



Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

TO: Hon. R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs
FROM: James Binns
Chairman, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
SUBJECT: Recommendations
DATE: February 1, 2007

Mr. Secretary:

I am please to provide you the following recommendations discussed and adopted by the Research Advisory Committee at its most recent meeting.

1. Treatment guidelines and training for VA clinicians regarding Gulf War veterans' illnesses are out of date in light of recent research, having last been revised in 2001. The Committee recommends that the "Clinical Practice Guidelines for Medically Unexplained Symptoms: Chronic Pain and Fatigue" and the Veterans Health Initiative course "A Guide to Gulf War Veterans' Health" be revised to reflect current scientific knowledge.
2. Since the Committee is the only official body dealing with Gulf War veterans' illnesses, veterans regularly address comments and requests to the Committee (and to VA officials participating in Committee meetings) indicating problems concerning clinical care, benefits, and related administrative issues outside the research scope of the Committee's chartered mission. To address these important topics, the Committee recommends that a separate advisory body be established to consider clinical care and benefits issues related to Gulf War veterans' illnesses.

Based on conversations with veterans, I would suggest that the membership of the new advisory body recommended above include civilian and VA field doctors and nurses with expertise in Gulf War illnesses and other chronic multisymptom illnesses, VA field environmental health coordinators, VA central office officials, Gulf War veterans, representatives of veterans' organizations and organizations with expertise in other chronic multisymptom illnesses, and VA and VSO professionals familiar with Gulf War illnesses claims procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

/signed/
James H. Binns
Chairman