

(d) **GENERAL FUNCTIONS.**—(1) The Director shall conduct periodic inspections and reviews, as the Director determines appropriate, of medical research programs of the Department. Such inspections and reviews shall include review of required documented assurances.

(2) The Director shall observe external accreditation activities conducted for accreditation of medical research programs conducted in facilities of the Department.

(3) The Director shall investigate allegations of research impropriety and misconduct in medical research projects of the Department.

(4) The Director shall submit to the Under Secretary for Health, the Secretary, and the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on any suspected lapse, from whatever cause or causes, in protecting safety of human subjects and others, including employees, in medical research programs of the Department.

(5) The Director shall carry out such other duties as the Under Secretary for Health may require.

(e) **SOURCE OF FUNDS.**—Amounts for the activities of the Office, including its regional offices, shall be derived from amounts appropriated for the Veterans Health Administration for Medical Care.

(f) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than March 15 each year, the Director shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the activities of the Office during the preceding calendar year. Each such report shall include, with respect to that year, the following:

(1) A summary of reviews of individual medical research programs of the Department completed by the Office.

(2) Directives and other communications issued by the Office to field activities of the Department.

(3) Results of any investigations undertaken by the Office during the reporting period consonant with the purposes of this section.

(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 stud-

ies 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 psy-