

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

(Formerly Retired Officers Committee)

Standard Operating Procedures

COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION OF THE U.S. PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICE



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Article

I. PURPOSE

The Commissioned Officers Association (COA) of United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Veterans Affairs Committee (VAC) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) provide operational and procedural guidance for the COA VAC. This SOP applies to all documents created that are related to all functions within the COA VAC to establish policies, processes, records, and acceptance criteria under the auspices of the COA. This SOP does not apply to documents created by other organizations outside of the COA VAC.

II. MISSION

The mission of the VAC Committee is (1) to provide a focal point within COA for veterans to express their concerns and suggestions regarding the services and programs provided by COA that directly affect veterans; and 2) to encourage USPHS veterans who are not members of COA to become active members in the Association, and 3) to encourage retention of current veterans in COA.

III. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES & ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Committee Responsibility

The VAC shall work with the COA Board of Directors, other COA Committees, and COA staff to facilitate issues and activities of USPHS veterans who are COA members.

Section 2. Structure

The VAC consists of one Committee Chair, up to two Vice-Chairs, and others who are designated as Committee members. The VAC Chair may form permanent or *ad hoc* subcommittees within, as needed.

- A. Chair: The VAC Chair shall be currently serving on the COA Board of Directors and is to be appointed by the Chair of the COA Board of Directors. The VAC Chair acts as a liaison between the COA Board of Directors and USPHS veterans who are members of COA. The VAC Chair facilitates, organizes, and maintains order in meetings; advises the VAC on new and existing projects; and reviews and finalizes Committee-specific documents. The current VAC Chair may have input on the selection of the next VAC Chair.
- B. Vice Chair: The VAC Vice Chair shall be currently serving on the COA Board of Directors and is to be appointed by the Chair of the COA Board of Directors. The VAC Vice Chair assists the Committee Chair with any administrative committee work and acts for the Chair when needed. The Vice Chair should prepare to take over the Committee in the following year.

C. Committee Members: Committee members consist of COA members who are veterans or active-duty officers nearing retirement or decommissioning with interest in developing and promoting Association activities for USPHS veterans. They should attend meetings regularly and volunteer for VAC activities as they arise to be considered active members.

IV. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Section 1. Responsibilities

The VAC Chair must keep the Committee viable and productive through aligning the meetings and projects to facilitate the mission of the VAC.

- A. The VAC Chair will have the following responsibilities:
 - i. Prepare written reports (to be included in the minutes) for COA Board meetings to communicate project progress and VAC activities.
 - ii. Review and approve VAC minutes.
 - iii. Prepare written and/or verbal reports for the COA Board of Directors meetings.
 - iv. Review the VAC SOP and other Committee documents (as listed in the Committee SOP) at least annually.
 - v. Involve as many VAC members as possible in discussions by soliciting opinions and experiences.
 - vi. Ensure VAC members understand expectations for assigned tasks and projects.
 - vii. Ensure individual project milestones are met, and if not, identify the cause and rectify the problem.
 - viii. Provide orientation to new VAC members to review the mission of the Committee, current projects, time and frequency of meetings, etc.
 - ix. Provide updates to national COA members via COA *Frontline* in an article or bulleted format.
- B. The VAC Vice Chair will have the following responsibilities:
 - i. Support the Chair in managing the VAC.
 - ii. Distribute agenda to VAC members prior to meetings.
 - iii. Prepare and distribute VAC meeting minutes and reports. Meeting minutes shall be archived on the Committee's designated page on the OnBoard webpage.
 - iv. Maintain accurate records of VAC attendance.
 - v. Maintain contact information for all VAC members.
 - vi. Provide Certificates of Achievement to all VAC members who are considered active. An example Certificate of Achievement is provided in Appendix A.
- C. The VAC Committee Members have the expected roles and responsibilities:
 - i. Be willing and able to give the necessary time to attend meetings and perform any assigned duties.
 - ii. Actively participate in discussions and be willing to

- respect others' viewpoints.
- iii. Think in terms of the welfare of the group rather than personal interests.
- iv. Communicate or elevate concerns or questions from the Committee that require attention from the Chair.
- v. Volunteer for and follow through with assignments.
- vi. Represent the interests of USPHS veterans or those soon to be veterans.

Section 2. Meetings

The VAC will meet on the first Monday of each month at 5:00pm ET unless this falls on a holiday. It will be rescheduled with the consensus of Committee. The Committee operational year is July 1 to June 30. Meeting minutes are archived by the Vice Chair via the designated space on the OnBoard webpage.

V. WORKGROUPS

Section 1. Overview

The VAC Chair will establish workgroups and delegate the workload amongst Committee members in an organized manner for activities led by the Committee.

Section 2. Established Workgroups and Responsibilities

A. Gatherings

- i. The VAC will organize up to three gatherings a year, with the anticipation that two would be held virtually and one during the annual COF Symposium. These meetings are open to both USPHS veterans, as well as interested Active Duty Officers.

B. Communication

- i. The VAC Chair will notify the COA Executive Director about important information or veteran issues that need to be communicated via email with COA members as needed.
- ii. The VAC Chair will provide updates to national COA members via COA Frontline in an article or bulleted format as needed.

C. COA Membership Drives

- i. The VAC Chair and Vice Chair will receive quarterly from COA a list of expiring memberships.
- ii. The VAC Chair will delegate amongst the workgroup the names and contact information of the expiring memberships to coordinate mailing personalized hand-written notes.
 - a. Writers in the workgroup are encouraged to congratulate those who recently retired or to thank the veteran for their service and encourage them to remain with COA by listing benefits and upcoming activities or events.
- iii. COA will provide note cards and envelopes to the VAC.
- iv. Workgroup members voluntarily cover the postage costs and mail the notes.

Appendix A. End-of-the Year Certificate of Appreciation

This certificate can be found on OnBoard in the Resources folder.

