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(202) 461-7600
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VA realigns police operations to promote oversight and standardization

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) approved plans recently to realign the structure of its police force.

The move follows several months of comprehensive analysis of the department's law enforcement procedures and serves as a critical step forward in implementing the recommendations made by the Office of Inspector General and Government Accountability Office.

"The realignment will be the most extensive since the creation of the police force and will fundamentally change standardization and oversight across the enterprise," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This highlights my commitment to the high standards of professionalism and transparency across the department."

The changes will include:

- Implementing a police national governance body that will incorporate all department stakeholders to effectively manage and oversee policy issues.
- Creating a police modernization office specifically charted to develop and implement uniformed standards and address staffing challenges.
- Dividing the VA police force into four multi-state regions under the head of a regional law enforcement director. The regional director will serve as the gateway official providing strategic direction from the VA Office of Operations, Security and Preparedness to the field operating offices.
- Placing a police chief in each of the 18 Veterans Integrated Service Networks who will be under the oversight of the Office of Operations, Security and Preparedness and will provide direct guidance of law enforcement operations and compliance.

The district and regional law enforcement directors will be department assets placed in the field for greater accountability and oversight of the police program. These changes reaffirm that safety and security are paramount to the Department. VA will continually implement solutions that assure a safe environment for Veterans, staff, and visitors.

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