



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

IL 10-2005-013

In Reply Refer To: 10

July 28, 2005

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER
CHANGES TO VHA LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

1. Background

a. In the past 10 years, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has positioned itself as a national leader in health care. In an Information Letter dated May 9, 2005 (IL 10-2005-008), mission and vision statements were formalized for VHA, and our existing core values and domains of value were reaffirmed. Eight strategies for VHA's future strategic direction were also approved, and initiatives related to those strategies are being prepared.

b. Coincident with those efforts, it is appropriate to ensure that VHA's organizational structure is properly configured to facilitate the activities necessary to fulfill our mission and achieve our vision. To refocus our mission to provide excellence in health care quality and value in the 21st century, the following changes to our organization are approved.

2. Creation of the Position of Principal Deputy Under Secretary. Proper succession planning requires that an individual within VHA have the scope and breadth of knowledge to be capable and qualified to act as Under Secretary on an interim or permanent basis in the event that the Under Secretary is unavailable, for any reason, to serve. Dr. Michael Kussman is appointed to serve in this position, which will provide better integration of field and headquarters operations and ensure appropriate accountability throughout the organization.

3. Realigning VHA's Reporting Structure. Because of the unique nature of their duties, the Chief Quality and Performance Officer, the Medical Inspector, the Director of the Office of Research Oversight, and the Director, National Center for Patient Safety will now report directly to the Under Secretary for Health. In addition, to ensure that budget and information technology submissions and discussions are informed by the most recent and accurate data and information, the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Health Informatics Officer will now report to the Under Secretary through the Principal Deputy Under Secretary.

4. Establishment of three new VHA Chief Officers. The rank of Chief Officer is reserved for VHA's most senior managers. To improve their visibility, and the status of the offices they manage, the title of three VHA Directors will be changed to Chief Officer. The Director, Compliance and Business Integrity Office will become the Chief Compliance and Business Integrity Officer; the Director, Management Support Office will become the Chief Management

IL 10-2005-013

July 28, 2005

Support Officer, and the Director, National Center for Patient Safety will become the Chief Patient Safety Officer. This will create parity of title with other similarly ranked titles, and will facilitate our ability to recruit top-notch candidates for these positions as they become vacant.

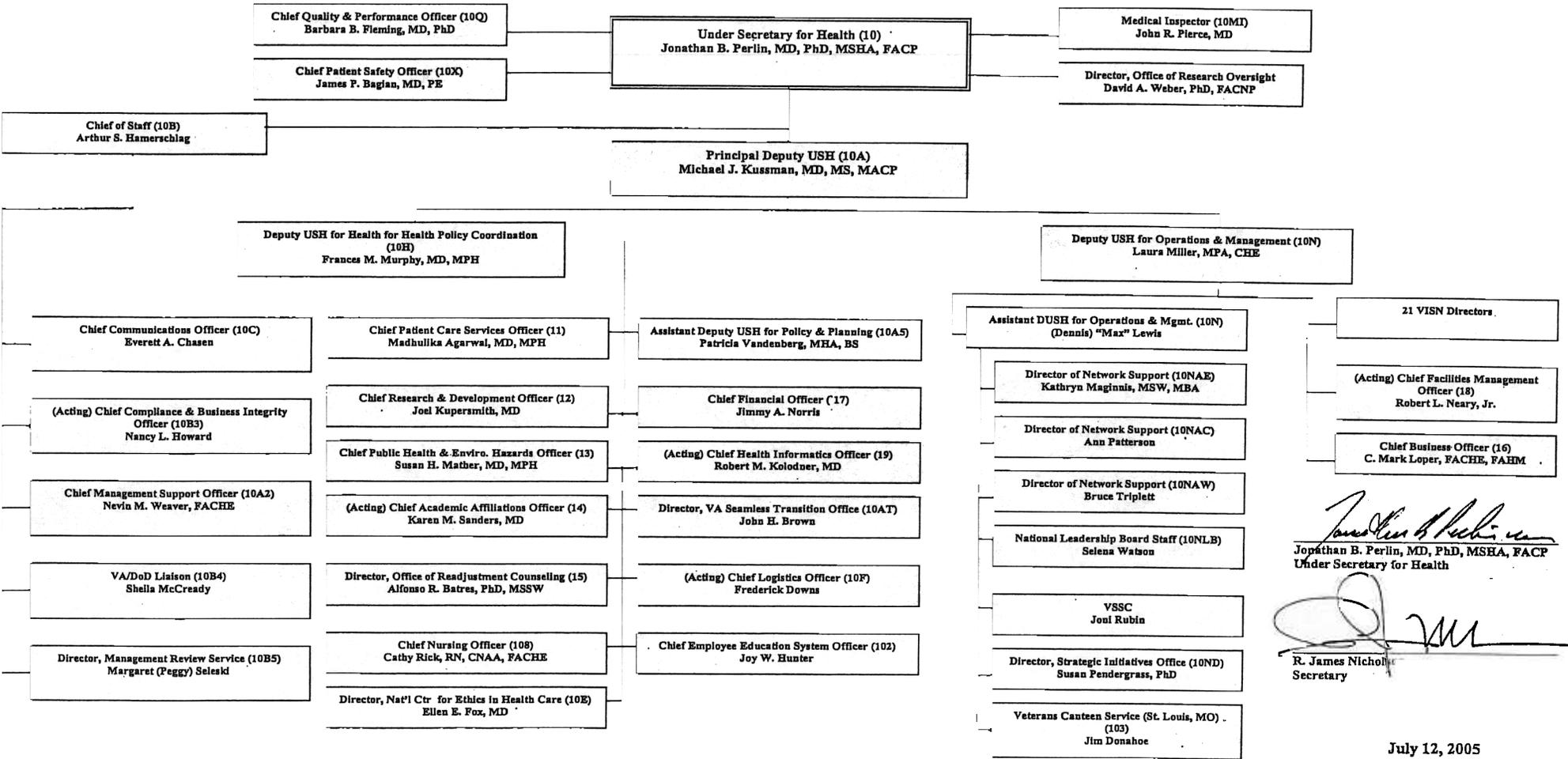
5. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has approved these organizational changes; a copy of VHA's new organizational chart is attached.

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

Attachment

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 7/28/05
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 7/28/05

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH



July 12, 2005