



**Department of
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News Release

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Secretary Enhancing Partnerships with Medical Schools *Accepts Report of Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel*

WASHINGTON – To ensure Veterans receive 21st century care, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki has vowed to strengthen the partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the schools that train the nation's health care professionals.

“Schools of medicine and other institutions of higher education for health care professionals have been essential partners with VA in caring for Veterans for over 60 years,” said Secretary Shinseki. “VA is strengthening that relationship to ensure it provides accessible, world-class health care for the men and women who have served this nation in uniform.”

Shinseki's remarks came in response to a report by a blue-ribbon panel appointed to advise VA on strengthening relationships with medical schools and other colleges and universities for health care professionals.

Two key recommendations from that report, which are among the 50 for which Shinseki said VA will have an implementation plan by January, are:

- Formation of a standing, federally-chartered advisory committee to help VA realize the full potential of its partnerships with health professional schools; and
- Examination and streamlining of policies and procedures that impede those partnerships.

The report reaffirms the vital importance of academic affiliations and calls for VA to strengthen its partnerships with the academic community to enhance health care for Veterans.

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Affiliates 2/2/2/2

VA manages the largest medical education and health professions training program in the United States. VA facilities are affiliated with 107 medical schools, 55 dental schools and more than 1,200 other schools for health care professionals. Each year, 100,000 health professionals are trained in VA medical centers. About two-thirds of the physicians practicing in the United States have had some of their professional education in the VA health care system.

“We welcome this opportunity to build even stronger bonds that will benefit not only the Veterans we serve, but also the tens of thousands of health professional trainees who receive some of their professional education in VA facilities,” said Shinseki.

The Blue Ribbon Panel on VA-Medical School Affiliations, which included members from within and outside VA, was chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act in 2006. It was led by Dr. Jordan Cohen, professor of medicine and public health at George Washington University and president emeritus of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

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