

2020 Current Fiscal Year Report: Creating Options for Veterans Expedited Recovery (COVER) Commission

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1. Department or Agency		2. Fiscal Year	
Department of Veterans Affairs		2020	
3. Committee or Subcommittee		3b. GSA Committee No.	
Creating Options for Veterans Expedited Recovery (COVER) Commission		2616	
4. Is this New Fiscal Year?	5. Current Charter	6. Expected Renewal Date	7. Expected Term Date
No	08/13/2019	08/13/2021	02/24/2020
8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?	8b. Specific Termination Authority		8c. Actual Term Date
Yes			02/24/2020
9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year	10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?		10b. Legislation Pending?
Terminate	No		Not Applicable
11. Establishment Authority Statutory (Congress Created)			
12. Specific Establishment Authority	13. Effective Date	14. Committee Type	14c. Presidential?
Section 931 of CARA	07/22/2016	Ad hoc	Yes
15. Description of Committee Other Committee			
16a. Total Number of Reports 1			
16b. Report Date			
Report Title			
COVER Commission Final Report			
Number of Committee Reports Listed: 1			
17a. Open	17b. Closed 0	17c. Partially Closed 1	Other Activities 0 17d. Total 3
Meetings and Dates			

Purpose	Start	End
Face-to-face Meeting	10/23/2019	10/24/2019
Face to Face Meeting for Commissioners to discuss final recommendations	11/05/2019	11/06/2019
Face-to-Face Meeting to discuss final report recommendation.	12/12/2019	12/12/2019

Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 3

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$8,887.92	\$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$279,073.12	\$0.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$289,732.10	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$18,633.50	\$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$4,472.04	\$0.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$14,162.05	\$0.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	\$0.00	\$0.00
18d. Total	\$614,960.73	\$0.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	5.50	0.00

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

The COVER Commission supports Secretary VA's priorities of Greater Choice and Suicide Prevention through an examination of complimentary and integrative health treatments that have the potential to improve the health of Veterans.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

Through Congressional and Presidential appointments as required in COVER legislation.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

Estimated number of face-to-face meetings per year - 6 with additional meetings called at the discretion of the Chair and/or DFO. Relevance of meetings called will be high. FY20 3 face-to-face visits to finalize report and recommendations.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 requires the establishment of the COVER Commission to achieve the goals outlined in Section 931 of that legislation. (Goals are listed in narrative description under Performance Measure section.)

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

Not Applicable

21. Remarks

Termination: 2.24.2020. Per COVER legislation: (4) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Members of the Commission shall be appointed for the life of the Commission; and (f) TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.—The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the Commission submits the final report under subsection (e)(2).

Designated Federal Officer

John P. Goodrich DFO

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
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Amidon, Matthew	11/15/2016	01/24/2020	Col. U.S. Marine Corps Reserve	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Beeman, Thomas	07/09/2018	12/31/2019	Rear Admiral, USN, (ret)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Harvey, Thomas	07/19/2018	01/24/2020	US Army retired	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Jonas, Wayne	11/15/2016	01/24/2020	Ltc, MD, US Army (Ret.)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Kahn, Jamil	11/15/2016	01/24/2020	LtCol, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Kuntz, Matthew	11/15/2016	01/24/2020	Esq.	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Leinenkugel, Thomas	07/09/2018	01/24/2020	Senior Advisor to White House; Company Commander, Marines (ret)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Maguen, Shira	02/20/2018	01/24/2020	Staff Psychologist, SF VAMC	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Potoczniack, Michael	02/20/2018	01/24/2020	Staff Psychologist, Northern CA VAMC	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Rose, John	11/15/2016	01/24/2020	Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Number of Committee Members Listed: 10

Narrative Description

COVER Commission, goals described in Section 931 of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 include: 1) Examine the efficacy of the evidence-based therapy model used by VA to treat mental health illnesses and identify areas of improvement; 2) Conduct a patient-centered survey within each VISN to examine: the experiences of veterans with VA facilities regarding mental health care, the experiences of veterans with non-VA facilities regarding mental health care, the preferences of veterans regarding available treatment for mental health issues and which methods the veterans believe to be most effective, the experience, if any, of veterans with respect to the complementary and integrative health treatment therapies, the prevalence of prescribing medication to veterans seeking treatment for mental health disorders through VA, and the outreach efforts of VA regarding the availability of benefits and treatments for veterans for addressing mental health issues; 3) examine available research on complementary and integrative health for mental health disorders in areas of therapy including: music therapy, equine therapy, training and caring for service dogs, yoga therapy, acupuncture therapy, meditation therapy, outdoor sports therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, accelerated resolution therapy, art therapy, magnetic resonance therapy, and others; 4) study the sufficiency of VA resources to deliver quality mental health care; and 5) study the current treatments and resources available within VA and assess: the effectiveness of such treatments and resources in decreasing the number of suicides per day by veterans, the number of veterans who have been diagnosed with mental health issues, the percentage of veterans who have completed VA counseling sessions, and the efforts of VA to expand complementary and integrative health treatments viable to the recovery of veterans with mental health issues as determined by the Secretary to improve the effectiveness of treatments offered by VA. FY20 the Commission Members worked to finalize the documentation describing their findings and recommendation for the components outlined above. The COVER Commission submitted their final report on the January 24, 2020 to the President of the United States, the United States Congress (House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs) and the Secretary of the VA. July 31, 2020 the SECVA's response to the COVER Commission's

report regarding the 10 recommendations was submitted to the President of the United States, the United States Congress (House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs) and the Secretary of the VA. The responses were a collaboration that included 7 VA program offices (Member Services and VBA, OMHSP, Veteran Access to Care, OPCC&CT, Veteran Experience Office and Office of Community Care) with an action plan for implementation, continuation of on-going activities and/or exploration of innovation solutions to address all recommendations.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
Improvements to health or safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trust in government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Major policy changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Outcome Comments

Provide report of findings and recommendations to SECVA, HVAC, SVAC, and POTUS

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cost Savings Other



Cost Savings Comments

Not Applicable

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

10

Number of Recommendations Comments

The COVER Commission active date(s) 2018 - 2020

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

20%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

COVER Commission recommendations are transformational changes requiring the integration of Whole Health, CIH and Mental Health approaches to expediate Veteran's recovery and resilience.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

80%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

Full implementation has been impacted by the necessary response to the COVID pandemic for 20% of the recommendations. The remaining recommendations are occurring and ongoing.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments

Not Applicable

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reorganized Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reallocated resources | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Issued new regulation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Proposed legislation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Approved grants or other payments | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Action Comments

Not Applicable

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

Not Applicable

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Contact DFO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online Agency Web Site | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online Committee Web Site | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Online GSA FACA Web Site | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Publications | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Access Comments

Not Applicable