

**Dr. Michael Kussman**  
**(Brigadier General, U.S. Army Ret.)**  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Under Secretary for Health Nominee**

### **A Distinguished Veteran**

- Dr. Michael J. Kussman, M.D., M.S., MACP was drafted into military service during the Viet Nam era as a physician in 1970 after completing his Bachelors and Medical degrees at Boston University. He served as battalion surgeon with the 7th Infantry Division and worked at the military hospital in Seoul, South Korea. He was honorably discharged from the military in 1972 and returned to Boston to complete his medical training.

### **A Leading Military Medical Professional**

- In 1974 he formed a successful private practice which he led until voluntarily returning to serve his country in 1979 eventually becoming the Chief of Internal Medicine at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Following service in Hawaii, he continued with tours of duty in leadership positions at Brooke Army Medical Center and the Joint Military Medical Command in Texas from 1984 - 1988. In recognition of his performance in the field, he was asked in 1988 to serve as the Chief Consultant in Medicine for the Surgeon General of the Army and Governor for the U.S. Army Region of the American College of Physicians.
- Dr. Kussman was presented the "A" designator professorial rank by the Surgeon General of the Army.
- In 1993 he was asked to return to the field and serve as Commander of the Army Medical Department Activity at Fort Benning, Georgia ultimately being named the Professional Officer Filler Information System (PROFIS) commander. Training and deployment of Army Medical Department personnel in support of operational missions is accomplished through the PROFIS Program.
- Dr. Kussman has been published in numerous medical journals for over 30 years. He is licensed to practice medicine in Massachusetts, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. He has received hospital appointments in Massachusetts, Kansas, Texas, Georgia, Germany, and Washington D.C. He has participated in frequent military and civilian medical courses and belongs to numerous military, medical, and civilian organizations including the American Medical Association and the American College of Health Care Executives.
- Dr. Kussman has also received prestigious Academic Appointments at Harvard Medical School, Albany Medical College, University of Massachusetts School of Medicine, University of Texas Health Science Center and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

### **Service At Walter Reed Army Medical Center**

- From 1996 until 1998, Dr. Kussman served as the Commander of the Walter Reed Hospital and Commander of the Walter Reed Health Care System. In his capacity at that time, he was responsible for the patient medical care system at Walter Reed and 9 other locations in three states within the umbrella of the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command as a component of those larger military facilities.
- While Dr. Kussman commanded his section of Walter Reed, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), an independent non-profit organized in 1951 to maintain and elevate the standards of healthcare delivery through evaluation and accreditation of healthcare organizations, gave WRAMC the highest JCAHO score ever received by an Army facility. Under Dr. Kussman's leadership, they also achieve the highest patient satisfaction scores in the large facility category two consecutive years.
- He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General during his service.
- Following his service at Walter Reed, he was promoted to lead the Europe Regional Medical Command where he was responsible for Army health care throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

## Serving Our Nation's Veterans

- Upon leaving military service in 2000, Dr. Kussman transitioned from providing for the medical needs of service men and women to veterans. He became the Deputy Medical Inspector for Investigations, followed by the Acute Care Strategic Health Group Chief Consultant, the Deputy Chief Officer for Patient Care Services and the Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Health in the Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (VHA).
- As a key leader at VHA, Dr. Kussman has helped direct a health care system, with a medical care budget of nearly \$32 billion annually, which employs more than 198,000 health care professionals at more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community and facility-based clinics, nursing homes, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and various other facilities.
- At the VHA, Dr. Kussman has helped oversee the delivery of health care to more than 5.3 million veterans and 7.7 million enrollees throughout the United States. In addition to its medical care mission, VHA is the Nation's largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical and scientific research. More than 125,000 volunteers, 92,000 health profession trainees, and 25,000 affiliated medical faculties serve an integral part of the VHA community.
- The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has received praise from respected publications during Dr. Kussman's time as a key leader:
  - August 2004 Editorial Board of the *Annals of Internal Medicine* cited the "remarkable transformation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System" creating a "culture of quality" that delivered better care for veterans compared to commercial managed-care systems in their treatment of diabetes patients in seven out of seven measures of quality.
  - January / February 2005 *Washington Monthly* article "the VHA has a quality performance record that exceeds that of private sector providers." An article later expanded into the March 28, 2007 published book by Phillip Longman - *Best Care Anywhere - Why VA Health Care is Better Than Yours*
  - July 17, 2006 *BusinessWeek* "The Best Medical Care In The U.S. – How Veterans Affairs transformed itself – and what it means for the rest of us"
  - August 27, 2006 *Time Magazine* "How Veterans' Hospitals Became the Best in Health Care."

## Awards and Honors

- Distinguished Service Medal (the highest award given in peace time)
- Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters
- Army Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
- Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Order of Military Medical Merit
- Graduate with Honors from the Army Command and General Staff College
- Army War College Graduate, the premier institution for strategic leadership and for the study of land power
- Laureate Award recipient for Clinical Excellence and presented the prestigious Master of the College designation from the American College of Physicians / American Society of Internal Medicine .
- Association of Military Surgeons of the United States Federal Healthcare Executive Award and Physician Excellence Award recipient
- Awarded the prestigious Masters designation of the American of Physicians

## Under Secretary for Health Selection Process

- When a vacancy occurs, statute requires a commission be formed to recommend three candidates to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to then forward for consideration to the President. The commission must be composed of three persons representing clinical care and medical research and education activities affected by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); two persons representing veterans served by VHA; two persons who have experience in the management of veterans health services and research programs; the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs; the Chairman of the Special Medical Advisory Group; and one person who has previously held the position. The Under Secretary for Health position is required to be appointed without regard to political affiliation or activity.

# What They Are Saying About Dr. Michael Kussman . . . .

## ➤ Disabled American Veterans

"Dr. Kussman's focus has always been how do we make the VA better, more efficient, effective, less burdensome for the veteran and continue to enhance our mission of providing medical care that is secondary to none for a very special segment of the American population. His drive, passion and commitment toward that end is commendable and reflective of a compassionate physician, health care executive and unique public servant."

*Dave Gorman*

*DAV Washington Office Director*

*DAV represents 1.2 million members nationwide.*

## ➤ Veterans of Foreign Wars

"I am pleased to join with my many colleagues in the Veterans Service Community in strongly supporting the President's nomination of Dr. Michael Kussman for the position of Undersecretary for the Veterans Health Administration. Dr. Kussman's professional credentials are unquestionable. In my personal dealings with Dr. Kussman I have found him to be very knowledgeable, honest and display excellence in leadership with the highest level of integrity

"The Veterans of Foreign Wars looks to the U.S. Senate for swift action on his confirmation for this vitally important leadership position for America's veterans."

*Bob Wallace*

*VFW Washington Office Director*

*VFW, with its Auxiliaries, includes 2.4 million members in approximately 9,000 Posts worldwide.*