



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Veterans Health Administration  
Washington DC 20420**

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**UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER**

**VHA MISSION, CORE VALUES, VISION, DOMAINS OF VALUE  
AND PLANNING STRATEGIES**

1. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has undergone profound changes over the past 10 years, which have proven both rewarding and challenging. VHA has positioned itself as a national leader in health care by using innovative medical practices and technologies; advances in research and education; and expanding the evidence base for health care and translating it into changes in delivery, particularly in meeting the needs of the new veteran and his or her family. This leadership role, however, comes with a responsibility to continue to find more innovative ways to provide safe, effective, and compassionate health care in a time of complex changes in health care and financial constraints.
2. Like other high-performing organizations, VHA must have a clear sense of mission and vision for the future, and an understanding of the core values that motivate VHA actions. A clear understanding of the domains of value that provide a framework for developing strategies and initiatives is also essential to achieve our mission and vision and fulfill VHA's obligation to our Nation's veterans.
3. In January 2005, VHA began to prepare for the National Leadership Board's (NLB) Strategic Planning Summit, which was held in April 2005 in Washington, DC. The goals for the Summit were to reaffirm the strategic direction for VHA to focus on development of mission-critical strategies, and to set clear priorities for the future. In preparation for the Summit, extensive deliberations took place within Veteran Integrated Services Networks (VISNs), in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Central Office Program Offices, and in NLB Committees. Each reviewed and discussed VHA's mission, core values, vision, domains of value, and strategies.
4. The Summit resulted in the development and affirmation of new mission and vision statements, and a reaffirmation of the core values and domains of value for VHA. Thoughtful consideration was given to VHA's future strategic direction. Eight strategies were formulated, and the process to develop initiatives related to those strategies has begun. These strategies will be used beginning in Fiscal Year 2006. The planning already done in Stage 1 of the Fiscal Year 2006-2010 strategic planning process, however, will be mapped into the new strategies and initiatives.

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5. As a result of the deliberations at the Strategic Planning Summit and feedback from VISNs and Program Offices, the five key components of VHA's strategic planning framework are being provided for wide and immediate dissemination to all VHA staff, and for use in all official documents. This information will be reflected in all documents emanating from VHA facilities and VISNs, replacing any local or national versions previously used. The five components include:

- a. The VHA Mission Statement,
- b. The VHA Core Values and their definitions,
- c. The VHA Vision Statement,
- d. The VHA Domains of Value, and
- e. The VHA Planning Strategies.

6. **Mission Statement.** VHA's mission statement is: Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

7. **Core Values.** The Core values are:

a. **Trust.** Trust means having a high degree of confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability and sincere good intent of those with whom we work, of those whom we serve, and the system of which we are a part. Trust is the basis for the caregiver-patient relationship and is fundamental to all that we do in health care.

b. **Respect.** Respect means honoring and holding in high regard the dignity and worth of our patients and their families, our co-workers, and the system of which we are a part. It means relating to each other and providing services in a manner that demonstrates an understanding of, sensitivity to and concern for each person's individuality and importance.

c. **Excellence.** Excellence means being exceptionally good and of the highest quality. It means being the most competent and the finest in everything we do. It also means continually improving what we do.

d. **Compassion.** Compassion means demonstrating empathy and caring in all that we say and do in responding to our co-workers, our patients and their families, and all others with whom we interact.

e. **Commitment.** Commitment means meaningful engagement with coworkers, veterans, and families. It includes a promise to work hard to do all that we can in accordance with the highest principles and ethics governing the conduct of the health care professions and public service. It is a pledge to assume personal responsibility for our individual and collective actions.

8. **Vision Statement.** The Vision Statement is: To be a patient-centered integrated health care organization for veterans providing excellent health care, research, and education; an organization where people choose to work; an active community partner; and a back-up for National emergencies.

9. **Domains of Value.** The Domains of Value are:

- a. **Quality.** To put quality first.
- b. **Access.** To provide easy access to care, expertise and knowledge.
- c. **Function.** To restore, preserve, and improve veterans' function.
- e. **Satisfaction.** To exceed veteran, family, and employee expectations.
- f. **Cost-effectiveness.** To optimize resource use to benefit veterans.

g. **Healthy Communities.** To optimize the health of the veteran and the VA community and to contribute to the health of the Nation.

10. **VHA Strategies.** The VHA Strategies are to:

- a. Continuously improve the quality and safety of health care for veterans, particularly in those health issues associated with military service.
- b. Provide timely and appropriate access to health care by implementing best practices.
- c. Continuously improve veteran and family satisfaction with VA care by promoting patient-centered care and excellent customer service.
- d. Promote diversity, excellence, and satisfaction in the workforce and to foster a culture which encourages innovation.
- e. Promote excellence in business practices through administrative, financial, and clinical efficiencies.
- f. Focus research and development on clinical and system improvements designed to enhance the health and well-being of veterans.
- g. Promote excellence in the education of future health care professionals and to enhance VHA partnership with affiliates.
- h. Promote health within VA , local communities, and the Nation consistent with VA's mission.

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11. All VHA employees are called upon to embrace VHA's new mission and vision and for each individual to personally reaffirm the strategic direction of VHA to ensure all veterans, old and new, are served to the best of our abilities.

S/Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP  
Under Secretary for Health

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