

VFW National Commander Commends Administration's Actions on Toxic Exposure

'Much-needed steps to address the urgent health needs of toxic exposed veterans'

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WASHINGTON — On Veterans Day, the Biden Administration [announced](#) a series of actions that VA will take to address the health conditions veterans experience due to burn pits and other toxic exposures. The announcement was well-received by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), as it has continuously urged Congress and both the current and previous administrations to address toxic exposure since the issue came to public awareness.

"The VFW thanks VA and the administration for taking these much-needed steps to address the urgent health needs of toxic-exposed veterans," said VFW National Commander Matthew "Fritz" Mihelcic. "With veterans fighting and succumbing everyday to illnesses related to toxic exposure, the time is now to address this issue."

VA will pilot a new model to accelerate the process to establish presumptive conditions by reviewing the available science from the National Academies, analyzing VA data, and gathering evidence from other scientific sources. VA says it already used this model when it added sinusitis, rhinitis, and asthma as presumptive conditions related to particulate matter last May. Within 90 days, VA will use the model to assess rare cancers. After 90 days, VA will then address constrictive bronchiolitis. Over the next few months, VA will also consider additional presumptives. Additionally, DOD plans to accelerate the implementation of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER), which the VFW supported in past legislation, that tracks service members' environmental and occupational exposures.

"We will work with VA to monitor these developments while continuing to advocate for toxic exposure legislation," Mihelcic said.

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