



Department of Veterans Affairs

Senior Executive Biography

John J. Bartrum, MBA, J.D

Under Secretary for Health

Veterans' Health Administration

Retired Major General John Bartrum currently serves as the Under Secretary for Health for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), leading the nation's largest integrated health care system and overseeing care for over nine million Veterans. VHA is also the largest provider of graduate medical education and a major contributor to medical research.

He previously served as the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of VA. Prior to rejoining federal service, he founded and served as chief executive officer of a strategic advisory firm where he provided tactical advice on matters pertaining to leadership, public policy, health care, government finance, supply chain, and national security topics. He also served as partner with an international law firm after retiring from federal service as a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES).



In his prior federal positions, John served on the US House Appropriations Committee with responsibility for policy and funding issues for the labor, health, education, and related agencies subcommittee. Previously he served as an Associate Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and its Budget Director. John also served in the National Security Division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the Executive Office of the President, where he was responsible for advising on key activities in the Department of Defense and VA. He joined OMB from the VA where he worked on health care policy, budget, and related issues.

John, a retired Major General served as the Mobilization Assistant to the Surgeon General of the Air Force. He directed Air Force Medical Service operations, composed of a 6.1 billion dollars, 44,000-person integrated health care delivery system worldwide. His military career began when he enlisted in 1984 and served over 40 years in active and reserve Air Force military positions. A deployed combat Veteran who has served in a variety of medical and operational positions supporting Air and Space forces.

In 2020, as a Healthcare Executive he was activated to serve as the Government-wide COVID-19 Emergency Support Function-8 (Public Health and Medical Services) Deputy Incident Manager. In this role, John provided the leadership to enhance the interagency doctrine while overseeing coordination of the joint federal agency medical response forces. In addition to many military and civilian /SES awards for his leadership, including the Department of Health and Human Service Pinnacle Medal, Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, and the Federal Health Care Executive Award for Excellence from the American Hospital Association. He is a fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY:

2025 – Present Under Secretary for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington DC
2025 – 2025 Senior Advisor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington DC
2019 – 2025 Chief Executive Officer/Founder, Brightstar Innovations Group, LLC, Arlington, VA
2017 – 2019 Partner, Squire Patton Boggs, Washington DC
2009 – 2017 House of Representatives, Appropriations Senior Professional Staff, Washington, DC
1988 – 2009 Various Federal Positions in Dept of Air Force, HHS, & OMB in the U.S. and Europe

EDUCATION:

2004 Juris Doctor (JD), George Mason University School of Law, Arlington, VA
1994 Master in Business Administration (MBA), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, IL
1991 Associate in Bioenvironmental Engineering, Community College of the Air Force
1990 Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA), 1990, McKendree University, Lebanon, IL
1988 Associate in Survival/Rescue Operations, Community College of the Air Force