

## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Policy Statement on Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation

### Purpose

It is the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to make climate change resilience and adaptation an integral part of its ongoing mission. Most importantly, VA will use resilience and adaptation as opportunities to continually improve its service to Veterans and their families.

### Background

In 2009, the President issued Executive Order (EO) 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*. This EO required all Federal agencies, including VA, to evaluate climate change-associated risks and vulnerabilities. VA completed these evaluations and adopted mitigation plans.

On November 1, 2013, the President issued EO 13653, *Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change*. This EO tasked agencies to update and improve their Climate Change Adaptation Plan as a living document, reflecting new information and ongoing performance against goals, targets, and strategic priorities.

### Vision

VA will make risk-informed decisions, adaptively learn through experiences, and partner with agencies and organizations at all levels of government. VA will continually evaluate the risks and challenges posed by climate change to mission, operations, and programs. A primary mission of VA is the delivery of quality health care to our Nation's Veterans. To ensure that such health care continues, VA will place greater emphasis on how responses to climate change will impact health risks and related clinical and non-clinical requirements.

VA will update its existing Climate Change Adaptation Plan to include strategies so that Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, National Cemetery Administration, and VA Staff Offices incorporate resilience and adaptation mitigation into their regular business practices. VA will:

- Analyze the best relevant existing and emerging scientific data;
- Periodically review and evaluate risks and vulnerabilities;
- Assess VA's organizational capacity to adapt to both short- and long-term climate threats;
- Periodically evaluate the risk that short- and long-term climate threats pose to providing quality health care and clinical and non-clinical requirements;
- Prioritize responses according to threat severity; and
- Explicitly integrate resilience and adaptation considerations and planning into existing decision-making processes and activities.

### Conclusion

The VA Climate Change Adaptation Plan is a living document. VA is continuously improving the integration of resilience, adaptation, and sustainability into all aspects of its mission. VA will build on our previous experiences as it adapts to changing conditions. Above all else, VA will continue to provide high-quality care and services to America's Veterans and their families.



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