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 the direction of the Secretary, 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 of Veterans Affairs on health care issues affecting enrolled Veterans residing in rural areas.

4. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: The Committee will examine ways to improve and enhance VA services for enrolled 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 of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Health.

6. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE: The 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 $325,000 and 1.0 full-time equivalent staff. 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: The Designated Federal Officer (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 enrolled Veterans residing in rural areas.

11. COMMITTEE TERMINATION DATE: Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to the expiration of this charter, the Committee will terminate 2 years after the date shown below.

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 and the Department of Agriculture.

The Committee will be composed of approximately 12 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 for which they may otherwise be serving.

Each member of the Committee will serve an initial 2 year term. The Secretary may reappoint members for additional terms of service.

13. SUBCOMMITTEES: The Committee is authorized to establish subcommittees, with the DFO 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: Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date: 6/16/2010