DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

CHARTER OF THE HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW BOARD

1. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Services Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board.

2. AUTHORITY: The Board is established by directive of the Secretary of VA, and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) App. 2.

3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: The objective of the Board is to provide for the fair and equitable selection of the most meritorious research projects for support by VA research funds and to offer advice for research program officials and program priorities and policies. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure the high quality and mission relevance of VA's legislatively mandated Health Services Research and Development program.

Board members advise the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the administration of its intramural program including scientific and technical merit, mission relevance, originality, and feasibility of individual Health Services research proposals. The Board also advises on the adequacy of protection of human and animal subjects and proposed budgets. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

4. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES: The Board members and its subcommittees will review Health Services Research and Development proposals administered locally by VA field facilities for scientific and technical merit and advise the Director of the Health Services Research and Development Service regarding the status of Health Services Research and Development applicable to members' areas of expertise.

5. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE BOARD REPORTS: The Board reports to the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service.

6. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT FOR THE BOARD: Support for the Board is provided by the Office of Research and Development, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

7. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF-YEARS: The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is $1 million and 6 staff years. 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 Board.

8. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER (DFO): The DFO, a full time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Board meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so.

9. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS: The Board is expected to meet up to twice annually.

10. DURATION: The Board performs a continuing service unrestricted as to time except as periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed. The Board's continued operation is contingent upon renewal of this charter by appropriate action prior to its expiration.

11. TERMINATION DATE: Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Board will terminate 2 years from the date below.

12. MEMBERSHIP AND DESIGNATION: The Board is composed of members having experience and expertise in major health services specialties, disciplines, and practices, including but not limited to health care and clinical management; behavioral, social, and cultural determinants of health and care; health care informatics; mental and behavioral health; health care system organization and delivery, research methods and models; post-acute and long-term care; nursing research initiatives; and the development of talented VA researchers. The Board shall represent, to the extent possible, diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, and geographical background. Members will serve 2- to 4-year staggered appointments. The Board will be composed of approximately 125 members. Some members may be Regular Government Employees, but the majority of the Board's membership will be Special Government Employees.

13. SUBCOMMITTEES: The Board is authorized to establish subcommittees, with the DFO's approval, to perform specific projects or assignments as necessary and consistent with its mission. The Board chair shall notify the Director, Health Services Research and Development Service, through the DFO, of the establishment of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Subcommittees will report back to the Board.

14. RECORDKEEPING: Records of the Board shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2. or other approved agency records disposition schedules. Those records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

15. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved: _____ Date: 5/4/16

Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs