

**Department of Veterans Affairs  
Charter of the  
Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee (VRHAC)**

**1. Official Designation.** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 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 U.S.C. App. 2.

**3. Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The Committee will advise the Secretary on health care issues that affect Veterans residing in rural areas.

**4. Description of Duties.** The Committee will examine ways to enhance or improve VA services for Veterans residing in rural areas by assessing the current rural environment, existing health care opportunities, and challenges or barriers to access. The Committee will meet as necessary to discuss 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, VA, is responsible for providing support to the Committee.

**7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs in Dollars and Staff Years.** Estimated annual operating costs for the Committee are \$100,000 and 0.1 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 Committee.

**8. Designated Federal Officer.** The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Committee 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 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.** If there are health care issues affecting Veterans in rural communities, there is a need for the Committee to provide advice to the Secretary. The Committee performs a continuing service, unrestricted as to time except as periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed. The Committee's continued operation is contingent upon renewal of this charter by appropriate action prior to its expiration.

**11. Committee Termination Date.** Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to the expiration, the Committee will terminate 2 years from the date below.

**12. Membership and Designation.** Committee members will be appointed by the Secretary and will include Veterans, rural health experts in academia and the community; 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, Indian Health Services and Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Department of Defense and the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee will be composed of not more than 12 appointed members and 3 to 4 non-voting 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 organization.

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

**13. Subcommittees.** The Committee may 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 intent to establish of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Such subcommittees may not work independently of the chartered Committee and 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.

**14. Recordkeeping.** Records of the Committee 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. Filing date.**

Approved. DMC 3/21/22  
Denis McDonough Date  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs