



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Gulf War Task Force Report Released *Report Redefines How Care and Services Are Provided*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs has released the second in a series of annual reports from its Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Task Force, outlining how the department will address the concerns of Veterans deployed during the Gulf War of 1990-1991. The report is available on the Internet at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/2011_GWVI-TF_Report.pdf.

“This report, which considered input from nearly 500 Veterans who responded to the draft report, provides a roadmap for our continued enhancements in the care and services we provide to Gulf War Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We will also apply lessons learned from this Task Force to our engagement with Veterans of all eras.”

VA issued a draft version of this report for public comment on Oct. 21, 2011. During the 30-day comment period, VA received over 450 comments through a special social media website created for this purpose, along with twenty-five other comments received through mail, e-mail and telephone calls.

The chairman of the Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses Task Force is John R. Gingrich, chief of staff at VA, and a retired Army officer who also served in the Gulf War.

“Feedback is critical to understand and serve the specific needs of Gulf War Veterans,” said Gingrich. “This valuable input will guide how the task force communicates with Veterans in the future.”

The report focuses on efforts to improve the delivery of health care for Gulf War Veterans. One of the most substantial additions is the launch of a prototype clinical care model specifically for Gulf War Veterans, which is the most critical point of service VA provides. There are also efforts underway to create better links between specialty knowledge on Gulf War health issues and subject matter experts for health care providers serving these Veterans at the point of care.

Gulf War specific research and development is also contributing to clinical practice and clinical education throughout VA. Two new positions were established in the Office of Research and Development for deployment health and Gulf War health-related issues. Both positions have been filled, are enhancing research efforts for Gulf War Veterans now, and will continue to do so in the coming years.

VA continues to leverage partnerships to improve longitudinal medical surveillance and epidemiology so the department is better able to address the potential health impacts on Veterans from past environmental exposures as well as those on today's battlefield.

VA recognizes that a great number of Gulf War Veterans use the Internet every day to share their ideas and concerns. In addition to public interaction via social media, the main VA Gulf War illnesses website was recently updated at

www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/index.asp. Veterans can subscribe there to receive future updates.

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