

Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee (GGAC)

GGAC was created in 1980 to address challenges Veterans Affairs (VA) faced related to caring for a large influx of aging WWII Veterans. The growth of the WWII Veteran population and their need for care for complex health issues reinforced the need for this committee.

GGAC is mandated by congressional statute, title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 7315, and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2, and its main charge is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) and Under Secretary of Health on all matters pertaining to geriatrics and gerontology.

One of the committee's main duties is to assess the capabilities of VA's health care facilities to respond with effective and appropriate services to medical, psychological, and social needs of older Veterans. GGAC also monitors VA's Geriatric, Research, Education, and Clinical Centers (GRECCs) and conducts site visits to ensure they are achieving their established purposes of advancing the scientific knowledge needed to meet the needs of our aging Veteran population, educating health care staff and trainees, and developing innovative models of clinical care for older Veterans.

GGAC is required to provide recommendations to the SECVA by the end of each calendar year and copies of these recommendations are shared with Senate Veterans Affairs Committee and House Veterans Affairs Committee.

GGAC is required to hold at least one face-to-face meeting each year; however, the committee routinely holds two face-to-face meetings every year in Washington, DC. Additionally, subcommittee groups conduct three to five site visits each year to GRECC and co-located VA geriatric programs.

GGAC is chartered to have 13 active members who are non-Federal employees and one ex-officio member.

GGAC's Designated Federal Officer (DFO) is Marianne Shaughnessy, Ph.D. CRNP, Director, GRECC Programs, Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care. As the DFO, Dr. Shaughnessy serves as the Committee Manager and ensures the committee operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.