

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 of Veterans Affairs 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 the following: (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; conducts analyses; and develops reports or other materials as necessary. The Council will review deliberations of other committees or entities to avoid duplication of effort, and will 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; the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); 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: VA is responsible for providing the funding, organization and logistical support and resources for the Council. Within VA, 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 \$120,000 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 subcommittee 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 approximately three times or more per calendar year.

10. DURATION: There is a continuing need for the Council to provide advice to the Secretary, through the USH, 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: Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Council will terminate 2 years from the date below.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION: The Council will be comprised of approximately 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 VA. Appropriate categories of primary expertise that may be represented include the following: (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 one additional term. The Secretary will appoint the Chair of the Committee to a term of 2 years and may reappoint the Chair for 1 additional term. 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 must report their recommendations and advice to the full committee for full deliberation and discussion. Subcommittees have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the parent Committee, nor can they report directly to VA. Subcommittees will report back to the Council.

14. RECORDKEEPING: Records of the Council shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 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: 
Denis McDorrough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date: 6/4/21