

(4) Other information that would be of interest to those committees in oversight of the Department medical research program.

(g) **MEDICAL RESEARCH.**—For purposes of this section, the term “medical research” means medical research described in section 7303(a)(2) of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 108–170, title IV, § 401(a)(1), Dec. 6, 2003, 117 Stat. 2059.)

### § 7308. Office of Rural Health

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the Department within the Office of the Under Secretary for Health an office to be known as the “Office of Rural Health” (in this section referred to as the “Office”).

(b) **HEAD.**—The Director of the Office of Rural Health shall be the head of the Office. The Director of the Office of Rural Health shall be appointed by the Under Secretary of Health from among individuals qualified to perform the duties of the position.

(c) **FUNCTIONS.**—The functions of the Office are as follows:

(1) In cooperation with the medical, rehabilitation, health services, and cooperative studies research programs in the Office of Policy and the Office of Research and Development of the Veterans Health Administration, to assist the Under Secretary for Health in conducting, coordinating, promoting, and disseminating research into issues affecting veterans living in rural areas.

(2) To work with all personnel and offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop, refine, and promulgate policies, best practices, lessons learned, and innovative and successful programs to improve care and services for veterans who reside in rural areas of the United States.

(3) To designate in each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) an individual who shall consult on and coordinate the discharge in such Network of programs and activities of the Office for veterans who reside in rural areas of the United States.

(4) To perform such other functions and duties as the Secretary or the Under Secretary for Health considers appropriate.

(d) **RURAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTERS.**—(1) There are, in the Office, veterans rural health resource centers that serve as satellite offices for the Office.

(2) The veterans rural health resource centers have purposes as follows:

(A) To improve the understanding of the Office of the challenges faced by veterans living in rural areas.

(B) To identify disparities in the availability of health care to veterans living in rural areas.

(C) To formulate practices or programs to enhance the delivery of health care to veterans living in rural areas.

(D) To develop special practices and products for the benefit of veterans living in rural areas and for implementation of such practices and products in the Department system-wide.

(Added Pub. L. 109–461, title II, § 212(a)(1), Dec. 22, 2006, 120 Stat. 3421; amended Pub. L. 112–154, title I, § 110, Aug. 6, 2012, 126 Stat. 1175.)

### Editorial Notes

#### AMENDMENTS

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 112–154 added subsec. (d).

### § 7309. Readjustment Counseling Service

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is in the Veterans Health Administration a Readjustment Counseling Service. The Readjustment Counseling Service shall provide readjustment counseling and associated services to individuals in accordance with section 1712A of this title.

(b) **CHIEF OFFICER.**—(1) The head of the Readjustment Counseling Service shall be the Chief Officer of the Readjustment Counseling Service (in this section referred to as the “Chief Officer”), who shall report directly to the Under Secretary for Health.

(2) The Chief Officer shall be appointed by the Under Secretary for Health from among individuals who—

(A)(i) are psychologists who hold a diploma as a doctorate in clinical or counseling psychology from an authority approved by the American Psychological Association and who have successfully undergone an internship approved by that association;

(ii) are holders of a master in social work degree; or

(iii) hold such other advanced degrees related to mental health as the Secretary considers appropriate;

(B) have at least three years of experience providing direct counseling services or outreach services in the Readjustment Counseling Service;

(C) have at least three years of experience administering direct counseling services or outreach services in the Readjustment Counseling Service;

(D) meet the quality standards and requirements of the Department; and

(E) are veterans who served in combat as members of the Armed Forces.

(c) **STRUCTURE.**—(1) The Readjustment Counseling Service is a distinct organizational element within the Veterans Health Administration.

(2) The Readjustment Counseling Service shall provide counseling and services as described in subsection (a).

(3) The Chief Officer shall have direct authority over all Readjustment Counseling Service staff and assets, including Vet Centers.

(d) **SOURCE OF FUNDS.**—(1) Amounts for the activities of the Readjustment Counseling Service, including the operations of its Vet Centers, shall be derived from amounts appropriated for the Veterans Health Administration for medical care.

(2) Amounts for activities of the Readjustment Counseling Service, including the operations of its Vet Centers, shall not be allocated through the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system.

(3) In each budget request submitted for the Department of Veterans Affairs by the President