

**Department of Veterans Affairs
Charter of the
Health Services Research and Development Service
Scientific Merit Review Board**

1. Official Designation. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Services Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board.

2. Authority. The Board is established by directive of the Secretary of VA and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), App. 2.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activity. The objective of the Board is to provide for the fair and equitable selection of the most meritorious research projects for support by VA research funds and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure the high quality and mission relevance of VA's legislatively mandated Health Services Research and Development Program.

Board members advise the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the scientific and technical merit, the mission relevance and the protection of human and animal subjects of Health Services Research and Development proposals. The Board does not consider grants, contracts or other forms of extramural research.

4. Description of Duties. The Board members and its subcommittees will, as needed: (1) review health services research and development proposals administered locally by VA facilities for scientific and technical merit, (2) prepare summary recommendations on all proposals based upon independent review, Board discussions and site visits, where necessary, which are used to convey group consensus to the Director of the Health Services Research and Development Service and (3) advise the Director of the Health Services Research and Development Service regarding the status of health services research and development as applicable to the Board members' areas of expertise.

5. Official to Whom the Committee Reports. The Board reports to the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service.

6. Office Responsible for Providing the Support to the Committee. Support for the Board is provided by the Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs in Dollars and Staff Years. The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is approximately \$1,100,000 and 7.9 staff years. All members 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 Board.

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8. Designation Federal Officer. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Board 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 Board is expected to meet up to twice annually.

10. Duration. The Board performs a continuing service unrestricted as to time except as periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed. The Board's continued operation is contingent upon renewal of this charter by appropriate action prior to its expiration.

11. Termination Date. Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Board will terminate 2 years from the date this charter is signed.

12. Membership and Designation. The Board is composed of members having training and expertise in a variety of scientific, technical and medical disciplines, including but not limited to health care and clinical management; behavioral, social and cultural determinants of health; health, healthcare informatics; mental and behavioral health; health care system organization, design and delivery; research methods and models; post-acute and long-term care and aging; nursing research initiatives; public health and epidemiology; access to care; post-deployment care including traumatic brain injury; health equity and health disparities; rural health; women's health; complementary and integrative health; mobility, activity and function; implementation science; patient experience; community care and VA/non-VA care coordination; mobile and connected health and patient-reported outcomes; management of chronic pain; opioids and suicide prevention; health economics; efficiency and value; genomics and precision medicine in clinical practice; patient safety; predictive analytic; performance measurement; learning health system; provider behavior; health behavior change; operations research and health systems re-engineering; and the development of talented VA researchers. The Board shall represent the required technical skills along with diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, geographical background and Veterans of diverse eras and branches of service when possible. Members will serve 2- to 4-year staggered appointments. The Board will be composed of approximately 14 members (the subcommittee chairs) and members will be a mix of Regular Government Employees and Special Government Employees.

13. Subcommittees. With the DFO's approval, the Board is authorized to establish subcommittees to perform specific projects or assignments as necessary and consistent with its mission. The Board chair shall notify the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service, through the DFO, of the establishment of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Subcommittees must report

