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**Lebanon VA Medical Center Announces Burn Pit and Airborne Hazards Registry
Veterans May Report Exposures and Concerns for Treatment and Tracking**

LEBANON – July 23, 2014 –

Lebanon VA Medical Center (VAMC) encourages all Veterans who deployed to southwest Asia or Djibouti, Africa for Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Desert Shield, or Operation Desert Storm to register in the Burn Pit Registry (BPR). The BPR has been established to monitor the health of Veterans who may have been exposed to airborne hazards (such as smoke and fumes from burn pits, oil-well fires, or pollution during deployment). The registry allows eligible Veterans and service members to document their exposures and report health concerns. It also allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to identify health conditions possibly related to burn pit exposure or other airborne hazards during military service. Registration for the BPR is completely voluntary but must be completed on-line.

Airborne hazards are substances moving through the air which may pose danger or risk. The dusty, polluted environments of Iraq and Afghanistan contain many potential airborne hazards. The high level of fine dust and pollution common in those areas may pose a greater danger for respiratory illnesses than exposure to burn pits on U.S. base camps, according to a 2011 Institute of Medicine report, "Long-Term Health Consequences of Exposure to Burn Pits in Iraq and Afghanistan". Acting on the findings and recommendations in the report, VA and the Department of Defense developed a standard screening and evaluation of service members and Veterans with respiratory complaints after deployment in order to improve care and to conduct a long-term study that will follow Veterans for decades looking at their exposures and health issues to determine the impact of deployment.

BPR participation is open to any Veteran or service member who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, or in Djibouti, Africa, after September 11, 2001, or Operations Desert Shield or Desert Storm or the Southwest Asia area of operations after August 2, 1990. The Southwest Asia area of operations includes the following locations: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, waters of the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations. VA will use deployment data provided by the Department of Defense to determine eligibility.

Veterans seeking to participate in the BPR are encouraged to register and complete the on-line questionnaire, by visiting <https://veteran.mobilehealth.va.gov/AHBurnPitRegistry/#page/home>. It takes approximately 40 minutes to complete. It can be done in one sitting or incrementally. After completing the questionnaire, Veterans may request a free, optional medical evaluation. See more at:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/actionplan.asp#sthash.uUKc7HsT.dpuf>

Participation in the registry is voluntary and will not affect access to health care or benefits. Information gathered from the on-line questionnaire and comprehensive health exam (which includes an exposure history, medical history, physical exam, and any tests if needed) helps VA understand and respond to these health problems more effectively. Information reported by participants is maintained in a secure database and may be used in future research studies.

Registry examinations are free of charge and no co-payment are incurred as a result of participating in the registry. Registry evaluations are not disability compensation exams; nor are they required to receive other VA benefits. Enrollment in VA's health care system is not necessary (although if eligible, enrollment is encouraged). Lebanon VAMC will assist Veterans and service members with registration at its main campus or its six community-based outpatient clinics located in Camp Hill, Frackville, Lancaster, Pottsville, Reading, and York.

For more additional information regarding Special Environmental Health Registry Evaluation Programs for Veterans please visit: <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/> or contact the VA's Special Health Issues Helpline at 800-749-8387. Additionally, VA publishes newsletters related to several environmental hazards. Subscribe online at <http://www.easmailcall.aac.va.gov/>.

Environmental health appointments may also be scheduled by contacting Lebanon VA Medical Center's Environmental Health Coordinator at 717-272-6621, ext. 4195 or toll free 800-409-877, ext. 4195. Veterans can receive additional assistance by contacting their local County Veterans Service Officer (VSO).

Lebanon VA Medical Center is one of 152 medical centers across the United States which are dedicated to serving the unique needs of America's Veterans. The VA is the largest health care system in the country, using state of the art technology to improve the health of Veterans from every generation. If you are Veteran, you may be eligible to receive care and benefits from the VA. Call 717-228-6000 to learn about eligibility in VA health care.

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