



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

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## **New Members Appointed to VA Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced the appointment of five new members to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. The committee was chartered on November 2, 1994, and advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the needs of the nation's 4.7 million minority Veterans with respect to compensation, health care, rehabilitation, outreach and other benefits and programs administered by the VA. The Committee assesses the needs of Veterans who are minority group members and recommends program improvements designed to meet their needs. The committee members are appointed to two or three-year terms. Minority Veterans comprise nearly 21 percent of the total Veteran population in the United States and its territories.

### **The new committee members are:**

- **Patricia Jackson-Kelley:** Lt. Col. (US Army-Ret) of Los Angeles, California; Served as one of the first full time Women Veteran Program Coordinators at the Los Angeles VAMC. Currently serves as a member of the LA County Veterans Advisory Council; Board Member of Military Women in Need Organization and LA County Council Commander of the American Legion.
- **Librado Rivas:** Command Sgt. Maj. (USA-Ret) of Manassas, Virginia; State Commander of the DC Chapter, American GI Forum of the United States; National Liaison Officer in Washington, DC, for the National Office of the American GI Forum, and Director of the Army Lean Six Sigma.
- **Rebecca Stone:** Staff Sgt. (USA-Ret) of Columbia, Maryland; served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was medically retired under the Wounded Warrior Program through Warrior Transition Units. She is a certified suicide negotiator/first responder. She was also the recipient of the National Association of Female Executives (NAFE) Women of Excellence Award.
- **Cornell Wilson, Jr.:** Maj. Gen. (USMC-Ret) of Charlotte, North Carolina; currently serves as Military Advisor to the Governor of North Carolina, where he also advises state agencies and Veteran's organizations on the needs of Veterans.
- **Anthony Woods:** Army Veteran of University Park, Maryland; currently serves as the Senior Manager at Cisco System's Consulting Services and consults with the Department of Defense and the Army on IT transformations. Mr. Woods also volunteers with organizations such as Got Your 6 and Hiring Our Heroes.

### **The new members join current members:**

**Marvin Trujillo, Jr.,** Committee Chairman, Marine Corps Veteran

**Richard de Moya,** Lt. Col. (USA-Ret)

**Elisandro (Alex) Diaz,** Navy Veteran

**Many-Bears Grinder,** Col. (USA-Ret)

**Harold Hunt,** Army Veteran

**Sheila Mitchell,** Air Force Veteran

**Teresita Smith,** Sgt. First Class (USA-Ret)

**In addition to working closely with the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, VA is improving its services for Veterans who are minority group members:**

- Establishing the Office of Health Equity Research and Promotion, which assesses health equity and health disparities within the health care system to ensure adequate policies are in place to reduce disparities in vulnerable minority Veteran populations.
- Funding projects focused on Pacific Rim Veterans, including Spinal Cord Injury outreach and treatment in Hilo, Kona, Maui, Molakai, and Kauai; leveraging telehealth technology to provide clinic based tele-mental health care on the island of Kauai.
- Conducting a 3-year project through VA's Office of Rural Health to establish a collaborative National Native Telehealth Training and Consultative Service which aids in the replication of tele-mental health clinics for use by rural Native American Veterans.

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