



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice of intent for reestablishment.

SUMMARY: We are giving notice that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs intends to reestablish the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee for a 2-year period. The Secretary has determined that the Committee is necessary and in the public interest.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey Moragne, Committee Management Office, Department of Veterans Affairs, Advisory Committee Management Office (00AC), 811 Vermont Avenue, 4th floor, NW, Washington, DC 20420; telephone (202) 714-1578; or email at Jeffrey.Moragne@va.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee ACT, notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) intends to reestablish the Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee (Committee or VRHAC) for two (2) years from the filing date of the charter's reestablishment. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of VA on rural health care issues affecting Veterans. The VHRAC examines programs and policies that impact the delivery of VA rural health care to Veterans and discusses ways to improve and enhance VA access to rural health care services for Veterans.

In addition, pursuant to 41 C.F.R section 102-3.65, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides this written notice determination stating that the Committee is in the public interest and found to be in accordance with the Federal Advisory Community Act (FACA), the 2025 FACA Final Rule, and current to the U.S. General Services Administration, Committee Management Secretariat guidance. The following factors below provide an overview of the Committee's operations and public interest intent.

Annual Budget – The overall operating costs for the Committee is \$184,169. All members receive travel expenses and a per diem allowance in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the Committee. The expected costs are broken into:

- (i) Federal personnel (based on full-time equivalent (FTE) usage basis) is .80 with other Federal internal costs being \$135,369
- (ii) Proposed payments to Non-Federal Members is \$3,218. Payments to Federal Members are \$7,081. The Committee is composed of not more than 12 appointed members and up to 3 ex-officio members.
- (iii) Reimbursable costs equate to travel reimbursement for Non-Federal Members is \$11,230, for Federal Members is \$3,671 and for Federal Staff is \$23,600.

This Committee does not have any dollar value of grants expected for the fiscal year.

Membership Selection - The Committee's membership includes academic experts in rural health care delivery, state and federal government professionals who focus on rural health issues, Department of Veterans Affairs officials at the state level, and selected Veterans service organization leaders. VHRAC members range from patient care advocates to medical policy strategists. Additionally, the Committee works with the Department's Advisory Committee Management Office, the Committee Chair, and the Office of Rural Health (ORD) leadership to ensure the committee is balanced, to the extent possible, diversity ethnically and geographical background representation.

Existing Federal Advisory Committees - The following list are the 27 VA advisory committees includes 18 that are statute (with an asterisk *) and 9 non-statutory committees.

- 1) VA National Academic Affiliations Council
- *2) Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials
- 3) Cooperative Studies Scientific Evaluation Committee
- *4) Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation

- *5) Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education
- *6) Veterans' Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards (Administratively Inactive)
- *7) Advisory Committee on Former Prisoners of War
- *8) Geriatrics and Gerontology Advisory Committee
- *9) Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses
- 10) Health Systems Research Service Merit Review Board
- *11) Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans
- 12) Joint Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development and Clinical Science Research and Development Services Scientific Merit Review Board
- *13) Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans
- 14) National Research Advisory Council
- *15) Advisory Committee on U.S. Outlying Areas and Freely Associated States
- *16) Advisory Committee on Prosthetics and Special Disabilities Programs
- *17) Advisory Committee on the Readjustment of Veterans
- *18) Veterans' Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation
- 19) Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board
- 20) Veterans' Rural Health Advisory Committee
- *21) Special Medical Advisory Group
- *22) Advisory Committee on Structural Safety of Department of Veterans Affairs

Facilities

- *23) Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs
- 24) Veterans' Family, Caregiver, and Survivor Advisory Committee
- *25) Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board
- 26) Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee
- *27) Advisory Committee on Women Veterans

Justification - VRHAC continues to provide valuable external rural health stakeholder perspective regarding rural health care and the challenges of accessing and delivering services in rural and highly rural areas. Stakeholder representation of Federal, state, regional, and local organizations is good; though proposed solutions to overcoming challenges specific to rural Veterans are often limited by implementation feasibility in the VA and the Veterans Health Administration.

Summary of Previous Committee Accomplishments - The Committee's standard operations entail conducting one local meeting in Washington, DC to receive updates from VA Senior Leaders, and one site visit to a VA facility with a high concentration of rural Veterans. Its meetings focus on evaluating the programs and initiatives of VHA's ORD and its VHA program office partners; and on recommending ways to improve. The Committee evaluates current VA rural health program activities and identifies existing barriers to rural health services. It recommends strategies to improve those services for Veterans to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Why Committee is Essential - VRHAC provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on health care issues that affect Veterans residing in rural areas. The Committee meets at least twice annually to discuss programs and policies that impact the provision of VA health care to Veterans. This is obtained from its committee meetings and through the valuable external rural health stakeholder perspective regarding rural health care and the challenges of accessing and delivering services in rural and highly rural areas.

In conclusion, this Notice of Reestablishment states that this Committee is in the public interest, essential to the conduct of agency business and that the information provided is not available through any other advisory committee or source within the Federal Government.

Dated: April 2, 2026.

LaTonya L. Small,
Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.