1996 Update
• skin cancer moves from No association to Probably Not an association category
• spina bifida is added to the category of Possible Association; other birth defects remain in the Probably Not category
• acute or subacute peripheral neuropathy is added to the Possible association category leaving chronic persistent peripheral neuropathy in the Probably Not category
• porphyria cutanea tarda is removed from Positive association category to the Possible category

1998 Update
• urinary bladder cancer moves from No Evidence to Probably Not category

Important Contact Information
• American Legion National Headquarters
  (202) 861-2772 or
  1-800-433-3318 or
  www.legion.org
• Agent Orange Review
  Environmental Agents Service
  VA Central Office
  810 Vermont Avenue
  Washington DC
  (202) 273-8580
• National Academy Press
  2101 Constitution Avenue, NW
  Washington, D.C. 20418
  1-800-624-6242 or
  www.nap.edu

For more information contact:
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission.
The American Legion
1608 “K” Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 861-2772
www.legion.org

Other brochures available:
• Guide to Understanding Agent Orange
• Guide to Agent Orange Benefits

Institute of Medicine and Agent Orange Research

Vietnam Veterans

Other brochures available:
• Guide to Understanding Agent Orange
• Guide to Agent Orange Benefits
What Role does the Institute of Medicine have in Agent Orange Research?

This brochure is for those who want to understand the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) role in determining compensation benefits for Vietnam veterans exposed to herbicides.

A federal law was passed, The Agent Orange Act of 1991, that directed the Department of Veterans Affairs to enter into a contract with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in order to have an independent examination of the association between herbicide exposure in Vietnam and illness in veterans. NAS delegated this task to IOM which created a distinguished panel of experts to exhaustively study this issue.

The IOM committee was formed in 1992 and published its first comprehensive report in 1994, Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam (VAO). IOM sought veterans’ input throughout the study process. This report has been, and will be, updated approximately every two years until 2004. (Full reports available through the National Academy Press)

Categories of Association between Illness and Exposures

- Positive association
- Possible association
- Probably Not an association
- No association evidenced

Each illness IOM researched was placed into one of the above categories. Each update evaluates new scientific evidence to ensure the condition is appropriately placed in the proper category. The IOM may change the placement of a particular condition as new evidence becomes available.

An illness can be grouped in the Positive association category if the IOM determines the collective scientific evidence to be statistically valid, reliable and relevant. The professional opinion of the committee, as scientists, plays an integral part in the decision making process concerning the validity of studies.

How is compensation effected by the IOM Process?

VA grants compensation for all conditions recognized by the IOM reports as having a Positive association.

1994 VAO Report

Positive Association
- chloracne
- soft tissue sarcoma
- non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma
- Hodgkin’s disease
- porphyria cutanea tarda

Possible Association
- multiple myeloma
- respiratory cancers (lung, trachea, larynx)
- prostate cancer

Probably Not an Association
- Cancers: hepatobiliary, nasal/nasopharyngeal, bone, cervical, uterine, ovarian, breast, testicular, renal, Leukemia, childhood cancer in offspring
- spontaneous abortion
- birth defects
- infant death and stillbirths
- low birthweight
- infertility
- cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders
- motor/coordination dysfunction
- peripheral nervous system disorders
- metabolic and digestive disorders (includes diabetes)
- immune system disorders
- respiratory disorders

No Association Evidenced
- skin cancer
- gastrointestinal tumors
- bladder cancer
- brain tumors

The Institute of Medicine was created in 1970 by the National Academy of Sciences to examine policy matters related to public health.