

relating to the evaluation of specific efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of mental health services provided by the Department at or through individual facilities.

(e)(1) In order to provide advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health to carry out their responsibilities under this section, the official within the central office of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for mental health and behavioral sciences matters shall establish a peer review panel to assess the scientific and clinical merit of proposals that are submitted to the Secretary for the designation of centers under this section.

(2) The panel shall consist of experts in the fields of mental health research, education and training, and clinical care. Members of the panel shall serve as consultants to the Department.

(3) The panel shall review each proposal submitted to the panel by the official referred to in paragraph (1) and shall submit to that official its views on the relative scientific and clinical merit of each such proposal. The panel shall specifically determine with respect to each such proposal whether that proposal is among those proposals which have met the highest competitive standards of scientific and clinical merit.

(4) The panel shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(f) Clinical and scientific investigation activities at each center established under this section—

(1) may compete for the award of funding from amounts appropriated for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account; and

(2) shall receive priority in the award of funding from such account insofar as funds are awarded to projects and activities relating to mental illness.

(g) The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that at least three centers designated under this section emphasize research into means of improving the quality of care for veterans suffering from mental illness through the development of community-based alternatives to institutional treatment for such illness.

(h) The Under Secretary for Health shall ensure that information produced by the research, education and training, and clinical activities of centers established under this section that may be useful for other activities of the Veterans Health Administration is disseminated throughout the Veterans Health Administration. Such dissemination shall be made through publications, through programs of continuing medical and related education provided through regional medical education centers under subchapter VI of chapter 74 of this title, and through other means. Such programs of continuing medical education shall receive priority in the award of funding.

(i) The official within the central office of the Veterans Health Administration responsible for mental health and behavioral sciences matters shall be responsible for supervising the operation of the centers established pursuant to this section and shall provide for ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance with the requirements of this section.

(j)(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the basic support of the research and education and training activities of centers established pursuant to this section amounts as follows:

(A) \$3,125,000 for fiscal year 1998.

(B) \$6,250,000 for each of fiscal years 1999 through 2001.

(2) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (1), the Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from other funds appropriated for that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical services account and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section.

(Added Pub. L. 104-262, title III, §334(a)(1), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3200; amended Pub. L. 110-387, title IX, §901(a)(8), Oct. 10, 2008, 122 Stat. 4142.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Advisory Committee Act, referred to in subsec. (e)(4), is Pub. L. 92-463, Oct. 6, 1972, 86 Stat. 770, as amended, which is set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

#### AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (j)(2). Pub. L. 110-387 substituted “medical services account” for “medical care account”.

#### ANNUAL REPORTS ON AND DESIGNATION OF CENTERS

Pub. L. 104-262, title III, §334(b), (c), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3203, 3204, provided that:

“(b) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than February 1 of each of 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the status and activities during the previous fiscal year of the centers for mental illness research, education, and clinical activities established pursuant to section 7320 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)). Each such report shall include the following:

“(1) A description of the activities carried out at each center and the funding provided for such activities.

“(2) A description of the advances made at each of the participating facilities of the center in research, education and training, and clinical activities relating to mental illness in veterans.

“(3) A description of the actions taken by the Under Secretary for Health pursuant to subsection (h) of that section (as so added) to disseminate information derived from such activities throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

“(4) The Secretary's evaluations of the effectiveness of the centers in fulfilling the purposes of the centers.

“(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall designate at least one center under section 7320 of title 38, United States Code, not later than January 1, 1998.”

#### § 7321. Committee on Care of Severely Chronically Mentally Ill Veterans

(a) The Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Health, shall establish in the Veterans Health Administration a Committee on Care of Severely Chronically Mentally Ill Veterans. The Under Secretary shall appoint employees of the Department with expertise in the care

of the chronically mentally ill to serve on the committee.

(b) The committee shall assess, and carry out a continuing assessment of, the capability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of mentally ill veterans whose mental illness is severe and chronic and who are eligible for health care furnished by the Department, including the needs of such veterans who are women. In carrying out that responsibility, the committee shall—

(1) evaluate the care provided to such veterans through the Veterans Health Administration;

(2) identify systemwide problems in caring for such veterans in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration;

(3) identify specific facilities within the Veterans Health Administration at which program enrichment is needed to improve treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans; and

(4) identify model programs which the committee considers to have been successful in the treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans and which should be implemented more widely in or through facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) The committee shall—

(1) advise the Under Secretary regarding the development of policies for the care and rehabilitation of severely chronically mentally ill veterans; and

(2) make recommendations to the Under Secretary—

(A) for improving programs of care of such veterans at specific facilities and throughout the Veterans Health Administration;

(B) for establishing special programs of education and training relevant to the care of such veterans for employees of the Veterans Health Administration;

(C) regarding research needs and priorities relevant to the care of such veterans; and

(D) regarding the appropriate allocation of resources for all such activities.

(d)(1) Not later than April 1, 1997, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the implementation of this section. The report shall include the following:

(A) A list of the members of the committee.

(B) The assessment of the Under Secretary for Health, after review of the initial findings of the committee, regarding the capability of the Veterans Health Administration, on a systemwide and facility-by-facility basis, to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of severely chronically mentally ill veterans who are eligible for Department care.

(C) The plans of the committee for further assessments.

(D) The findings and recommendations made by the committee to the Under Secretary for Health and the views of the Under Secretary on such findings and recommendations.

(E) A description of the steps taken, plans made (and a timetable for their execution), and resources to be applied toward improving

the capability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of severely chronically mentally ill veterans who are eligible for Department care.

(2) Not later than June 1 of each year through 2012, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report containing information updating the reports submitted under this subsection before the submission of such report.

(Added Pub. L. 104-262, title III, § 335(a), Oct. 9, 1996, 110 Stat. 3204; amended Pub. L. 106-419, title IV, § 402(f), Nov. 1, 2000, 114 Stat. 1863; Pub. L. 108-170, title IV, § 405(c), Dec. 6, 2003, 117 Stat. 2063; Pub. L. 110-387, title VIII, § 807, Oct. 10, 2008, 122 Stat. 4141.)

#### AMENDMENTS

2008—Subsec. (d)(2). Pub. L. 110-387 substituted “through 2012” for “through 2008”.

2003—Subsec. (d)(2). Pub. L. 108-170 substituted “June 1 of each year through 2008” for “February 1, 1998, and February 1 of each of the six following years”.

2000—Subsec. (d)(2). Pub. L. 106-419, substituted “six following years” for “three following years”.

#### § 7321A. Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish in the Veterans Health Administration a committee to be known as the “Committee on Care of Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury”. The Under Secretary for Health shall appoint employees of the Department with expertise in the care of veterans with traumatic brain injury to serve on the committee.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE.—The committee shall assess, and carry out a continuing assessment of, the capability of the Veterans Health Administration to meet effectively the treatment and rehabilitation needs of veterans with traumatic brain injury. In carrying out that responsibility, the committee shall—

(1) evaluate the care provided to such veterans through the Veterans Health Administration;

(2) identify systemwide problems in caring for such veterans in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration;

(3) identify specific facilities within the Veterans Health Administration at which program enrichment is needed to improve treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans; and

(4) identify model programs which the committee considers to have been successful in the treatment and rehabilitation of such veterans and which should be implemented more widely in or through facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—The committee shall—

(1) advise the Under Secretary regarding the development of policies for the care and rehabilitation of veterans with traumatic brain injury; and

(2) make recommendations to the Under Secretary—

(A) for improving programs of care of such veterans at specific facilities and throughout the Veterans Health Administration;