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News Release

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VA Convenes Commission to Identify Candidates for the Under Secretary for Health Position

WASHINGTON – The Secretary of the Veterans Affairs (VA) is convening a commission to recommend candidates to the President for appointment as the Under Secretary for Health (USH) for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the largest integrated health care system in the country.

Following a 40-year career serving Veterans as a VA physician, teacher, and administrator, Dr. Robert A. Petzel, will retire in 2014 as planned, following a four-year tenure as Under Secretary for Health.

“I am grateful for Dr. Petzel’s distinguished service to Veterans spanning four decades, and for his leadership in transforming VHA’s health care delivery system to better care for Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “Dr. Petzel has assured me that he will continue to serve in his position until the Senate confirms a new Under Secretary for Health, in order to ensure a smooth transition.”

VA is required by law to convene a commission to seek the next Under Secretary for Health. Due to the length of the process, VA is initiating the commission in advance of Dr. Petzel’s retirement.

As Under Secretary for Health since February 2010, Dr. Petzel has directed a health care system with over 286,000 employees and a medical care budget of \$53.1 billion, overseeing the care of more than 6.3 million Veterans. Dr. Petzel has led VHA’s innovative efforts at moving toward a new model of care and pursuing eConnected health, in which VA providers use mobile devices and technology to extend health care beyond traditional visits.

“I have appreciated the privilege to serve Veterans by developing a healthcare system that reaches beyond simple treatment of diseases to a true partnership with Veterans,” said Dr. Petzel.

“VA will continue to partner with Veteran patients throughout their lives in order to improve their health and well-being.”

The commission will be launched this Fall. Suitable candidates to serve as members of this important commission will be selected based upon criteria outlined in the law and their skills, knowledge and attributes as leaders, managers and educators.

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