

RAUL PEREA-HENZE, M.D., NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

STATEMENT OF
RAUL PEREA-HENZE, M.D.
NOMINEE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLICY AND PLANNING
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
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Chairman Akaka, Senator Burr, Distinguished Members of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am deeply honored and humbled by President Obama's nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning at the Department of Veterans Affairs. And I greatly appreciate the President and Secretary Shinseki's confidence in me to lead this important function and help achieve their vision of transforming the VA into a 21st century organization.

Although my family is not physically present here, I stand on their shoulders. Those members of my family who served in government, the military, or as physicians and mental health professionals, as I have the honor to appear in front of you today. They have been my inspiration to pursue a passion for finding ways to help others. As a physician and public health professional, I have strived to find innovative cures and secure access to medicines for those who need them so they can, like me, hope to achieve their full God-given potential.

If confirmed, I hope to bring almost 25 years of experience in planning and strategy to serve the needs of Veterans and contribute to their well-being and the well-being of those who care for them. I began my career in policy and planning in New York City Government, where I oversaw the development of patient-centered services at one of the largest public hospitals in the Nation, ensured the optimization of funds and services for those affected with HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, and created a 10-year strategic plan for mental health and substance abuse services. At the Commerce Department, I managed policy issues as a White House Fellow and Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary for International Trade, and later, I managed an organization of close to 700 people, as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration. These experiences provided me with a broad understanding of how the Federal Government works and made me aware of the value and expertise of those who have devoted their careers to public service. My subsequent experience in the private sector, advising and working for leading Fortune 100 companies in management consulting and in the health care sector, provided me with business acumen and a results-oriented approach driven by a long-term vision. I believe with these combined capabilities I can bring significant value and innovation to those served by

the Department of Veterans Affairs: Veterans and those caring for Veterans.

The Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning is responsible for providing advice and counsel to the Secretary and other senior leaders and helping formulate corporate policy and strategic planning. If confirmed, I commit to faithfully advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and to work with Congress to produce better services and benefits for our Nation's Veterans.

The Office of Policy and Planning is responsible for developing the data and analysis to drive strategic planning and policy development for the Department. This critical function is essential to the transformation effort, as articulated by President Obama and Secretary Shinseki. The appropriate collection, management, and analysis of accurate data from the National Survey of Veterans and other population studies, as well as measurement of the effect of VA's services and benefits, is essential to informing policy decisions. Through such efforts, OPP will be instrumental in helping VA achieve the President and Secretary Shinseki's objectives. In addition, if confirmed I intend to establish and maintain strong working relationships with my counterparts at the Department of Defense and other key organizations to improve the delivery of health care services and benefits to Service members and Veterans.

If confirmed, I hope to bring stability, vision and innovation to the Office of Policy and Planning. I will work to optimize data collection and scientific methodologies for the analysis of the Veteran population and VA services and benefits so this information can serve transform the services they and their loved ones receive. I will work tirelessly to support Secretary Shinseki's goals for a VA that is people-centric, results-oriented and forward-looking. I believe that I will provide strong leadership and clear vision to this office so it can be regarded as a model across the Federal Government.

In closing, I would like to thank this distinguished Committee again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I stand ready to work with Congress and to advance President Obama's and Secretary Shinseki's goal to transform the VA into a 21st Century organization centered on those it serves. I look forward to any questions you may have.