

The agenda will include various Earned Income Tax Credit issues.

Dated: December 19, 2003.

**Bernard Coston,**

*Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.*

[FR Doc. 03-31827 Filed 12-24-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4830-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Internal Revenue Service

#### Open Meeting of the Area 1 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (Including the States of New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine)

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** An open meeting of the Area 1 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be conducted (via teleconference). The Taxpayer Advocacy Panel is soliciting public comments, ideas and suggestions on improving customer service at the Internal Revenue Service.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Tuesday, January 20, 2004.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Marisa Knispel at 1-888-912-1227 (toll-free), or 718-488-3557 (non toll-free).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice is hereby given pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. (1988) that an open meeting of the Area 1 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be held Tuesday, January 20, 2004, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. e.s.t. via a telephone conference call. Individual comments will be limited to 5 minutes. If you would like to have the TAP consider a written statement, please call 1-888-912-1227 or 718-488-3557, or write Marisa Knispel, TAP Office, 10 MetroTech Center, 625 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Due to limited conference lines, notification of intent to participate in the telephone conference call meeting must be made with Marisa Knispel.

The agenda will include the following: Various IRS issues.

Dated: December 19, 2003.

**Bernard Coston,**

*Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.*

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**BILLING CODE 4830-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

### Internal Revenue Service

#### Open Meeting of the Joint Committee of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel

**AGENCY:** Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** An open meeting of the Joint Committee of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be conducted via teleconference.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Tuesday, January 20, 2004, at 1:30 p.m., eastern time.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Barbara Toy at 1-888-912-1227, or 414-297-1611.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice is hereby given pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. (1988) that an open meeting of the Joint Committee of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP) will be held Tuesday, January 20, 2004, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Eastern time via a telephone conference call. If you would like to have the Joint Committee of TAP consider a written statement, please call 1-888-912-1227 or 414-297-1611, or write Barbara Toy, TAP Office, MS-1006-MIL, 310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203-2221, or FAX to 414-297-1623. Due to limited conference lines, notification of intent to participate in the telephone conference call meeting must be made with Barbara Toy. Ms. Toy can be reached at 1-888-912-1227 or 414-297-1611, or FAX 414-297-1623.

The agenda will include the following: monthly committee summary report, discussion of issues brought to the joint committee, office report and discussion of next meeting.

Dated: December 19, 2003.

**Bernard Coston,**

*Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.*

[FR Doc. 03-31829 Filed 12-24-03; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Medical Research Service Merit Review Committee, Notice of Meetings

The Department of Veterans Affairs gives notice under the Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Medical Research Service Merit Review Committee will meet from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on January 13, 2004, at

the Governor's House Hotel, 1615 Rhode Island Avenue, NW., Washington, DC.

The purpose of the Committee is to provide advice to the Under Secretary for Health on the review of the scientific merit of research conducted in each specialty by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) investigators working in VA Medical Centers and Clinics.

The meeting will be open to the public for approximately one hour at the start to discuss the general status of the program. The remaining portion of the meeting will be closed to the public for discussion and evaluation of the scientific review of initial and renewal projects.

The closed portion of the meeting involves discussion, examination, reference to and oral review of site visits, staff and consultant critiques of research protocols and similar documents. During the portion of the meeting, discussion and recommendations will deal with qualifications of personnel conducting the studies, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, as well as research information, the premature disclosure of which could significantly frustrate implementation of proposed agency action regarding such research projects.

As provided by subsection 10(d) of Public Law 92-463, as amended, closing a portion of the meeting is in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(b) and (9)(B). Those who plan to attend or would like to obtain a copy of minutes of the meeting should contact LeRoy G. Frey, Ph.D., Chief, Program Review Division, Medical Research Service (121F), Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC, (202) 254-0288.

Dated: December 19, 2003.

By Direction of the Secretary.

**E. Philip Riggan,**

*Committee Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 03-31815 Filed 12-24-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Advisory Committee on Women Veterans; Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under Public Law 92-463 (Federal Advisory Committee Act) that the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans will meet January 27-29, 2004, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., in VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. On January 27 and 29, the meeting will be held in room C-7 and on January 28, the

meeting will be held in room 630. The meeting is open to the public.

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding the needs of women veterans with respect to health care, rehabilitation, compensation, outreach, and other programs and activities administered by VA designed to meet such needs. The Committee will make recommendations to the Secretary regarding such programs and activities.

On January 27, the agenda will include briefings and updates on issues related to women veterans' issues in VA Veterans Health Administration, research studies on women veterans' health, the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) process, focus group site visits, the Stakeholder Engagement Survey administered by the General Services Administration, and presentations of Certificates of Appointment to two new Committee members. On January 28, the Committee will be briefed on legislative issues affecting women veterans, compensation and pension benefits, and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service administered by the Department of Labor. On January 29, the Committee will receive updates on the VA Homeless Program, the required ethics briefing, and any new issues that the Committee members may introduce.

Any member of the public wishing to attend should contact Ms. Rebecca Schiller, at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Center for Women Veterans (00W), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Ms. Schiller may be contacted either by phone at (202) 273-6193, fax at (202) 273-7092, or e-mail at [00W@mail.va.gov](mailto:00W@mail.va.gov). Interested persons may attend, appear before, or file statements with the Committee. Written statements must be filed before the meeting, or within 10 days after the meeting.

Dated: December 18, 2003.

By Direction of the Secretary.

**E. Philip Riggin,**

*Committee Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 03-31814 Filed 12-24-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 8320-01-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Privacy Act of 1974; System of Records

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**ACTION:** Notice of amendment to system of records.

**SUMMARY:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a(e) (4)) requires that all agencies publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of the existence and character of their systems of records. Notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending the system of records entitled, "Agent Orange Registry—VA" (105VA131) as set forth in the **Federal Register** 66 FR 3653-3656 dated January 16, 2001. VA is amending the system by revising the System Location, the Categories of Individuals Covered by this System, the Authority for Maintenance of the System, the Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System, Including Categories of Users and the Purposes of Such Uses, and the Policies and Practices for Storing, Retrieving, Accessing, Retaining and Disposing of Records in the System. VA is republishing the system notice in its entirety.

**DATES:** Comments on the establishment of this system of records must be received no later than January 28, 2004. If no public comment is received, the amended system will become effective January 28, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** You may mail or hand-deliver written comments concerning the proposed amended system of records to the Director, Regulations Management (OOREG1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420; or fax comments to (202) 273-9026; or e-mail comments to "[OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov](mailto:OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov)". All relevant material received before January 28, 2004, will be considered. Comments will be available for public inspection at the above address in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Privacy Act Officer (19F2), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (727) 320-1839.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** VA expanded the Agent Orange Registry Program to provide registry examinations not only to the veterans who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 and veterans who served in Korea between 1968 and 1969, but all other United States veterans who may have been exposed to dioxin or other toxic substances in a herbicide or defoliant during the conduct of or as a result of testing, transporting or spraying of herbicides for military purposes.

The Agent Orange Registry (AOR) located at the Austin Automation Center (AAC), Austin, Texas, is an automated integrated system containing demographic and medical data of all these registry examinations from 1988. These data were entered manually on code sheets by VA facility staff and copies sent to the AAC for entry into the AOR data set.

The AOR system of records located at VA Central Office, Washington, DC, is an optical disk system containing images of paper records, *i.e.*, code sheets, medical records, correspondence and questionnaires relating to the veterans exposed to agent orange. Once these paper records are scanned on optical disks, they are disposed of in accordance with VHA Records Control Schedule (RCS) 10.1.

The System Location has been amended to include the AOR system's change to a secure web-based data entry procedure. The process moved to a secure web-based data entry system at each VA facility during the first quarter of calendar year 2003. The secure web-based data entry system is maintained by the AAC and provides retrievable images to users. The optical disk system is currently being utilized where there is no access to the secure web-based system. However, the optical disk system is scheduled to be discontinued in 2004 and all access to the AOR system will be through the secure web-based data entry system.

The Categories of Individuals Covered by this System has been amended to the following:

Veterans who may have been exposed to dioxin or other toxic substance in an herbicide or defoliant during:

1. Active military service in the Republic of Vietnam between 1962 and 1975,
2. The Republic of Korea between 1968-1969,
3. The conduct of or as a result of testing, transporting or spraying herbicides for military purposes, and
4. Have had an AOR examination at a VA medical facility.

The Authority for Maintenance of the System has been amended to delete a duplicate reference to U.S.C. 1710(e)(1)(B).

VA is proposing to amend the following routine use disclosures of information to be maintained in the system:

- Routine use number seven (7) is being amended in its entirety. VA must be able to comply with the requirements of agencies charged with enforcing the law and conducting investigations. VA must also be able to provide information to state or local agencies charged with