Functional Statements for VHA Headquarters
This office is responsible for the overall executive leadership and direction of the Veterans Health Administration. The office includes the Under Secretary for Health (USH), the Deputy Under Secretary for Health (DUSH), the Chief Network Officer (CNO), and their immediate staffs. The Under Secretary has statutory responsibility for operation of the Veterans Health Administration and serves as its Chief Executive Officer. The Deputy Under Secretary serves as Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Network Officer provides
line supervision for the VISN Directors. These three executives are the only headquarters officials in the direct chain of command above the networks and field medical facilities. The Under Secretary and the Deputy Under Secretary share executive responsibilities and divide day-to-day activities as determined by the Under Secretary.

**CHIEF NETWORK OFFICER:** This official will be a headquarters change agent to help activate the VISNs, support them as they develop and mature, serve as a primary point of contact between national headquarters staff and the field and, in conjunction with the USH/DUSH, monitor and evaluate the VISN directors’ progress on their performance contracts. A cadre of network support specialists will provide general administrative support for the network directors and their staffs. The specialists will coordinate with the emerging support services centers to ensure that various tracking and roll-up functions are accomplished and that needed information is available to the headquarters offices. Essentially, this office replaces the operations function in headquarters. The programmatic activities formerly performed in operations (i.e., budget, planning, engineering and quality management) will be decentralized or absorbed by the appropriate headquarters offices.

**CHIEF OF STAFF:** This official is responsible for the administrative management of the Office of the Under Secretary, including liaison with the Offices of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries, Veterans Benefits Administration, National Cemetery System and other executive offices in headquarters. The Chief of Staff also provides first line supervision for the legislative programs function, the communications/public affairs function and the IG/GAO liaison function, which will be reassigned from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE UNDER SECRETARY: This official provides direct support to the Under Secretary for a variety of special projects and emergent priority matters of interest to the Under Secretary.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY: This official provides executive and administrative support to the Deputy Under Secretary and supervises other staff in the office.

VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION/CONSUMER AFFAIRS STAFF: This office provides ongoing communications with the veterans organizations. This includes arranging regular and special briefings, ad hoc projects, and other events involving Veterans Service Organizations.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT: This office administers the VHA correspondence management program, establishes VHA correspondence policy, and reviews all written communications prepared for the signature of the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Under Secretary, and Deputy Under Secretary. The office serves as VHA liaison with the Secretary’s office and other VA offices on all correspondence issues. The office also analyzes and processes VHA correspondence and maintains the official files for the Under Secretary.

VETERANS CANTEEN SERVICE: This office manages a self-sustaining business which provides reasonably priced goods and services to veteran patients and caregivers. The service has been reassigned to VHA from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Facilities.
This office is responsible for the integration of VHA’s strategic planning and performance measurement activities with policy implications to ensure that quality management considerations drive the planning activities and underlie all ongoing operations. The new organization combines the present office and functions of the Associate Chief Medical Director for Quality Management with strategic planning functions now located in the Chief Financial Officer’s organization, the Office of the Medical Inspector and the Office of Policy Analysis (formerly the Health Care Reform Office). In conjunction with the appropriate headquarters program offices, the quality management function will focus on the development of appropriate measures for use at all levels of the organization to reflect performance and progress toward system goals. Planning functions will include forecasting of need and changes in the technical environment of health care as well as the
development of a responsive plan for the evolution of the organization through the next decade. Education of staff in the mechanism of developing local plans will also be carried out. Policy Analysis will evaluate alternatives and strategies for access and care for VA’s patients, provide support and recommendations to the Under Secretary regarding health care policy and reform issues, monitor state reform initiatives, maintain an information clearinghouse, and provide liaison with other federal and non-federal agencies on health policy issues. Inspection capability from the Medical Inspector functions will be maintained for specially warranted circumstances; other functions of the Medical Inspector will be folded into ongoing quality management activities.
Support Programs

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

This office serves as the principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on resource management and financial matters. This includes identifying and monitoring financial performance measures; formulating, defending, and administering the VHA budget; directing the MCCR program; developing policies for implementation of recoveries from non-appropriated sources; and performing program financial management evaluations. As described above, the strategic planning function will move to the Office of Policy, Planning and Performance. The IG/GAO liaison function will move to the Office of the Under Secretary. Also, all construction-related functions and staff located in the present Infrastructure Policy and Development Office and the former Construction Project Coordination and Budget Office, with the exception of the activation budget coordination activity and the post occupancy evaluation function, will move to the Office of Construction Management. The CFO office will retain responsibility for formulation and execution of the construction budget.
This office houses VHA’s major construction and capital project programs and serves as the principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary for construction, capital project management, systemwide architectural and engineering design policy and consultation, real property, leasing and land acquisition activities. In addition, the office re-integrates the functions and associated staff being transferred from the CFO office, as described in the CFO’s functional statement on the previous page.
Office of Emergency Medical Preparedness

This office serves as VHA’s primary policy, planning, training and management organization for internal and external medical emergencies. It supervises the development and coordination of the agency-wide emergency medical preparedness program and the overall emergency management program for VHA.
This office is the principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on information resources management and telecommunications. It is responsible for the integration of all VHA information functions. The functions formerly performed by the Medical Information Resources Management Office (MIRMO) and the Decision Support System (DSS) Office will be incorporated into this new office. The CIO will play a critical role in seeing that business and information strategies are carefully coordinated, and will act as a change agent to implement information systems that achieve service and productivity objectives. The CIO will ensure that a strong medical informatics support structure is in place to assist the VISNs in delivering high quality, cost effective care, and to support VHA’s corporate policy, planning and performance management functions.
This office houses VHA’s administrative support programs and systems, and serves as principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on administrative matters and a number of policy and operational issues external to VHA. Program functions assigned to this office include all of those formerly assigned to the Associate CMD for Administration, with the exception of the Medical Information Resources Management Office (MIRMO) which will become part of the new Office of the Chief Information Officer. In addition, two new activities will become part of the office: a new headquarters administration function for overall administrative support of the internal operation of VHA headquarters, and liaison with the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management. Also, the Engineering Management and Field Support Office (EMFSO) will be reassigned from Operations and will be integrated with the Environmental Management Service to create a consolidated facilities management function.
Health Care Programs

Office of Patient Care Services

This office houses VHA’s clinically-related headquarters programs that serve to support the actual delivery of patient care services in the field. It integrates professional knowledge and practice skills into policy, planning, and systemwide development of patient care guidelines, critical pathways, and practice parameters. This includes providing leadership for those programs designated as “special programs” by the Under Secretary. Working with the Office of Policy, Planning and Performance, network and field representatives and appropriate external stakeholders, the office will develop evaluation mechanisms and outcome measurements for these programs. Interdisciplinary clinical leadership will be available to the Office of the Under Secretary and the field for consultation and to provide clinical coordination and integration with research, education and emergency medical preparedness activities. The office will also provide national leadership on professional issues for the medical, technical and allied health disciplines and serve as liaison to various professional organizations. These functions include the
offices
formerly reporting to the ADCMD for Clinical Programs, with the exception of Readjustment Counseling Service and the Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, which now report separately to the Office of the Under Secretary. Rehabilitation Research and Development Service will move to the research organization. The Professional Affairs Staff, formerly reporting to the Deputy Under Secretary, will be assigned to this office. The traditional “stovepipe” structure organized around discrete professions and disciplines will be replaced with a structure that will be organized around substantive clinical functions and product lines. Examples of such activities or product lines are primary care, acute inpatient care, rehabilitation and long term care.
This office houses VHA’s public health and environmental hazards programs and serves as principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on public health issues and environmental hazards, including exposure to phenoxy herbicides (e.g., Agent Orange), ionizing radiation and Persian Gulf health issues, as well as the AIDS/HIV program, the women veterans program and the smoking program.
This office is responsible for supervising the management of the readjustment counseling operations carried out in over 200 field-based Vet Centers. The office establishes policies for services, training and quality control for all program activities. The readjustment counseling field structure will be modified from the present seven regional manager offices for the purpose of better integration of readjustment counseling activities into the total health care delivery mission of the network, although it will maintain its present separate reporting line and funding stream.
This office houses VHA’s academic activities and serves as the principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on academic matters. It is responsible for management of a variety of programs that support training, recruiting, and retraining health care professionals and administrative personnel to meet the needs of the VA health care system and contribute to the nation’s health manpower pool. It develops, monitors, and supports graduate education and training programs and serves as the Under Secretary’s primary liaison with the academic community. It continues its present mission and structure pending evaluation and decision on the recommendations in the "Report of the VHA Education and Training Review Task Force," which was presented to the Under Secretary on January 30, 1995.
This office houses VHA’s research and development activities and serves as principal advisor to the Office of the Under Secretary on research matters. It is responsible for formulating policies and procedures for biomedical and health services research. The responsibility for rehabilitation research and development, formerly located in the Office of Clinical Programs, will be added to this office. Health Services Research and Development continues responsibility for VHA’s technology assessment function. The office is also responsible for management of a scientific peer review system to evaluate research applications for funding, determination of research funding and FTE levels for the field, and development of the annual medical and prosthetic research budget request.