



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

Cheryl Rawls, MPA

**Executive Director, Outreach, Transition and Economic Development
Veterans Benefits Administration**



Cheryl J. Rawls was appointed as Executive Director for Outreach, Transition and Economic Development on April 26, 2021. She is responsible for department-wide, Veteran and family-centric outreach and direct services, community stakeholder engagement, and Veteran service recovery programs throughout VBA's 4 Districts and 56 Regional Offices. She has oversight of VA's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at over 300 installations worldwide for active duty, Reservist, and National Guard Personnel across all branches of Service: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. As each earned and provided benefit has an economic coupling, she is responsible for ensuring knowledge is transferred and aligned with the military life cycle that empowers right choices at the right time. She provides direct oversight of the Overseas Military Service Coordinator program that connects Veterans living overseas to their benefits and she operates all 14 of VBA's Veteran special emphasis programs.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY:

2021-Present Executive Director, Outreach, Transition and Economic Development, Washington, DC
2019–2021 Assistant Deputy Under Secretary, Office of Field Operations-Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement, Washington, DC
2018–2019 Director, Office of Transition and Economic Development, Washington, DC
2016–2018 Director, Pension and Fiduciary Service, Washington, DC
2012–2016 Director, VA Regional Office, Winston-Salem, NC
2007–2012 Director, VA Regional Office, Little Rock, AR
2005–2007 Director, VA Regional Office, Huntington, WV

MAJOR MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS/AWARDS/DECORATIONS:

Levy Officer, 172 Infantry Battalion, Fort Richardson, AK
Commander, Replacement Detachment, 6th Infantry Division (L), 203rd Personnel CO, Fort Richardson, AK
Adjutant and Secretary to the General's Staff, HQ Third ROTC Region, Fort Riley, KS
Commander, HQ Company, 18th Military Intelligence Battalion, HHC, Augsburg, GE

EDUCATION:

DoD Vanguard Senior Executive Development Program
VA Senior Executive Strategic Leadership Course, UNC Chapel Hill
Leadership VA (LVA) and Assistant Director Development Program (ADDP)
Leadership for a Democratic Society, Federal Executive Institute
2004 One-VA Senior Executive Service Career Development Program (SESCDP)
Company Commander/First Sergeant Course
Project Management Professional, Georgetown University, Washington, DC
Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of the District of Columbia
BS in Business Management, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, VA



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

Michael Frueh

Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits Veterans Benefits Administration

Michael James Frueh was appointed the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits on February 14, 2021. He is responsible for administering benefits programs for Veterans, including education, home loan guaranty, insurance, disability compensation, pension, fiduciary, veteran readiness and employment and transition assistance, in the 25,000 employee, \$130B organization.



Prior to this appointment, he served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning and Performance Management in the Office of Enterprise Integration since June 2019. He was responsible for the Department's strategic planning, enterprise risk management, performance management, enterprise governance, Evidence Act implementation, requirements management, and the efficient integration of other enterprise-wide initiatives.

He served as the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations for the Benefits Assistance Service, responsible for all efficient execution of the benefits, which included all VBA call centers, global outreach, public contact, and the Transition Assistance Program. He was appointed VBA Chief of Staff in 2016, where he served as the senior staff advisor to the Under Secretary for Benefits, responsible for the creation and efficient execution of all VBA policies, programs, and operational plans. Prior to that, he was the Executive Director for VBA's Loan Guaranty Service.

Mr. Frueh previously worked in the structured finance group at PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bankers Trust's asset securitization group, and Andersen Consulting's commercial practice.

Mr. Frueh received a Presidential Rank Award as a Distinguished Executive in 2017.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY:

2021 – Present	Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits
2019 – 2021	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Enterprise Integration
2018 – 2019	Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Benefits Assistance Service
2016 – 2018	Chief of Staff, Veterans Benefits Administration
2012 – 2016	Executive Director, Loan Guaranty Service
2002 – 2012	Financial Advisor/Assistant Director/Acting Director, Loan Guaranty Service

EDUCATION:

2005	MBA, The George Washington University, Washington, DC
1991	B.S., Mathematics, Pepperdine University, Seaver College, Malibu, CA



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

Denis Richard McDonough

Secretary of Veterans Affairs

The Honorable Denis Richard McDonough was nominated by President Biden to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Mr. McDonough's nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on February 8th, 2021, and he was sworn in the following day as the 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

On January 27, 2021, during his confirmation hearing, Secretary McDonough testified to Congress, "I will work tirelessly to build and restore VA's trust as the premier agency for ensuring the well-being of America's Veterans.

After all, there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our Veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

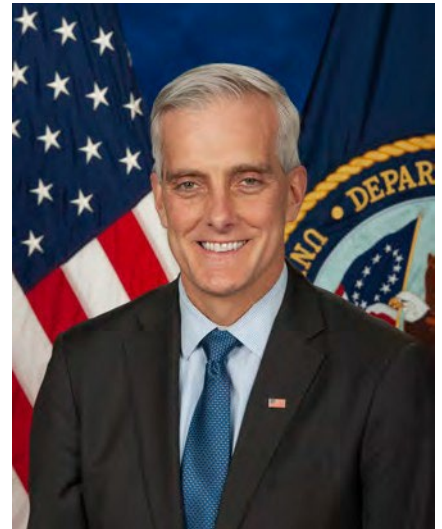
Secretary McDonough served in the Obama Administration as the 26th White House Chief of Staff from February 2013 to January 2017. In that role, Mr. McDonough managed the White House staff and worked across the cabinet to advance the Obama-Biden agenda, confronted management issues facing the federal government, and devised and enforced goals, plans, and performance standards to preserve the Obama-Biden Administration's reputation for effective, ethical operations.

Prior to his role as Chief of Staff, Mr. McDonough was Principal Deputy National Security Advisor from October 2010 to January 2013. He also served as the Chief of Staff of the National Security Staff and as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications. He chaired the National Security Council's Deputies Committee, leading the multiagency team to address complex challenges including crisis management and national security policymaking. And throughout his service in the White House, Secretary McDonough helped lead the Obama-Biden administration's work on behalf of military families and Veterans.

Before his eight-year tenure in the White House, Secretary McDonough served in senior leadership and policymaking positions in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Professional Staff Member on the International Relations Committee and in the U.S. Senate for Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Senator Ken Salazar.

Since his White House tenure, Secretary McDonough was Professor of the Practice of Public Policy at the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, Senior Advisor and Senior Principal at the Markle Foundation, and on the board of directors of the National Democratic Institute, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and the SAFE Project, a national nonprofit working to end the nation's catastrophic addiction epidemic.

Secretary McDonough grew up in Minnesota in a family of 11 children, graduated from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and earned his master's degree from Georgetown University. Secretary McDonough and his wife, Kari, have three children.



***Susan Black, DSW
National Suicide Prevention Officer
Outreach, Transition, and Economic Development
Veterans Benefits Administration***



Dr. Susan Black is the National Suicide Prevention Officer for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). In this capacity she serves as the focal point for VBA suicide prevention strategies, activities, and research. She is responsible for organizing suicide prevention efforts and supporting VBA and Veterans Administration (VA) enterprise-wide suicide prevention efforts and initiatives. Prior to her current position, she served as the Chief of United States Air National Guard (ANG) Psychological Health Branch, responsible for directing policy development, clinical operations, strategic planning, clinical suicide prevention, and program research and evaluation for the ANG Director of Psychological Health Program at 90 ANG Wings assigned to 54 States/Territories/District of Columbia, serving 107,000 Air National Guard members and their families.

Dr. Black is a retired United States Air Force Clinical Social Work Officer where she held various clinical and leadership positions to include Chief of the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program, Information Manager for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, and Social Work Residency Training Director. She also deployed in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

Dr. Black received her Bachelor of Social Work from Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL, her Master of Social Work from Barry University, Miami Shores, FL, and her Doctor of Social Work from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and is a certified Master Addictions Counselor. She is a Board-Certified Diplomate in Clinical Social Work and holds credentials in the Academy of Certified Social Workers.

Dr. Emily Jeffries
Psychologist
Hines VA Medical Center
Veterans Health Administration

Dr. Emily Jeffries (she/her/hers) is a staff psychologist working at the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital. She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Louisiana State University in 2018. She completed pre- and post-doctoral training within the VA system. She has been a staff psychologist at Hines VA since 2019. She currently serves as the Substance Use Disorder/Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (SUD/PTSD) Specialist at Hines VA and provides clinical services to Veterans through the VA's Trauma Services Program. She also serves on the Psychology Department's Diversity and Inclusion Committee as the lead for the Training and Education Subcommittee. She has given numerous presentations on Trauma-Informed Care to a wide variety of disciplines within VA.



Dr. Jessica Keith
Psychologist
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)
Veterans Health Administration

Dr. Jessica Keith (she/her) is a clinical psychologist and the Clinical Programs and Practices Lead for the National Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Support Team in the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Columbia University and completed a VA fellowship focused on mental health care for women Veterans with trauma histories. With over 15 years of experience providing care and developing treatment programs for survivors of military sexual trauma, she now serves as a subject matter expert providing consultation to VA providers nationwide through the VA's MST Consultation Program. She conducts trainings and presentations for providers, develops outreach initiatives to raise awareness about MST and VA's MST-related services, and has an active line of research seeking to improve understanding of Veterans' trauma-related recovery needs.



Lillie Mells
Education & Training Program Manager
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP)
Veterans Health Administration

Lillie Mells is a Licensed Clinical Social Work and Board-Certified Diplomate in Social Work with over 20yrs of experience. She has worked in various capacities to include Child abuse, Domestic Violence, and Substance Abuse. Lillie is an Air Force Veteran and has served as Director of Psychological Health for Virginia Air National Guard. Lillie has been with the Department of Veteran Affairs since 2013 working in Suicide Prevention. Currently she is the Education & Training Program Coordinator at the Office of Mental Health Suicide Prevention at Veteran's Affairs Central Office. Lillie is currently working on projects to include Resource toolkit for Guard/Reserve, Safety Plan for PTSD app, Training for Custom and Border Protection, and NASA.

