

**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Response to Veterans and Community Oversight
and Engagement Board (VCOEB)**

June 2023 Recommendations

Recommendation 20-01: The Secretary of VA instruct the leadership of VA of Greater Los Angeles to provide funding and staffing to place at least two fulltime registered nurses in at least two of the proposed project-based facilities on the West LA Campus to serve at least 120 unduplicated Veterans with chronic medical conditions.

VA Response: Non-Concur.

While VA supports the general intent of this recommendation, we are unable to concur due to the limiting specificity related to number of full-time equivalents, disciplines, and number of Veterans to be served. The proximity of VA's extensive healthcare resources to housing is a distinctive feature of the growing Veteran community on the West Los Angeles campus. VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS) will ensure that the appropriate level of care is available for Veterans residing in the Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) developments at West Los Angeles and at other locations on the campus. To accomplish that, VAGLAHS will leverage its Homeless Patient Aligned Care Teams, along with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) staff assigned to each EUL, to offer comprehensive, individualized care from medical staff, social workers, mental health and substance use counselors, nurses, and homeless program staff to our most vulnerable Veterans residing on campus.

While medical care is available in relatively close proximity to housing on campus, it still may not be close enough for some of the more medically fragile residents. VA will continue to evaluate these Veterans' medical needs, ensuring that all residents on the West LA campus will have the access to medical care that they require. We have begun to deploy nursing staff to the EUL sites on the West LA campus, and we will continue to assess this need along with our available medical resources. We expect that medical care for residents in the West LA campus buildings will ultimately be provided via a multifaceted approach including a combination of providers who may be involved to deliver rotating onsite care.

Recommendation 20-02-A: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to post all agenda from past meetings.

Recommendation 20-02-B: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to post all briefing materials from past meetings.

Recommendation 20-02-C: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to post all minutes from past meetings, to include video recordings if available.

Recommendation 20-02-D: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to post all recommendations, as adopted, by the board from past meetings.

Recommendation 20-02-E: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to post all Office of the Secretary response packets from past meetings.

Recommendation 20-02-F: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs task the VA Advisory Committee Management Office to organize all aforementioned material by VCOEB Meeting (in reverse chronological order) to facilitate a streamlined organizational structure for archival information.

VA Response to recommendations 20-02-A through F: Concur in Principle.

At VA, the role and functions of our Federal advisory committees (FAC) continue to render great importance to the Department. In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Final Rule 41 C.F.R. parts 102–3.115, 102–3.120 and the Department's written Committee Management Policy known as the Advisory Committee Management Office (ACMO) Guide (revised 2023, pages 7 and 8 and 41 C.F.R. part 102-3.175(e)), the ACMO works in conjunction with the Committee's Designated Federal Officer (DFO) to certify that effective committee management responsibilities are executed, as prescribed by FACA. FACA requires the DFO to manage the FAC's overall day-to-day activities. The DFO ensures accurate records are kept of the FAC's deliberations and maintains the records, reports, transcripts, minutes, working papers, drafts, studies, agenda, or other documents that are made available to or are prepared for or by a FAC. Additionally, the DFO keeps all FAC documents which are made available to or prepared by the FAC and adhere to the applicable Records Control Schedules. Moreover, the DFO works closely with the VA ACMO Team to ensure all these tasks are accomplished in a timely manner.

Per VA policy and the statutes and regulations applicable to all Federal Advisory Committees, it is implied that shared the responsibilities of ACMO and the DFO enables both Committee members and public stakeholders unfettered access to these unclassified documents. As a courtesy, ACMO maintains a generic webpage for each VA FAC on its internal website. The FAC's generic webpage contains only the most recently signed documents, such as the most current/active signed Committee charter, signed copies of the Committee report or recommendations within a 1-year period, signed copies of the Committee's minutes submitted within a 1-period, and so forth. Access to these current documents or older generated documents may be obtained by contacting the DFO as that individual is the caretaker for FAC documents, not ACMO. Given the existing access, the request for ACMO to post and maintain all the Committee's documents on the public site is duplicative and beyond the scope of current manpower for ACMO. Due to the vastness of this request, ACMO cannot maintain all VA FAC documents on its internal website. ACMO recommends that the Veterans Experience Office coordinate with the VA Office of Information and

Technology to explore immediate options for the Committee to establish its own internal website, as some other VA FACs have previously done.

Recommendation 20-03: The Secretary of Veterans Affairs instruct the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to inform House and Senate VA committee staff that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs no longer supports section 3 of H.R. 3848 having heard strong opposition from Veteran's groups such as The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and the Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board.

VA Response: Non-Concur

Section 3 of H.R. 3848, as introduced, no longer exists. It was removed from the version of the bill that was reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on September 8, 2023. Moreover, a change in Department position for any bill requires redrafting and restaffing of views on the bill, as VA cannot simply change position on a provision within a bill. As the Department's position was previously cleared by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a change in position would require clearance by OMB as well before any change to VA's testimony could be communicated to the committee.