

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
CHARTER OF THE
HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE
SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW BOARD

1. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Health Services Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board.
2. AUTHORITY: The Board operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, 5 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. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure the high quality and mission relevance of VA's legislatively mandated 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, originality, feasibility, and mission relevance of individual research proposals. They also advise on the adequacy of protection of human and animal subjects and proposed budgets. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

4. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: The Board and subcommittee members review Health Services Research and Development proposals administered locally by VA field facilities for scientific and technical merit and advise the Director of the Health Services Research and Development Service regarding the status of Health Services Research and Development applicable to members' areas of expertise.

5. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE BOARD REPORTS: The Board reports to the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service.

6. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT FOR THE BOARD: Support for the Board is provided by the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF: The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is \$750,000 and 2.5 staff. 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.

8. DESIGNATED 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 BOARD 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 below.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION: Board membership will reflect equitable geographic, ethnic, and gender representation so long as the effectiveness of the Board is not impaired. The Board is composed of members having experience and expertise in major health services specialties and disciplines. Members will serve 4 year staggered appointments contingent upon renewal of the Board's charter. The Board will be composed of approximately 125 members. Several members may be Regular Government Employees (RGE), but the majority of the Board's membership will be Special Government Employees (SGE).

13. SUBCOMMITTEES: The Board is authorized to establish subcommittees, with the Designated Federal Officer's (DFO) approval, 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 will report back to the Board.

14. RECORDKEEPING: Records of the Board 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:

6/18/2010