

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022

Evaluation of Medical Conditions for Presumptions Associated with Burn Pits

Presentation for: Veterans Service Organization (VSO) Briefing
Presented by: Health Outcomes and Military Exposure (HOME),
12POP5
Date of Briefing: February 22, 2023



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Selection Process and Update on Progress

- Thanks to the efforts and insights of the VSOs, the Military Environmental Exposure Sub-Council (MEESC) Working Group provided the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with the recommendation to direct VA to initiate a formal evaluation to assess whether an association exists between male breast cancer, acute leukemias and chronic leukemias, and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from airborne hazards and open burn pits in Southwest Asia.
- The conditions addressed above are currently within the review process and are pending approval. Following approval, these recommendations will be published to the Federal Register by VBA.
 - At this point, VHA will solicit additional comments from VSOs and make a call for comments



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Why Male Breast Cancer and Leukemias?

- ❑ Male Breast Cancer:
 - ❑ Not covered by the *Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (PACT Act)*
 - ❑ In women, breast cancers fall under “Reproductive Cancers of Any Type” in the PACT Act for Gulf War and Post-9/11 conflicts
 - ❑ Male reproductive cancers include cancers of the testes, adjacent structures (such as the epididymis), prostate and external genitalia
- ❑ Leukemias:
 - ❑ Conditions that can be affected by toxic exposures within both Gulf War and Post-9/11 Veterans, but are not included in the PACT Act
 - ❑ Bone marrow is sensitive to many things that may have been disposed of in burn pits (i.e. arsenic, lead, mercury, etc.)
 - ❑ Leukemias as a major category of cancers would cover a major cancer domain and one in which there is some evidence that there may be increased incidence in deployed Veterans



Next Steps

- VA will solicit public comment(s) regarding the recommendations to the Secretary to direct the VA to initiate a formal evaluation to look at male breast cancer and leukemias
 - Comments are accepted for usually 30 days after posting the annual notice to the Federal Register
- VA anticipates that there may be comments and/ or input for additional conditions that may be considered for review in the future and VA will seek VSO comment regarding these in future
 - Further instructions on providing comments will be provided following publication



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