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VA's Veterans Health Administration Central Office gets realignment to improve care for Veterans

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced Jan. 1, the redesign of the Veterans Health Administration Central Office (VHACO) as part of its modernization efforts.

The new structure reflects leading health care industry practices and addresses clinical integration through the joint leadership of a chief medical officer and expanded chief nursing officer role.

This model strengthens and expands the role of nursing to leverage skills of clinicians and non-clinicians. VHACO will also create integrated clinical communities across the enterprise to help personnel better identify and share leading practices, drive continuous improvement and support a consistent [Veteran experience](#).

The new structure clarifies office roles and streamlines responsibilities to eliminate fragmentation, overlap and duplication. It also allows VHA to be more agile and respond to changes and make decisions more quickly. This positions VHA to better support Veterans Integrated Service Networks and facilities directly serving Veterans. VHACO staff includes the approximately 20,000 staff located throughout the country that provide operational support to VA Medical Centers. The proposed change in structure will not result in a reduction or termination of staff.

“These improvements will promote efficiency, effectiveness and accountability as VA modernizes its health system to address Veterans’ 21st century health care needs,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The reformation will ensure VHA programs, staff and resources are best aligned to advance VHA’s transformation into an integrated high reliability health care organization.”

The redesign addresses concerns raised in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2019 High Risk List and recent external assessments from GAO, [Commission on Care](#) and the [Independent Assessment](#) regarding the need for improved accountability, integration of the organizational structure, and clearer definition of roles. The changes will emphasize and support VA’s top priorities including, improving patient safety and quality, enrollment and delivery of Women’s Health.

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