

**Management of Reports issued by the National Academies of Sciences,
Engineering, and Medicine**

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To revise VA Directive 0215, Management of Institute of Medicine Reports, dated May 2, 2016.
2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This directive sets forth the policies, roles, and responsibilities for managing VA's National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Task Force (NASEMTF), the NASEM Strategic Work Group (SWG), and NASEM Technical Work Groups (TWGs). Significant changes include:
 - a. Amendments to the Executive Agent responsibilities, to include a central tracking and monitoring of the progress of VA's activities and contracts with NASEM Department-wide.
 - b. Reflects the name change from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
 - c. Lays out the NASEM study report process.
 - d. Amends NASEMTF membership to include the Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG) as a voting member and the Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals as a non-voting member.
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Enterprise Integration (008), Office of Policy and Interagency Collaboration (008D).
4. **RELATED HANDBOOK:** None.
5. **RESCISSION:** VA Directive 0215 dated May 2, 2016, Management of Institute of Medicine Reports.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
Karen L. Brazell
Principal Executive Director, Office of
Acquisition, Logistics and Construction and
Chief Acquisition Officer, and Acting
Assistant Secretary for Enterprise
Integration

**BY THE DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
Karen L. Brazell
Principal Executive Director, Office of
Acquisition, Logistics and Construction and
Chief Acquisition Officer, and Acting
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Management of Reports issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

- 1. PURPOSE.** This directive establishes Departmental policy that delineates responsibilities for addressing reports issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).
- 2. BACKGROUND.** Over the last 30 years, legislation such as the Agent Orange Act of 1991, Public Law 102-4, 105 Stat. 11 (codified in part at 38 U.S.C. § 1116), and the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999, Public Law 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681, Title XVI—Service Connection for Persian Gulf War Illnesses (codified in part at 38 U.S.C. § 1118), have been enacted that direct VA to contract with NASEM to evaluate available scientific evidence concerning Veterans' issues and publish related reports. In addition to Congressionally mandated studies, NASEM studies can also be initiated by request of VA or by recommendation from NASEM. VA's NASEM Task Force (NASEMTF) was created to enhance coordination and collaboration across the Department to better address such reports.
- 3. POLICY.**
 - a.** NASEM reports that address healthcare issues and provide recommendations for VA actions and require responses will be managed by the NASEMTF to facilitate coordination and collaboration across the Department and ensure that Congressionally mandated requirements are met. See Appendix B – NASEM Study Process Flow chart.
 - b.** The NASEMTF receives, reviews and evaluates NASEM reports and develops and presents related findings, recommendations, and/or responses to SECVA. In addition, the NASEMTF provides oversight of implementation of recommendations adopted by SECVA. This body meets or is briefed quarterly. See Appendix A for NASEMTF membership.
 - c.** Under the direction of the NASEMTF, the Strategic Working Group (SWG) serves as the permanent body to monitor VA's review of and responses to NASEM reports; approves those reports prior to them being submitted to the NASEMTF; provides advice and guidance to the Technical Working Groups (TWGs); and provides updates to NASEMTF members as needed. The SWG will consist of members from across the Department and will be assigned by their respective offices. This body meets monthly. See Appendix A for SWG membership.
 - d.** Under the direction of the SWG, TWGs are formed to review NASEM reports and develop any related findings, recommendations, and/or responses for SWG and NASEMTF review, consideration, and approval. Members of the TWGs will be determined based on the subject matter of the relevant NASEM report. TWGs

organize and meet as needed and are disbanded upon the completion of their work.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall:

- (1) Review and approve/disapprove NASEMTF findings and recommendations developed in response to NASEM reports;
- (2) Notify Congress and the Office of Management and Budget of recommendations or decisions, as appropriate.

b. The Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration shall:

- (1) Chair the NASEMTF;
- (2) Provide oversight of implementation of actions related to SECVA decisions;
- (3) Appoint the Executive Director, Office of Policy and Interagency Collaboration or any other similarly qualified employee within the Office of Enterprise Integration to serve as NASEMTF Executive Agent.

c. The NASEMTF shall:

- (1) Review and approve/disapprove TWG findings and recommendations that have been developed in response to NASEM reports;
- (2) Meet quarterly or as required to discuss status of issues related to NASEM studies;
- (3) Provide direction and guidance to the SWG;
- (4) Present NASEMTF findings, recommendations, and responses to NASEM reports to SECVA;
- (5) Provide oversight of implementation of actions related to SECVA decisions;
- (6) Establish the policies and processes for NASEMTF, SWGs, and TWGs.

d. NASEMTF Executive Agent shall:

- (1) Manage NASEMTF activities and provide program management for reports, deliverables, and meetings;
- (2) Manage communications between the NASEMTF and the SWG;
- (3) Coordinate NASEMTF meetings and briefings;

- (4) Coordinate Department review and concurrence of NASEMTF recommendations and responses;
- (5) Publish and maintain the database entitled "Directive 0215, Management of Reports Issued by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine;"
- (6) Implement policies and processes established by NASEMTF;
- (7) Track, monitor, and ensure progress of VA's activities and contracts with NASEM across VA.

e. The NASEM SWG shall:

- (1) Review the findings, recommendations, and responses of TWGs for NASEMTF approval;
- (2) Provide advice and guidance to TWGs;
- (3) Provide updates to NASEMTF on the status of issues related to NASEM studies; and
- (4) Meet once each month.

f. The NASEM TWGs shall:

- (1) Review and evaluate NASEM reports and develop related findings, recommendations, and/or responses;
- (2) Participate in NASEMTF meetings as needed and SWG meetings regularly to provide status updates;
- (3) Brief NASEMTF as needed on findings, recommendations, and/or responses to NASEM reports; and
- (4) Assist the NASEMTF in presenting findings, recommendations, and/or responses to NASEM reports to SECVA.

APPENDIX A – Membership

NASEM Task Force

1. Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration (Chair);
2. Under Secretary for Health;
3. Under Secretary for Benefits;
4. General Counsel;
5. Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals;
6. Director, Office of Regulation Policy and Management (00REG);
7. Executive Agent for the task force chair (non-voting member)

NASEM Strategic Working Group

1. Veterans Health Administration Chief Consultant for Post Deployment Health Services (Chair);
2. NASEM contract leads (full members);
3. Veterans Benefits Administration Compensation Service*;
4. Office of General Counsel*;
5. Office of Regulation and Policy Management (00REG)*;
6. Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs*;
7. Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs*;
8. Executive Agent for the task force chair (non-voting member)*

* Offices designated with a * are “ex officio” contributors and not full or permanent members.

NASEM Technical Working Groups

1. Veterans Health Administration subject matter experts;
2. Veterans Benefits Administration subject matter experts as necessary;
3. Other subject matter experts as required to review technical aspects of or assist in the preparation of VA responses to NASEM reports.

APPENDIX B – NASEM Study Report Process

