

“(B) An assessment of the benefits to veterans of the pilot program.

“(C) The recommendations of the Secretary as to the advisability of continuing the pilot program.”

§ 525. Publication of laws relating to veterans

(a) The Secretary may compile and publish all Federal laws relating to veterans' relief, including laws administered by the Department as well as by other agencies of the Government. Such compilation and publication shall be in such form as the Secretary considers advisable for the purpose of making currently available in convenient form for the use of the Department and full-time representatives of the several service organizations an annotated, indexed, and cross-referenced statement of the laws providing veterans' relief.

(b) The Secretary may maintain such compilation on a current basis either by the publication, from time to time, of supplementary documents or by complete revision of the compilation.

(c) The distribution of the compilation to the representatives of the several service organizations shall be as determined by the Secretary.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 391.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Prior section 525 was renumbered section 1525 of this title.

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 215 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

§ 527. Evaluation and data collection

(a) The Secretary, pursuant to general standards which the Secretary shall prescribe in regulations, shall measure and evaluate on a continuing basis the effect of all programs authorized under this title, in order to determine their effectiveness in achieving stated goals in general, and in achieving such goals in relation to their cost, their effect on related programs, and their structure and mechanisms for delivery of services. Such information as the Secretary may consider necessary for purposes of such evaluations shall be made available to the Secretary, upon request, by all departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the executive branch.

(b) In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall collect, collate, and analyze on a continuing basis full statistical data regarding participation (including the duration thereof), provision of services, categories of beneficiaries, planning and construction of facilities, acquisition of real property, proposed excessing of land, accretion and attrition of personnel, and categorized expenditures attributable thereto, under all programs carried out under this title.

(c) The Secretary shall make available to the public, and on a regular basis provide to the appropriate committees of the Congress, copies of all completed evaluative research studies and summaries of evaluations of program impact and effectiveness carried out, and tabulations and analyses of all data collected, under this section.

(Added Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a), Aug. 6, 1991, 105 Stat. 391.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in section 219 of this title prior to repeal by Pub. L. 102-83, §2(a).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON TREATMENT OF VETERANS FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO TOXIC EXPOSURE

Pub. L. 117-168, title V, §502, Aug. 10, 2022, 136 Stat. 1786, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall analyze, on a continuous basis, all clinical data that—

“(1) is obtained by the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care furnished under section 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code; and

“(2) is likely to be scientifically useful in determining the association, if any, between the medical condition of a veteran and a toxic exposure.

“(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 10, 2022], and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing the following:

“(1) The aggregate data compiled under subsection (a).

“(2) An analysis of such data.

“(3) A description of the types and incidences of medical conditions identified by the Department under such subsection.

“(4) The explanation of the Secretary for the incidence of such medical conditions and other explanations for the incidence of such conditions as the Secretary considers reasonable.

“(5) The views of the Secretary on the scientific validity of drawing conclusions from the incidence of such medical conditions, as evidenced by the data compiled under subsection (a), regarding any association between such conditions and toxic exposures.

“(c) TOXIC EXPOSURE DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘toxic exposure’ has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 102(b).”

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PUBLIC WEBSITE FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH

Pub. L. 117-168, title V, §509, Aug. 10, 2022, 136 Stat. 1791, provided that:

“(a) WEBSITE.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 10, 2022], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, and maintain thereafter, a publicly accessible internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs that serves as a clearinghouse for the publication of all toxic exposure research carried out or funded by the executive branch of the Federal Government.

“(b) COORDINATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall coordinate with—

“(1) the heads of each Federal agency carrying out or funding toxic exposure research;

“(2) the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor center; and

“(3) any working group of the Department of Veterans Affairs or other similar entity responsible for coordinating toxic exposure research.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) TOXIC EXPOSURE.—The term ‘toxic exposure’ has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 102(b).

“(2) TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH.—The term ‘toxic exposure research’ means research on the health consequences of toxic exposures experienced during service in the Armed Forces.”

BURN PIT TRANSPARENCY

Pub. L. 117-168, title VIII, §808, Aug. 10, 2022, 136 Stat. 1806, provided that:

“(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON DISABILITY CLAIMS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, [Aug. 10, 2022] and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report detailing the following:

“(A) The total number of covered veterans.

“(B) The total number of claimed issues for disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, approved and the total number denied by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to a covered veteran, and a breakdown of the reasons for the denials.

“(C) A comprehensive list of the top 10 conditions from each body system for which the Secretary awarded service connection for covered veterans.

“(D) Any updates or trends with respect to the information described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), that the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(2) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘covered veteran’ means a veteran who deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations any time after August 1990, or Afghanistan, Syria, Djibouti, or Uzbekistan after September 19, 2001, and who submits a claim for disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

“(b) INFORMATION REGARDING THE AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY.—

“(1) NOTICE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that a medical professional of the Department of Veterans Affairs informs a veteran of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry if the veteran presents at a medical facility of the Department for treatment that the veteran describes as being related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

“(2) DISPLAY.—In making information public regarding the number of participants in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, the Secretary shall display such numbers by both State and by congressional district.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY.—The term ‘Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry’ means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

“(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

“(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

“(3) OPEN BURN PIT.—The term ‘open burn pit’ has the meaning given that term in section 201(c) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).”

REQUIREMENT FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA ON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES AND DISAGGREGATION OF SUCH DATA BY GENDER, RACE, AND ETHNICITY

Pub. L. 116-315, title V, §5401, Jan. 5, 2021, 134 Stat. 5045, provided that: “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

“(1) collect and analyze data on each program of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provides a service or benefit to a veteran, including the program carried out under section 1144 of title 10, United States Code;

“(2) disaggregate such data by gender, race, and ethnicity, when the data lends itself to such disaggregation; and

“(3) publish the data collected and analyzed under paragraph (1), except for such cases in which the Secretary determines that some portions of the data would undermine the anonymity of a veteran.”

ADDITION OF BURN PIT REGISTRATION AND OTHER INFORMATION TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title VII, §720, Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3697, provided that:

“(a) UPDATES TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS.—Beginning not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 1, 2021], the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that—

“(1) the electronic health record maintained by the Secretary for a member of the Armed Forces registered with the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry is updated with any information contained in such registry with respect to the member; and

“(2) any occupational or environmental health exposure recorded in the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System (or any successor system) is linked to the electronic health record system of the Department of Defense to notify health professionals treating a member specified in paragraph (1) of any such exposure recorded for the member.

“(b) AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry’ means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).”

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS OF VETERANS DIAGNOSED WITH PANDEMIC DISEASES TO DETERMINE EXPOSURE TO OPEN BURN PITS AND TOXIC AIRBORNE CHEMICALS

Pub. L. 116-283, div. A, title VII, §735, Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 3703, provided that:

“(a) EXPOSURE TO OPEN BURN PITS AND TOXIC AIRBORNE CHEMICALS OR OTHER AIRBORNE CONTAMINANTS AS PART OF HEALTH ASSESSMENTS FOR VETERANS DURING A PANDEMIC AND INCLUSION OF INFORMATION IN REGISTRY.—

“(1) HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the first health assessment or physical examination furnished to a veteran under the laws administered by the Secretary after the veteran tests positive for a pathogen, such as a virus, with respect to which a public health emergency has been declared under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) includes an evaluation of whether the veteran has been—

“(A) based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used; or

“(B) exposed to toxic airborne chemicals or other airborne contaminants relating to service in the Armed Forces, including an evaluation of any information recorded as part of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

“(2) INCLUSION OF INDIVIDUALS IN REGISTRY.—If an evaluation conducted under paragraph (1) with respect to a veteran establishes that the veteran was based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used, or that the individual was exposed to toxic airborne chemicals or other airborne contaminants, the individual shall be enrolled in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry unless the veteran elects to not enroll in such registry.

“(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to preclude eligibility of a veteran for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by reason of the history of exposure of the veteran to an open burn pit not being recorded in an evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

“(b) STUDY ON IMPACT OF VIRAL PANDEMICS ON MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TOXIC EXPOSURE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study, through the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (in this subsection referred to as the ‘Center’), on the health impacts of infection with a pathogen, such as a virus, with respect to which a public health emergency has been declared under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d), including a coronavirus, to members of the Armed Forces and veterans who have been exposed to open burn pits and other toxic exposures for the purposes of understanding the health impacts of the pathogen and whether individuals infected with the pathogen are at increased risk of severe symptoms due to previous conditions linked to toxic exposure.

“(2) PREPARATION FOR FUTURE PANDEMIC.—The Secretary, through the Center, shall analyze potential lessons learned through the study conducted under paragraph (1) to assist in preparing the Department of Veterans Affairs for potential future pandemics.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection [probably should be ‘section’]:

“(1) The term ‘Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry’ means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

“(2) The term ‘coronavirus’ has the meaning given that term in section 506 of the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-123 [134 Stat. 155]).

“(3) The term ‘open burn pit’ has the meaning given that term in section 201(c) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 126 Stat. 2422; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).”

ACCESS OF VETERANS TO INDIVIDUAL LONGITUDINAL EXPOSURE RECORD

Pub. L. 116-283, div. H, title XCI, §9105, Jan. 1, 2021, 134 Stat. 4783, provided that: “The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to a veteran read-only access to the documents of the veteran contained in the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record in a printable format through a portal accessible through an internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs.”

ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN BURN PIT REGISTRY

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title VII, §705(c), Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1440, provided that:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that all medical personnel of the Department of Defense have access to the information contained in the burn pit registry.

“(2) BURN PIT REGISTRY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘burn pit registry’ means the registry established under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).”

EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

Pub. L. 115-232, div. A, title X, §1050, Aug. 13, 2018, 132 Stat. 1962, provided that:

“(a) EDUCATION CAMPAIGN.—Beginning not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 13, 2018], the Secretary of Defense shall carry out an annual education campaign to inform individuals who may be eligible to enroll in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry of such eligibility. Each such campaign shall include at least one electronic method and one physical mailing method to provide such information.

“(b) AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry’ means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’

Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) [set out below].”

COORDINATION BY VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OF EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND EFFECTS OF BURN PITS

Pub. L. 115-91, div. A, title VII, §738, Dec. 12, 2017, 131 Stat. 1446, provided that: “The Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, acting through the Office of Public Health of the Veterans Health Administration, shall coordinate efforts related to furthering understanding of burn pits, the effect of burn pits on veterans, and effective treatments relating to such effects, including with respect to research efforts and training of clinical staff on related matters.”

SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION TO SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RELATING TO EXPOSURE TO AIRBORNE HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PITS

Pub. L. 114-92, div. A, title VII, §728, Nov. 25, 2015, 129 Stat. 873, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 25, 2015], and periodically thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs such information in the possession of the Secretary of Defense as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers necessary to supplement and support—

“(1) the development of information to be included in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry established by the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note); and

“(2) research and development activities conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs to explore the potential health risks of exposure by members of the Armed Forces to environmental factors in Iraq and Afghanistan, in particular the connection of such exposure to respiratory illnesses such as chronic cough, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, constrictive bronchiolitis, and pulmonary fibrosis.

“(b) INCLUSION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Defense shall include in the information submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under subsection (a) information on any research and surveillance efforts conducted by the Department of Defense to evaluate the incidence and prevalence of respiratory illnesses among members of the Armed Forces who were exposed to open burn pits while deployed overseas.”

ESTABLISHMENT OF OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY

Pub. L. 112-260, title II, §201, Jan. 10, 2013, 126 Stat. 2422, as amended by Pub. L. 116-315, title II, §2010(g), Jan. 5, 2021, 134 Stat. 4979; Pub. L. 117-81, div. F, title LXVI, §6602, Dec. 27, 2021, 135 Stat. 2438, provided that:

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRY.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act [Jan. 10, 2013], the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

“(A) establish and maintain an open burn pit registry for eligible individuals who may have been exposed to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits;

“(B) include any information in such registry that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines necessary to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits;

“(C) develop a public information campaign to inform eligible individuals about the open burn pit registry, including how to register and the benefits of registering; and

“(D) periodically notify eligible individuals of significant developments in the study and treatment of conditions associated with exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

“(2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall coordinate with the Secretary of Defense in carrying out paragraph (1).

“(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

“(1) REPORTS BY INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with an independent scientific organization to prepare reports as follows:

“(A) Not later than two years after the date on which the registry under subsection (a) is established, an initial report containing the following:

“(i) An assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken by the Secretaries to collect and maintain information on the health effects of exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits.

“(ii) Recommendations to improve the collection and maintenance of such information.

“(iii) Using established and previously published epidemiological studies, recommendations regarding the most effective and prudent means of addressing the medical needs of eligible individuals with respect to conditions that are likely to result from exposure to open burn pits.

“(B) Not later than five years after completing the initial report described in subparagraph (A), a follow-up report containing the following:

“(i) An update to the initial report described in subparagraph (A).

“(ii) An assessment of whether and to what degree the content of the registry established under subsection (a) is current and scientifically up-to-date.

“(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—

“(A) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date on which the registry under subsection (a) is established, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress the initial report prepared under paragraph (1)(A).

“(B) FOLLOW-UP REPORT.—Not later than five years after submitting the report under subparagraph (A), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress the follow-up report prepared under paragraph (1)(B).

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘eligible individual’ means any individual who, on or after September 11, 2001—

“(A) was deployed in support of a contingency operation while serving in the Armed Forces; and

“(B) during such deployment, was based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used.

“(2) OPEN BURN PIT.—The term ‘open burn pit’ means an area of land located in Afghanistan, Iraq, [sic] Uzbekistan, Egypt, or Syria that—

“(A) is designated by the Secretary of Defense to be used for disposing solid waste by burning in the outdoor air; and

“(B) does not contain a commercially manufactured incinerator or other equipment specifically designed and manufactured for the burning of solid waste.”

PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS' HEALTH STATUS

Pub. L. 102-585, title VII, Nov. 4, 1992, 106 Stat. 4975, as amended by Pub. L. 103-446, title I, §108, Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4653; Pub. L. 105-368, title I, §§104, 106, Nov. 11, 1998, 112 Stat. 3323, 3325; Pub. L. 111-163, title V, §502, May 5, 2010, 124 Stat. 1157, provided that:

“SEC. 701. SHORT TITLE.

“This title may be cited as the ‘Persian Gulf War Veterans’ Health Status Act’.

“SEC. 702. PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS HEALTH REGISTRY.

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and maintain a special record to be known as the ‘Persian Gulf War Veterans

Health Registry’ (in this section referred to as the ‘Registry’).

“(b) CONTENTS OF REGISTRY.—Except as provided in subsection (c), the Registry shall include the following information:

“(1) A list containing the name of each individual who served as a member of the Armed Forces in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War and who—

“(A) applies for care or services from the Department of Veterans Affairs under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code;

“(B) files a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of such title on the basis of any disability which may be associated with such service;

“(C) dies and is survived by a spouse, child, or parent who files a claim for dependency and indemnity compensation under chapter 13 of such title on the basis of such service;

“(D) requests from the Department a health examination under section 703; or

“(E) receives from the Department of Defense a health examination similar to the health examination referred to in subparagraph (D) and requests inclusion in the Registry.

“(2) Relevant medical data relating to the health status of, and other information that the Secretary considers relevant and appropriate with respect to, each individual described in paragraph (1) who—

“(A) grants to the Secretary permission to include such information in the Registry; or

“(B) at the time the individual is listed in the Registry, is deceased.

“(c) INDIVIDUALS SUBMITTING CLAIMS OR MAKING REQUESTS BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—If in the case of an individual described in subsection (b)(1) the application, claim, or request referred to in such subsection was submitted, filed, or made, before the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 4, 1992], the Secretary shall, to the extent feasible, include in the Registry such individual’s name and the data and information, if any, described in subsection (b)(2) relating to the individual.

“(d) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Defense shall furnish to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs such information maintained by the Department of Defense as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers necessary to establish and maintain the Registry.

“(e) RELATION TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REGISTRY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall ensure that information is collected and maintained in the Registry in a manner that permits effective and efficient cross-reference between the Registry and the registry established under section 734 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102-190; 105 Stat. 1411; 10 U.S.C. 1074 note), as amended by section 704.

“(f) ONGOING OUTREACH TO INDIVIDUALS LISTED IN REGISTRY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from time to time, notify individuals listed in the Registry of significant developments in research on the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

“SEC. 703. HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND COUNSELING FOR VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN CERTAIN HEALTH-RELATED REGISTRIES.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs—

“(A) shall, upon the request of a veteran described in subsection (b)(1), provide the veteran with a health examination (including any appropriate diagnostic tests) and consultation and counseling with respect to the results of the examination and the tests; and

“(B) may, upon the request of a veteran described in subsection (b)(2), provide the veteran with such an examination (including diagnostic tests) and such consultation and counseling.

“(2) The Secretary shall carry out appropriate outreach activities with respect to the provision of any health examinations (including any diagnostic tests) and consultation and counseling services under paragraph (1).

“(b) COVERED VETERANS.—(1) In accordance with subsection (a)(1)(A), the Secretary shall provide an examination (including diagnostic tests), consultation, and counseling under that subsection to any veteran who is eligible for listing or inclusion in the Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry established by section 702.

“(2) In accordance with subsection (a)(1)(B), the Secretary may provide an examination (including diagnostic tests), consultation, and counseling under that subsection to any veteran who is eligible for listing or inclusion in any other similar health-related registry administered by the Secretary.

“SEC. 704. EXPANSION OF COVERAGE OF PERSIAN GULF REGISTRY.

“[Amended section 734 of Pub. L. 102-190, set out as a note under section 1074 of Title 10, Armed Forces.]

“SEC. 705. STUDY BY OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT OF PERSIAN GULF REGISTRY AND PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS HEALTH REGISTRY.

“(a) STUDY.—The Director of the Office of Technology Assessment shall, in a manner consistent with the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(d) [2 U.S.C. 471 et seq.]), assess—

“(1) the potential utility of each of the Persian Gulf Registry and the Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry for scientific study and assessment of the intermediate and long-term health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War;

“(2) the extent to which each registry meets the requirements of the provisions of law under which the registry is established;

“(3) the extent to which data contained in each registry—

“(A) are maintained in a manner that ensures permanent preservation and facilitates the effective, efficient retrieval of information that is potentially relevant to the scientific study of the intermediate and long-term health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War; and

“(B) would be useful for scientific study regarding such health consequences;

“(4) the adequacy of any plans to update each of the registries;

“(5) the extent to which the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs, as the case may be, is assembling and maintaining information on the Persian Gulf theater of operations (including information on troop locations and atmospheric and weather conditions) in a manner that facilitates the usefulness of, maintenance of, and retrieval of information from, the applicable registry; and

“(6) the adequacy and compatibility of protocols for the health examinations and counseling provided under section 703 and health examinations provided by the Department of Defense to members of the Armed Forces for the purpose of assessing the health status of members of the Armed Forces who served in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

“(b) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall provide the Director with access to such records and information under the jurisdiction of each such secretary as the Director determines necessary to permit the Director to carry out the study required under this section.

“(c) REPORTS.—The Director shall—

“(1) not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 4, 1992], submit to Congress a report on the results of the assessment carried out under this section of the Persian Gulf Registry and health-examination protocols; and

“(2) not later than 15 months after such date, submit to Congress a report on the results of the assessment carried out under this section of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

“(1) The term ‘Persian Gulf Registry’ means the registry established under section 734 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102-190; 105 Stat. 1411; 10 U.S.C. 1074 note), as amended by section 704.

“(2) The term ‘Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry’ means the Persian Gulf War Veterans Health Registry established under section 702.

“SEC. 706. AGREEMENT WITH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FOR REVIEW OF HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SERVICE DURING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR.

“(a) AGREEMENT.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of Defense jointly shall seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences for the Medical Follow-Up Agency (MFUA) of the Institute of Medicine of the Academy to review existing scientific, medical, and other information on the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

“(2) The agreement shall require MFUA to provide members of veterans organizations and members of the scientific community (including the Director of the Office of Technology Assessment) with the opportunity to comment on the method or methods MFUA proposes to use in conducting the review.

“(3) The agreement shall permit MFUA, in conducting the review, to examine and evaluate medical records of individuals who are included in the registries referred to in section 705(d) for purposes that MFUA considers appropriate, including the purpose of identifying illnesses of those individuals.

“(4) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into the agreement under this section not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 4, 1992].

“(b) REPORT.—(1) The agreement under this section shall require the National Academy of Sciences to submit to the committees and secretaries referred to in paragraph (2) a report on the results of the review carried out under the agreement. Such report shall contain the following:

“(A) An assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense to collect and maintain information that is potentially useful for assessing the health consequences of the military service referred to in subsection (a).

“(B) Recommendations on means of improving the collection and maintenance of such information.

“(C) Recommendations on whether there is sound scientific basis for an epidemiological study or studies on the health consequences of such service, and if the recommendation is that there is sound scientific basis for such a study or studies, the nature of the study or studies.

“(2) The committees and secretaries referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:

“(A) The Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives.

“(B) The Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives.

“(C) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(D) The Secretary of Defense.

“(c) FUNDING.—(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall make available up to a total of \$500,000 in fiscal year 1993, from funds available to the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense in that fiscal year, to carry out the review. Any amounts provided by the two departments shall be provided in equal amounts.

“(2) If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense enter into an agreement under subsection (a) with the National Academy of Sciences—

“(A) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make available \$250,000 in each of fiscal years 1994 through 2003, from amounts available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in each such fiscal year, to the National Academy of Sciences for the general purposes of conducting epidemiological research with respect to military and veterans populations; and

“(B) the Secretary of Defense shall make available \$250,000 in each of fiscal years 1994 through 2003, from amounts available to the Department of Defense in each such fiscal year, to the National Academy of Sciences for the purposes of carrying out the research referred to in subparagraph (A).

“(d) RESEARCH REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM.—(1) In order to further understand the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War and of new research findings with implications for improving the provision of care for veterans of such service, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense shall seek to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences under which the Institute of Medicine of the Academy would—

“(A) develop a curriculum pertaining to the care and treatment of veterans of such service who have ill-defined or undiagnosed illnesses for use in the continuing medical education of both general and specialty physicians who provide care for such veterans; and

“(B) on an ongoing basis, periodically review and provide recommendations regarding the research plans and research strategies of the Departments relating to the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

“(2) Recommendations to be provided under paragraph (1)(B) include any recommendations that the Academy considers appropriate for additional scientific studies (including studies related to treatment models) to resolve areas of continuing scientific uncertainty relating to the health consequences of any aspects of such military service. In making recommendations for additional studies, the Academy shall consider the available scientific data, the value and relevance of the information that could result from such studies, and the cost and feasibility of carrying out such studies.

“(3) Not later than 9 months after the Institute of Medicine provides the Secretaries the curriculum developed under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretaries shall provide for the conduct of continuing education programs using that curriculum. Those programs shall include instruction which seeks to emphasize use of appropriate protocols of diagnosis, referral, and treatment of such veterans.

“SEC. 707. COORDINATION OF HEALTH-RELATED GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE PERSIAN GULF WAR.

“(a) DESIGNATION OF COORDINATING ORGANIZATION.—The President shall designate, and may redesignate from time to time, the head of an appropriate department or agency of the Federal Government to coordinate all activities undertaken or funded by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government on the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War.

“(b) PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—Not later than January 1, 1999, the head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall establish an advisory committee consisting of members of the general public, including Persian Gulf War veterans and representatives of such veterans, to provide advice to the head of that department or agency on proposed research studies, research plans, or research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War. The department or agency head shall consult with such advisory committee on a regular basis.

“(c) REPORTS.—(1) Not later than July 1, 2010, and July 1 of each of the five following years, the head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on—

“(A) the status and results of all such research activities undertaken by the executive branch during the previous year; and

“(B) research priorities identified during that year.

“(2)(A) Not later than 120 days after submission of the epidemiological research study conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs entitled ‘VA National Survey of Persian Gulf Veterans—Phase III’, the head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall submit to the congressional committees specified in paragraph (1) a report on the findings under that study and any other pertinent medical literature.

“(B) With respect to any findings of that study and any other pertinent medical literature which identify scientific evidence of a greater relative risk of illness or illnesses in family members of veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War theater of operations than in family members of veterans who did not so serve, the head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall seek to ensure that appropriate research studies are designed to follow up on such findings.

“(d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.—The head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall ensure that the findings of all research conducted by or for the executive branch relating to the health consequences of military service in the Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War (including information pertinent to improving provision of care for veterans of such service) are made available to the public through peer-reviewed medical journals, the World Wide Web, and other appropriate media.

“(e) OUTREACH.—The head of the department or agency designated under subsection (a) shall ensure that the appropriate departments consult and coordinate in carrying out an ongoing program to provide information to those who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War relating to: (1) the health risks, if any, resulting from any risk factors associated with such service; and (2) any services or benefits available with respect to such health risks.

“SEC. 708. DEFINITION.

“For the purposes of this title, the term ‘Persian Gulf War’ has the meaning given such term in section 101(33) of title 38, United States Code.”

SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Pub. L. 102-405, title I, §107, Oct. 9, 1992, 106 Stat. 1976, as amended by Pub. L. 103-446, title X, §1002, Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4679, required Secretary of Veterans' Affairs and directors of each medical center or benefits office to assess needs of homeless veterans and programs which have been developed to assist homeless veterans, and to replicate programs which have successfully rehabilitated homeless veterans, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 105-114, title II, §202(c)(2), Nov. 21, 1997, 111 Stat. 2287.

§ 529. Annual report to Congress

The Secretary shall submit annually, at the close of each fiscal year, a report in writing to Congress. Each such report shall—

(1) give an account of all moneys received and disbursed by the Department for such fiscal year;

(2) describe the work done during such fiscal year; and

(3) state the activities of the Department for such fiscal year.