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VA pilots evaluation model to determine potential exposure to environmental hazards while serving

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it is piloting a comprehensive military exposure model to consider possible relationships of in-service environmental hazards to medical conditions. The goal of this new model is to lower the burden of proof for Veterans impacted by exposures and speed up the delivery of health care and benefits that they need.

The new model will continue to leverage scientific findings from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), available and relevant scientific research data, surveillance of Veterans' health outcomes, and adding the review of VA claims data and military environmental research for trends and identify new concerns. At the direction of the President, the first conditions this pilot will actively consider are rare respiratory cancers and constrictive bronchiolitis. Consistent with the President's demands, VA anticipates answers on these conditions by mid-2022.

"We are seeking more information from Veterans, more evidence from more sources, and looking to take every avenue possible to determine where a potential presumptive illness based on military service location may exist in a more expedient and holistic manner," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We want all Veterans who may have been impacted to file a claim even if it was previously denied."

The presumptive decision model pilot will run from Nov. 15 to April 1, 2022. VA will look to use the results of the pilot to formalize the model after April 1, 2022. Over the last six months, VA has extended benefits and services to Veterans impacted by military exposures due to [Agent Orange](#) and [particulate matter](#).

If a Veteran has a condition they believe is attributed to an event during military service, they are highly encouraged to file a claim. More information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim may be found on VA's website at www.va.gov or by calling toll-free at 800-827-1000.

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