

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
CHARTER OF THE
REHABILITATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE
SCIENTIFIC MERIT REVIEW BOARD

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board.

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: The objective of the Board is to provide for the fair and equitable selection of the most meritorious research projects for support by VA research funds and to offer advice for research program officials on program priorities and policies. The ultimate objective of the Board is to ensure that the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development program promotes functional independence and improves the quality of life for impaired and disabled veterans.

Board members advise the Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service and the Chief Research and Development Officer on the scientific and technical merit, the mission relevance, and the protection of human and animal subjects of Rehabilitation Research and Development proposals. The Board does not consider grants, contracts, or other forms of extramural research.

C. PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE BOARD TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE(S): The Board performs a continuing service unrestricted as to time except as periodic review of its functions shall indicate that it is no longer needed. The Board's continued operation is contingent upon renewal of this charter by appropriate action prior to its expiration.

D. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE BOARD REPORTS: The Board reports to the Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service.

E. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE BOARD: Support for the Board is provided by the Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

F. DUTIES OF THE BOARD: The Board members and its subcommittees will, as needed: (1) review rehabilitation research and development proposals administered locally by VA facilities for scientific and technical merit; (2) prepare summary recommendations on all proposals based upon independent review, Board discussions, and site visits, where necessary, which are used to convey group consensus to the Director of the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service; and (3) advise the Director of the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service regarding the status of rehabilitation research and development as applicable to the Board members' areas of expertise. Board membership will reflect equitable geographic, ethnic, and gender representation so long as the effectiveness of the Board is not impaired. Members will serve 4-year staggered appointments contingent upon renewal of the Board's charter. The Board will be composed of approximately 15 members. Several members may be

Regular Government Employees (RGE), but the majority of the Board's membership will be Special Government Employees (SGE).

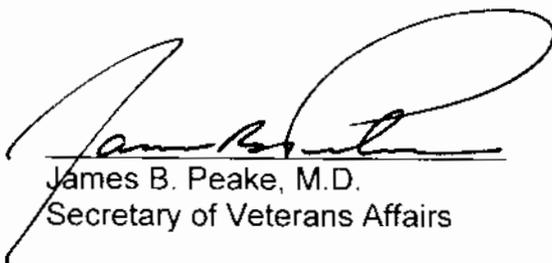
G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF-YEARS:

The estimated annual cost for operating the Board is approximately \$485,000 and 2.5 staff years. All members receive travel expenses and a per diem allowance in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the Board.

H. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF BOARD MEETINGS: The Board is expected to meet up to twice annually. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Board meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so.

I. BOARD TERMINATION DATE: Unless renewed by appropriate action prior to its expiration, the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service Scientific Merit Review Board will terminate 2 years from the date below.

J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved: 
James B. Peake, M.D.
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Date: 6/12/08