

# *Veterans Benefits Administration*



**Compensation and Pension Service**

**Radiation**



# Status Update – VBA Operations

## Radiation Claims

Las Vegas March 2007



# Consolidation of Radiation Claims at the Jackson Regional Office

All Types of Radiation Claims will be adjudicated by the Jackson RO.\*

\* Exceptions are cases under APPEAL.

Consolidation of pending claims has been completed.

Currently Jackson has 3,400 cases on hand.



# Handling of Expedited Radiation Doses for Skin & Prostate Cancer Claims

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) now provides expedited theoretical maximum radiation doses for skin & prostate cancer claims.

DTRA has provided similar worst case dose estimates for skin cancer cases (look back) where previous doses were prepared using an individual dose reconstruction process from May 2003 to 2006.

This look back process involves approximately 300 claims.



# Handling of Expedited Radiation Doses for Skin & Prostate Cancer Claims

The Under Secretary for Benefits (USB) has given Jackson the authority to make final decisions on claims from Atomic Veterans for skin and prostate cancer without referral to the Compensation & Pension Service.

DTRA has provided screening dose tables for use with these expedited doses.



# Handling of Expedited Radiation Doses for Skin & Prostate Cancer Claims

The Environmental Hazards Office of the Under Secretary for Health (USH) has provided instructions to VBA for the use of these screening tables to assist in the decision making process.

The Compensation & Pension Service has provided Jackson with worksheets and instructions to implement the use of these tables.



# Handling of Expedited Radiation Doses for Skin & Prostate Cancer Claims

Some claims may require a medical opinion from the USH provided through the Environmental Hazards Office.



# Quality Assurance Plan

The Systematic Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) is VA's national quality assurance program for measuring claims processing accuracy. Radiation claims are reviewed as part of STAR's workload.

A initial STAR review dealing specifically with radiation claims will be completed by September 2007.



# Quality Assurance Plan

Several specific areas will be assessed as part of the QA review including:

- The validity of the initial determination that a claim involving exposure to radiation required transfer to the Jackson RO.
- That referrals to DTRA for a radiation dose contain complete information.



# Quality Assurance Plan

- That decisions granting or denying benefits are correct.

During recurring site visits by the C&P Service to the Jackson RO, radiation workload management and individual performance factors will also be reviewed.

The Compensation and Pension Service will conduct a liaison visit with Jackson before April 2007.



## Draft Notification Letters

VBA appreciates the work the Committee has done in developing the draft letters.

VBA is working to incorporate the information contained in these letters into VA's initial development letters to Atomic Veterans.

Helping veterans better understand the process will hopefully provide for a more harmonious relationship.



## Notification of Claims Outcomes

The VBDR currently receives summaries of the outcomes of medical opinions provided by the Under Secretary for Health.

These summaries are provided to Dr. John Lathrop.



# Next Steps

## Brochures



# Other Issues

Attorneys

OEF/OIF



# QUESTIONS