

VIRTUAL PUBLIC SESSION

Committee to Reassess the Department of Veterans Affairs Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry

December 8, 2020

2:20pm to 4:30pm ET

AGENDA

- 2:20pm Welcome and Opening Remarks
David Savitz, Committee Chair
- 2:30pm Charge to the Committee and Overview of the Registry “2nd Review of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR) Charge to the Committee”
[Eric Shuping, M.D., M.P.H.](#) – Director, Post-9/11 Era Environmental Health Program, Department of Veterans Affairs
Accompanied by:
Patricia Hastings, D.O., Chief Consultant, Post Deployment Health Services, Department of Veterans Affairs
Aaron Schneiderman, Ph.D., Director Epidemiology Program, Post Deployment Health Services, Department of Veterans Affairs
Michael J. Falvo, Ph.D., Co-director Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence, Department of Veterans Affairs
- 3:45pm Public Comments
Limited to 3 minutes per individual or organization. Sign up to make comment via Registry-study@nas.edu
- 4:30pm Session Adjourns

A NOTE TO ATTENDEES

This meeting is being held to gather information to help the committee conduct its study. This committee will examine the information and material obtained during this, and other public meetings, in an effort to inform its work. Although opinions may be stated and lively discussion may ensue, no conclusions are being drawn at this time, and the committee will deliberate thoroughly before writing its draft report. Moreover, once the draft report is written, it must go through a rigorous review by experts who are anonymous to the committee, and the committee then must respond to this review with appropriate revisions that adequately satisfy the Academies' Report Review Committee and the NAS president before it is considered an official Academies report. Therefore, observers who draw conclusions about the committee's work based on today's discussions will be doing so prematurely.

Furthermore, individual committee members often engage in discussion and questioning for the specific purpose of probing an issue and sharpening an argument. The comments of any committee member may not necessarily reflect the position he or she may actually hold on the subject under discussion, to say nothing of that person's future position as it may evolve in the course of the project. Any inference about an individual's position regarding findings or recommendations in the final report is therefore also premature.

COMMUNICATION

At any time throughout the study, you may share your comments with the committee in writing. Send your comments and any supporting documentation to Registry-Study@nas.edu.

To receive notification about future committee events and the report release, sign up for the listserv [here](#).

STATEMENT OF TASK

In February 2017, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) published a report titled *Assessment of the Department of Veterans Affairs Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry*. The report was required by Public Law 112-260 (Section 201). This law also required an additional report not later than five years after completion of the initial effort.

The requirements of the Public Law include:

- (i) An update to the initial report described in subparagraph (A) of the Public Law.
- (ii) An assessment of whether and to what degree the content of the registry established under subsection (a) of the Public Law is current and scientifically up-to-date.

To accomplish this task, VA requests that the NASEM complete a report that:

- 1) conducts an independent scientific assessment of the effectiveness of actions taken by the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Defense to collect and maintain information on the health effects of exposure to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused by open burn pits,
- 2) provides recommendations to improve the collection and maintenance of such information, and
- 3) using established and previously published epidemiologic studies, provides recommendations regarding the most effective and prudent means of using the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit (AH&OBP) Registry or another system of records to provide information that translates into learning more about the medical needs of eligible individuals with respect to conditions that are likely to result from exposure to open burn pits. The assessment should also look at other means or methods to obtain similar or better information by VA and to achieve the goals of burn pit exposures research. Such means might include the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) and the Millennium Cohort Study.

The report should additionally address how VA has done in implementing the recommendations offered in the 2017 NASEM report and present recommendations on how to address gaps identified in the initial report and on burn pit and airborne hazards research, diagnosis, and treatment in general. It should review the scientific literature on other registries and self-reported databases for potential improvements and techniques that could be used by the AH&OBP Registry. The report shall include, to the extent permitted by the available data, a description of the data contained in the AH&OBP Registry, updating and augmenting the analyses presented in the 2017 initial report.

The report should make a recommendation on the best way to utilize resources for burn pit study and research. Does, for example, a more cost-effective way than the AH&OBP Registry exist to discover associations between airborne hazard and burn pit exposures and disease?

Lastly, the report should look at a potential end state to the AH&OBP Registry. At what point would it or any registry complete its intended purpose? What alternative form of surveillance and identification of research candidates would need to be identified if the AH&OBP Registry was closed?

COMMITTEE ROSTER

David A. Savitz, Ph.D. (*Chair*)

Professor of Epidemiology, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Associate Dean for Research
Brown University

John R. Balmes, M.D.

Professor of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco

Michelle Bell, Ph.D., M.S., M.S.E.

Mary E. Pinchot Professor of Environmental Health
Yale University

Michael J. Daniels, Sc.D.

Andrew Banks Family Endowed Chair and Professor Department of Statistics
University of Florida

Marianthi-Anna Kioumourtzoglou, Sc.D., M.S.P.H.

Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Bhramar Mukherjee, Ph.D., M.S.

John D. Kalbfleisch Collegiate Professor of Biostatistics, Professor of Epidemiology, Professor of Global
Public Health, Research Professor
University of Michigan

Frances M. Murphy, M.D., M.P.H.

President and CEO
Sigma Health Consulting, LLC

Kristen M. Olson, Ph.D., M.S.

Leland J. and Dorothy H Olson Professor of Sociology and Director,
Bureau of Sociological Research

Tyler Smith, Ph.D., M.S.

Professor and Statistical Epidemiologist
National University

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Discrimination is prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable laws.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Other types of harassment include any verbal or physical conduct directed at individuals or groups of people because of their race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable laws, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Bullying is unwelcome, aggressive behavior involving the use of influence, threat, intimidation, or coercion to dominate others in the professional environment.

REPORTING AND RESOLUTION

Any violation of this policy should be reported. If you experience or witness discrimination, harassment, or bullying, you are encouraged to make your unease or disapproval known to the individual, if you are comfortable doing so. You are also urged to report any incident by:

- Filing a complaint with the Office of Human Resources at 202-334-3400, or
- Reporting the incident to an employee involved in the activity in which the member or volunteer is participating, who will then file a complaint with the Office of Human Resources.

Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after an incident. To ensure the prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the complainant should provide as much information as is possible, such as names, dates, locations, and steps taken. The Office of Human Resources will investigate the alleged violation in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

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Updated June 7, 2018