DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
CHARTER OF THE
NATIONAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: National Research Advisory Council (NRAC)

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: NRAC provides advice to the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health and makes recommendations on the nature and scope of research and development sponsored and/or conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), to include (1) the policies and projects of the Office of Research and Development (ORD); (2) the focus of research on the high priority health care needs of Veterans; (3) the balance of basic, applied, and outcomes research; (4) the scientific merit review process; (5) the appropriate mechanisms by which ORD can leverage its resources to enhance the research financial base; (6) the rapid response to changing health care needs, while maintaining the stability of the research infrastructure; and (7) the protection of human subjects of research.

C. PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE COUNCIL TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE: There is a continuing need for NRAC and no termination date has been set.

D. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COUNCIL REPORTS: NRAC reports to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Health.

E. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL: The Veterans Health Administration is responsible for providing support to NRAC.

F. DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL: NRAC (1) advises the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health on all matters related to the research and development program and (2) conducts analyses and develop reports or other materials as necessary. In order to avoid duplication of effort, NRAC is encouraged to review deliberations of other committees or entities, and may incorporate or otherwise use the results of deliberations of such entities. As a part of its function, NRAC may accept for consideration suggestions for research and development issues from Congress, VA and non-VA scientists, Veterans and their representatives, and the general public.

NRAC may establish subcommittees to carry out specific projects or assignments. The Council chair shall notify the Secretary, through the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Council, of the establishment of any subcommittee, including its function, membership and estimated duration. Subcommittees will report back to the Council.

NRAC will be comprised of not more than 12 members. The majority of the Council's members are Special Government Employees. Members will be selected from knowledgeable VA- and non-VA experts, and Veterans' community representatives with

special qualifications and competence to deal effectively with research and development issues in VA. Appropriate categories of primary expertise that may be represented include (1) basic biomedical research; (2) rehabilitation research and development; (3) health services research and development; (4) clinical research; (5) geriatric care; (6) primary care; (7) special Veterans population health issues; (8) occupational and environmental health research; (9) mental health and behavioral research; and (10) surgery. In addition, NRAC will have at least one Veteran as a member to ensure an important perspective on the health problems of Veterans.

The Secretary will appoint members for overlapping two-year terms of service and may reappoint members for additional terms. The Secretary will appoint the Chair for a term of not more than three years and may reappoint the Chair for additional terms.

Records of the Council shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26 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.

G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF YEARS: The estimated annual cost for operating NRAC is $100,000 and 0.3 FTE staff years. All members will receive travel expenses and per diem in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the council.

H. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: NRAC will meet about four times per year. The DFO, a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Council and subcommittee meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all Council and subcommittee 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, and to chair any meeting when directed to do so by the Secretary.

I. COUNCIL TERMINATION DATE: None

J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved: Eric K. Shinseki Date: 10/2/2009

Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs