



Public Health Subcommittee

A Comprehensive Approach to the Assessment
of Deployment Pulmonary Health

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Defense Health Board

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Overview

- Membership
- Tasking
- Timeline
- Key Initial Points Related to Deployment Pulmonary Health
- Some Items of Special Interest to the Subcommittee
- Way Ahead



Membership

Public Health Subcommittee

- RADM (Ret) H. Clifford Lane, MD (Chair)
- Sonia A. Alemagno, PhD
- Gary P. Carlson, PhD
- John D. Clements, PhD
- Steven Gordon, MD*
- John Groopman, PhD
- David Lakey, MD
- James E. Lockey, MD, MS
- Gregory A. Poland, MD
- Maj (Ret) Joseph Silva, Jr., MD

**Nominee Pending Approval*



Tasking

(1 of 2)

Background

“There is some evidence of acute respiratory symptoms possibly associated with in-theater inhalational exposures [in Southwest Asia], but assessment of possible long-term pulmonary disease is inconclusive.”

- Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) [USD(P&R)] Memo dated January 20, 2012



Tasking

(2 of 2)

Request that the Defense Health Board review evidence and recommend:

- A comprehensive approach to the assessment and prevention of deployment-related pulmonary disease, including screening and clinical diagnostic tools
 - A direction for future research and surveillance
- Acting USD(P&R) Memo dated January 20, 2012



Timeline

Meetings to Date:

- August 28, 2013 – Kick-off Teleconference
- September 20, 2013 – Meeting at DHHQ
- October 23, 2013 – Teleconference

Upcoming Meeting:

- December 5, 2013 – Meeting at DHHQ
 - Focus on issues associated with diagnosing constrictive bronchiolitis and review of DoD research agenda



Key Initial Points Related to Deployment Pulmonary Health

- No clear epidemiologic association between deployment and chronic pulmonary health conditions at a population level
 - Studies lack good individual-level exposure data
- Evidence that smoking prevalence and rate increase with deployment
- Controversy regarding diagnosis of constrictive bronchiolitis
- VA/DoD Deployment Health Working Group actively working
- Active research program at Brooke Army Medical Center



Some Items of Special Interest to the Subcommittee

- Appropriate indications for transthoracic lung biopsy
 - Biopsy for disability vs impact on treatment/prognosis
- VA Airborne Hazards/Open Burn Pit Registry
 - DoD planning to ensure timely transfer of active duty entries from VA to DoD and facilitate medical follow-up
- Joint Pathology Center: Opportunities for additional study of biopsy and autopsy specimens
- Spirometry study of deployed Navy Seabee unit: terminated by Navy IRB in 2008 for procedural errors



Way Ahead

- Continue monthly teleconferences/meetings
- Information gathering through early 2014
- Begin deliberation of recommendations in Spring
- Draft Deployment Pulmonary Health report for June 2014 DHB meeting