

VBDR

Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction



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May 18, 2010

Mr. Kenneth A. Myers III
Director, Defense Threat Reduction Agency
8725 John J. Kingman Rd., Stop 6201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6201

Dear Mr. Myers:

The Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction met in Arlington, VA on March 11, 2011. At that meeting, the Board did not approve any formal recommendations for DTRA. The Board recognizes the dedication and commitment of Dr. Paul Blake and the Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) team.

For your records, I have enclosed a copy of the recommendations that were approved by the Board at the Arlington meeting. Please contact me if you require any additional information.

Very respectfully,

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Charles H. Roadman, II, M.D.
Lt. Gen., USAF, (Ret.)
VBDR Chairman

Enclosure: Formal VBDR recommendations

VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD ON DOSE RECONSTRUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MARCH 11, 2011 PLENARY MEETING

On the basis of its audits and assessments of Nuclear Test Personnel Review (NTPR) Program radiation dose assessments (RDAs), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claim procedures, and other meetings and interactions with both DTRA and VA, the Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction (VBDR) offered a number of recommendations at the March 11, 2011 meeting held in Arlington, Virginia. The Board believes that these recommendations, if implemented, would improve the VA compensation program for Atomic Veterans.

For the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA):

The VBDR had no specific recommendations for DTRA.

For the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA):

First, the VBDR continues to recognize the positive improvements that have taken place at the Jackson Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO).

Recommendation 1: We recommend the VA update the current Fast Letter 06-20 (October 16, 2006) and provide guidance to clearly indicate radiation claims are to be expedited to Jackson VARO with minimum, specific claim development (diagnosis of the disease and the consolidation letter sent to the veteran). The Fast Letter 06-20 is outdated and the Veteran Service Center Manager training is not as effective as it could be. A point of contact, email address and phone number for a Jackson VARO radiation team member should be clearly listed in this updated Fast Letter. Additionally, an individual at each VARO should be identified as the radiation claim files specialist.

Recommendation 2: We recommend effective participation by the VHA in the claims process and an appropriate representative should be available at all VBDR meetings.

Recommendation 3: We recommend a Tier 3 ad hoc quality review of the radiation claims process be completed at the end of calendar year 2011. The review should include an assessment of the timeliness of the entire process and should identify any unnecessary delays from initial receipt of claim at original VARO to the end product notification to veteran.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that VHA resolve the issue of completing medical examinations. We suggest providing Jackson Regional Office with a listing of VHA medical facilities that are staffed to conduct the specific examinations required and can provide medical opinions in radiation-related claims, and ensuring that if qualified staff is not available at any particular facility, the requestor is notified that the service can be done on a fee basis.