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News Release

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VA announces Biden administration appointees

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released the names of several key Biden administration political appointees joining the department.

Paula Molloy, PhD, assistant secretary, Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security and Preparedness: Paula Molloy rejoins VA after serving as chief administrative officer for the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), an independent federal agency since 2017. Molloy served as VA assistant deputy undersecretary for Health for Workforce Services, leading the strategic integration of initiatives to support human capital systems for more than 320,000 Veteran Health Administration employees and over 120,000 health professions trainees.

Kayla M. Williams, assistant secretary, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs: Prior to rejoining VA, Kayla Williams most recently was senior fellow and director of the Military, Veterans and Society Program at Center for a New American Security. Williams previously served as director of the Center for Women Veterans at VA, where she was primary adviser to the secretary on department policies, programs and legislation affecting women Veterans. Williams also served eight years at RAND researching service member and Veteran health needs and benefits, international security and intelligence policy.

Chris Díaz, acting chief of staff, White House Liaison, Office of the Secretary: Chris Diaz is founder and former executive director of the Veteran-led non-profit, Action Tank, whose mission tackles the toughest challenges facing the community. He has sat on numerous boards in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, helping to shape the future of the region. For leading these efforts, Diaz has received national recognition earning the SXSW Community Service Award, Aspen Ideas Fellowship and prestigious Pat Tillman scholarship. Diaz is an entrepreneur whose company, Performa, supported clients focused on implementing positive lifestyle changes, increasing their capacity for self-awareness and actualization.

Meg Kabat, senior advisor, Families, Caregivers and Survivors, Office of the Secretary: Meg Kabat is a licensed clinical social worker with more than 25 years supporting America's service members, Veterans and their families. Early in her civilian career with the U.S. Navy, Kabat served as a case manager. From 2011-2019, Kabat served in leadership roles with the VA Caregiver Support Program. Most recently, Kabat has been a senior director at Atlas Research, supporting the Department of Defense (DOD) Sexual Assault Prevention Office, as well as facilitating the COVID-19 Nursing Home Commission in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Kabat is the recipient of multiple awards including a Special Recognition Award from Disabled American Veterans, VA Exemplary Service Award and VA Exceptional Service Award.

Raymond C. Kelley, liaison, Veteran Service Organization, Office of the Secretary: Prior to his appointment to VA, Raymond Kelley was the majority staff director for the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. In this role, Kelley worked as the primary day-to-day Veterans' portfolio legislative and political advisor to Chairman Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and oversaw the daily operations of the Committee staff. Prior to his work on the Committee, Kelley was director of National Legislative Service for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) where he was responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of VFW's priorities that were presented to Congress, federal departments and agencies, and other organizations. Kelley also served as the national legislative director for AMVETS before his work with the VFW.

Ya Wei (Jenny) Wang - director of Mission Operations, Office of the Secretary: Jenny Wang recently served on the Biden-Harris transition team. She has worked in various foreign policy and national security positions throughout the government. From 2013-2017, Wang was special assistant and advisor to the White House chief of staff, where she managed executive operations. Wang held different positions on the National Security Council, to include special assistant in the Counterterrorism Directorate.

Tahmika Ruth Jackson, special counsel, Office of General Counsel: Prior to her appointment to VA, Tahmika Jackson served as National Security Agency (NSA) senior representative to the National Counterterrorism Center in McLean, Virginia. Jackson also served as a counterterrorism senior leader in the Counterterrorism Operations Cell of the National Security Operations Center, acting as NSA's primary coordinator for real-time counterterrorism situational awareness and crisis response. Jackson formerly represented the DOD as an attorney in the NSA Office of the General Counsel working national security and intelligence law issues.

Terrence L. Hayes, press secretary, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs: Prior to assuming the role of VA press secretary, Terrence Hayes served as national director of Communication and Public Affairs for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He has worked in critical executive-level public affairs positions throughout his 24-year civilian and military career. As a public affairs professional in VA's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Hayes was responsible for answering national, regional and local media queries on behalf of then Secretaries David Shulkin and Robert Wilkie. He also served as public affairs adviser and spokesperson to the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from November 2011 to January 2016.

John Santos, special assistant, Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs: John Santos previously served as Asian American and Pacific Islander outreach director at the Democratic National Committee (DNC) where he led the DNC's efforts to mobilize Asian American and Pacific Islander voters through close partnership with the Biden-Harris campaign and community leaders across the country. In addition to his organizing work, Santos has extensive experience in public affairs and communications having served as Western Region press secretary at the DNC and as deputy spokesperson for the international anti-ISIS coalition in Baghdad, Iraq.

More announcements are to come.

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