
REOPENING OF GULF WAR CLAIMS

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The U.S. Veterans Affairs Department (VA) announced that it will be re-examining veterans' disability claims for thousands of Gulf War veterans in the coming years.

According to a Congressional report in 2008, approximately 175,000 to 210,000 Gulf War veterans experience a pattern of symptoms that include rashes, joint and muscle pain, sleep issues and gastrointestinal problems. This is known collectively as Gulf War Illness.

While the actual cause of the problems is unclear, independent studies have focused on pesticides and pyridostigmine bromide pills, which were provided to troops for protection against possible nerve agents from Iraqi troops. A study by the Gulf War Veterans'



Illness Task Force is near completion and will hopefully shed more light on not only the cause but also treatment for this illness.

To accomplish the re-examination of claims, the VA first plans to review its own regulations to better accommodate the Gulf War Illness syndrome. Once the VA completes this review, veterans will then be invited to have rejected claims re-considered.

Re-examination of claims, better health care services, and the reduction of the veterans' claims backlog have been priorities of the Obama Administration. The Administration recently announced a \$125 billion budget next year for the Department of Veterans Affairs.
