, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, is responsible for providing support to the Committee.

7. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS AND STAFF YEARS: Estimated annual operating costs for the Committee are $200,000 and 1.0 staff years. All members will receive travel expenses and a per diem allowance in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the Committee.

8. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER (DFO): The DFO, a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Committee 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 he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so.

9. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS: The Committee is expected to meet at least two times annually.

10. DURATION: There is a continuing need for the Committee to provide advice to the Secretary on health care issues affecting eligible Veterans residing in rural areas.

11. COMMITTEE TERMINATION DATE: None.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION: Committee members will be appointed by the Secretary and will include affected Veterans, rural health experts in academia, state and Federal Government professionals who focus on rural health, Veterans Affairs officials at the state level, and Veterans Service Organization leaders. Ex-officio members will include appropriate designees of the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Defense, and the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee will be composed of approximately 12 appointed members and 3 to 4 ex-officio appointed members. Several members may be Regular Government Employees, but the majority of the Committee's membership will be Special Government Employees. Committee members will serve as objective advisors, not as representatives of any organizations.

Each member of the Committee will serve an initial 3-year term. The Secretary may reappoint members for additional terms of service.

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

14. RECORDKEEPING: Records of the Committee 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: _____ Date: 5/29/2014

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary