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VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD ON DOSE RECONSTRUCTION

FORT BELVOIR, Alexandria, VA -- The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have established the Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction. The board will audit dose reconstructions and VA claims decisions for service connection of radiogenic diseases, and improve communications with veterans. These dose reconstructions are used by VA to evaluate and decide claims by veterans of the 1945-1946 occupation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan; veterans who were prisoners of war in those regions when the atomic bombs were detonated; and veterans of U.S.-sponsored atmospheric nuclear weapons tests from 1945-1962.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense jointly established the 16-member board in accordance with Section 601 of Public Law 108-183. The chairman of the Veterans' Advisory Board is retired Navy Vice Admiral James A. Zimble, M.D., a former Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy. The board is composed of experts in radiation health effects and risk communication, veterans, and representatives from VA and DTRA. It will meet up to six times a year. The National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements will provide technical and administrative support for the board.

Radiation dose reconstruction has been carried out by the Department of Defense under the Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) program since the late 1970s. DTRA is the executive agent for the NTPR program which provides participation data and actual or estimated radiation dose information to veterans.

In response to concerns about the possibility of an elevated risk of cancer and other illnesses in veterans who were exposed to radiation or fallout from nuclear weapons, several laws have been passed by Congress on the reconstruction of radiation doses and the adjudication of claims of service-connected disability from radiation health effects. Recent reviews by the General Accounting Office and the National Academy of Sciences identified deficiencies in the dose reconstruction and compensation claims programs for eligible veterans. One of the ways these deficiencies are

being addressed is through the board, which will conduct periodic, random audits of dose reconstructions and decisions on claims for radiogenic diseases under the dose reconstruction program. The board will make recommendations, as appropriate, on modifications in dose reconstruction procedures.

DTRA safeguards America's interests from weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high explosives) by controlling and reducing the threat to the United States and its allies, and providing quality tools and services for the warfighter. This Department of Defense combat support agency is located at Fort Belvoir, Va., and operates field offices worldwide.

VA fulfills the government's obligation to help those who leave the military injured or ill. Administered through a network of 57 VA regional offices, disability compensation benefits cover chronic illnesses or injuries incurred as a result of, or worsened by, military service.

More information on the NTPR program is available at [Nuclear Test Personnel Review](#).