

2023 Current Fiscal Year Report: Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose Reconstruction

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1. Department or Agency

Department of Defense

2. Fiscal Year

2023

3. Committee or Subcommittee

Veterans' Advisory Board on Dose
Reconstruction

3b. GSA

Committee No.

22872

4. Is this New Fiscal Year?

No

5. Current Charter

02/13/2014

6. Expected Renewal Date

7. Expected Term Date

8a. Was Terminated During FiscalYear?

Yes

8b. Specific Termination Authority

sec. 734 of Public Law
117-263 (FY23 NDAA)

8c. Actual Term Date

12/23/2022

9. Agency Recommendation for Next FiscalYear

Terminate

10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?

Yes

10b. Legislation Pending?

Enacted

11. Establishment Authority

Statutory (Congress Created)

12. Specific Establishment Authority

Section 601(c) of Title VI of
Public Law 108-183

13. Effective Date

12/16/2003 Continuing

14. Committee Type

14c. Presidential?

No

15. Description of Committee

Scientific Technical Program
Advisory Board

16a. Total Number of Reports

No Reports for
this FiscalYear

17a. Open

0

17b. Closed0

17c. Partially Closed0

Other Activities0

17d. Total0

Meetings and Dates

No Meetings

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	\$0.00	\$0.00
18d. Total	\$0.00	\$0.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	0.00	0.00

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

Department of Defense (DoD), through Defense Threat Reduction Agency USSTRATCOM Center for Combating WMD (DTRA-SCC-WMD) as the Executive Agent, provided radiation dose estimates for veterans who participated in the 1945-1946 occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki or were POWs at Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, and in U.S. sponsored atmospheric nuclear testing between 1945 and 1962. These dose reconstructions were used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to evaluate and decide veterans' claims filed under the provisions of

Public Law (PL) 98-542 and implementing regulations in Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 3.311. Congress directed the Secretaries of DoD and VA under Section 601 of Public Law (PL) 108-183 to appoint an advisory board to provide ongoing independent review and oversight of the Dose Reconstruction Program. The Advisory Board on Veterans' Dose Reconstruction advised DoD and VA, as directed under Section 601 of PL 108-183, as follows: (a) conduct periodic, random audits of dose reconstructions and decisions on claims for radiogenic diseases; (b) assist the VA and DTRA-SCC-WMD in communicating to veterans information on the mission, procedures, and evidentiary requirements of dose reconstruction; (c) carry out other activities with regard to review and oversight of the Dose Reconstruction Program as specified jointly by the Secretaries; and (d) make recommendations on modifications to the mission and procedures of the Dose Reconstruction Program as the Advisory Board considers appropriate as a result of the audits. VA concurs with terminating this committee as it has met its statutory purpose and is no longer necessary.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

The Board was composed of members as directed by Section 601 of PL 108-183 as follows:- At least one expert in historical dose reconstruction of the type conducted under the Dose Reconstruction Program: (1) At least one expert in radiation health matters; (2) At least one expert in risk communications; (3) A VA representative; (4) A DTRA-SCC-WMD representative; and (5) At least three veterans, including at least one veteran who is a member of an atomic veterans group.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

Past Estimated Number of Committee Meetings per year - 1-2. The Committee will no longer meet but prior committee minutes and recommendations are posted on the Committee website at: www.vbdr.org

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

Congress directed the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs (VA) under Section 601 of Public Law,(PL) 108-183 to appoint an advisory board to provide on-going independent review and oversight of the DoD and VA Veterans' Dose Reconstruction Program. This Advisory Board maintained independent oversight of the procedures used by DTRA-SCC-WMD and the VA in responding to claims filed by veterans. The advisory board provided an avenue for improving communication with veterans and for resolving complex issues related to radiation dose reconstruction and claims adjudication. Both Secretariats believe that the VBDR has met its mandate and the two Secretaries can maintain an effective program.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

Meetings were not closed to the public.

21. Remarks

The committee has been terminated pursuant to section 734 of the FY23 NDAA.

Designated Federal Officer

Narrative Description

This committee supported the VA and the DoD (DTRA-SCC-WMD) by providing oversight, and recommendations for improvements to, the process used to adjudicate claims filed by atomic veterans.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
Improvements to health or safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Trust in government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Major policy changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome Comments

NA

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cost Savings Comments

For DOD: Cost savings to date = \$21 million. Projected cost savings through end of FY07

= \$13.5 million and \$1.5 million per year thereafter. For VA: Cost savings is unknown.

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

76

Number of Recommendations Comments

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 one recommendation to DoD and three recommendations to the VA, and three Joint recommendations at the July 23, 2014 meeting held in Arlington, Virginia. The Board believes that these recommendations, if put into action, would improve the VA compensation program for Atomic Veterans. For the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA): The VBDR recommends that NTPR maintain existing QA programs implemented under the VBDR including the double blind analyses; continues to conduct periodic independent audits of a sampling of RDAs, the QA programs, and double blind analyses; and obtain independent peer-reviews of technical documents and revisions or updates in SOPs. For the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA): Recommendation 1: We recommend that by September 13, 2013 the VA correct the problem which causes the delay in transferring veterans' claims from the Office of Original Jurisdiction (OOJ) to Jackson VARO. Recommendation 2: We recommend that by September 15, 2013, the VHA (Office of Public Health) complete production and distribute the briefing package material to the "Big 6" Veterans organizations to inform Veterans about the atomic Veterans claim process. Recommendation 3: We recommend the VA conduct a focused System Technical Accuracy Review (STAR) of the radiation claims every three years. Joint DoD and VA Recommendations: Recommendation 1: We recommend that by September 15, 2013 the VA and NTPR provide the board with a formal plan (to include staffing and other needed resources, ie. VPN) to remove the backlog. Recommendation 2: We recommend semi-annual meetings of NTPR, VA and the Department of Justice (DOJ) include detailed reports demonstrating case accuracy and timely performance, including current performance, performance trends, corrective action, and related improvements. Recommendation 3: We recommend the semi-annual NTPR, VA and the DOJ meetings include an agenda item to coordinate DTRA and VA Public Affairs outreach efforts, and a report describing the effort is written and reported on the public websites of DTRA and VA.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

100%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

The 100% mentioned above only applies to the VBDR recommendations to the DoD (DTRA-SCC-WMD). All of the recommendations made by the Committee can be found on the committee website: <http://www.vbdr.org/>

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

0%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

The DOD has fully implemented the VBDR recommendations.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments

Feedback was provided by formal letter from Director, DTRA-SCC-WMD to the board.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Comments

DTRA-SCC-WMD has revised the dose reconstruction methodology used and revised or recomputed all claims according to the new standards. In many cases, this increased the veteran's computed radiation dose.

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

This Committee does not issue or approve grants.

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online Agency Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online Committee Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Online GSA FACA Web Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Access Comments

Press releases; web site: <http://www.vbdr.org/> The agenda, meeting minutes, and recommendations made can be found on the VBDR website.