

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Clinical Follow-Up and Care for Those Impacted by the JP-5 Releases at Red Hill

Presentation for: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Presented by: Dr. Patricia R. Hastings, Chief Consultant, VA Health Outcomes Military Exposures

Date of briefing: February 20, 2025



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VA



U.S. Department
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Agenda

- Background on Red Hill and the 2021 Water Contamination
- VA Health Outcomes Military Exposures
- VA Presumption Decisions
- Purpose of the National Academies Review of Red Hill
- VA Information Needs
- Charge to the Committee



Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage Facility pump room.

Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility

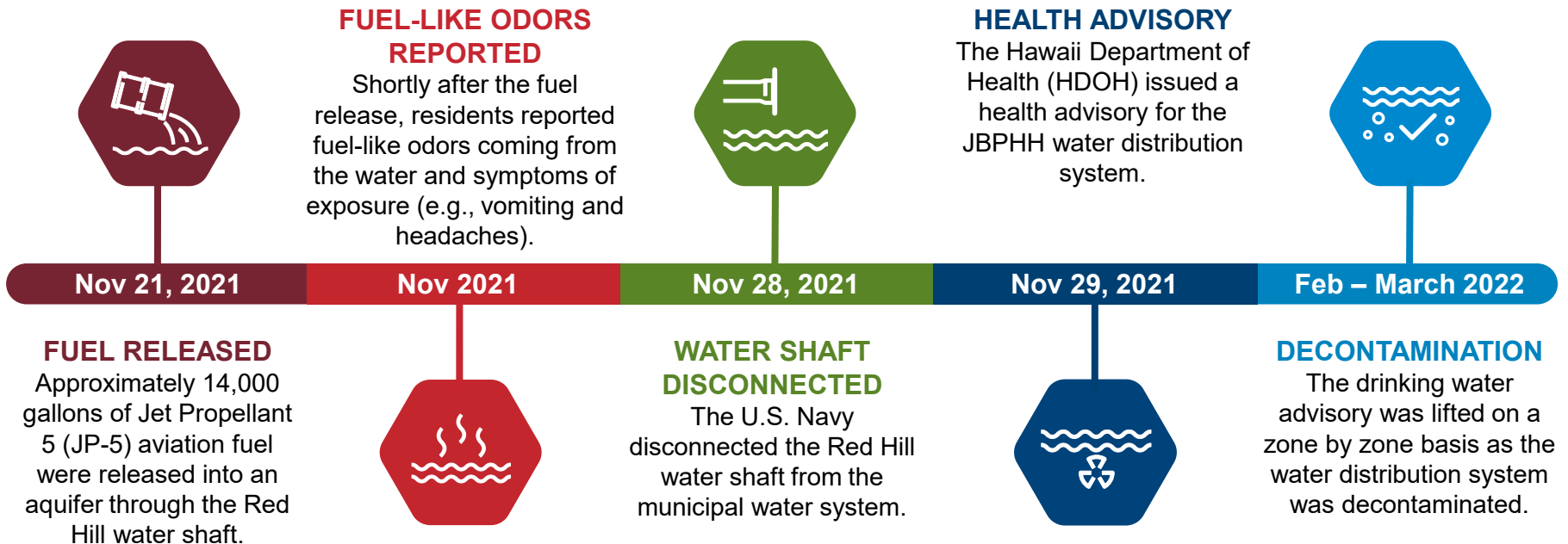
- The Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, located in Oahu, Hawaii, was built during the 1940s to support military operations in the Pacific by storing up to 250 million gallons of fuel.
- Twenty steel-lined tanks housed in underground cavities were mined inside Red Hill and connected to three pipelines linked to fueling piers at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH).
- Red Hill sits approximately 100 feet above the aquifer that supplies water to a large portion of JBPHH.



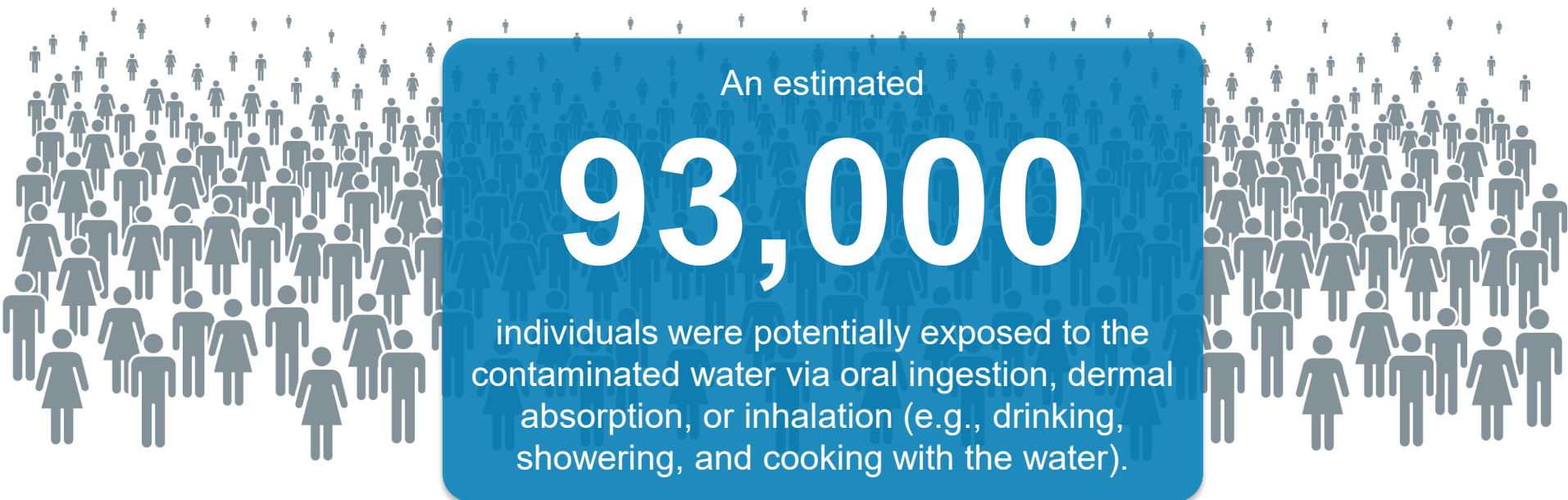
1942 Navy photo shows miners building just one of the 20 fuel tanks, which are connected by a miles-long tunnel.



2021 Red Hill Water Contamination



Health Impacts of the 2021 Red Hill Water Contamination



Various health effects were reported (e.g., gastrointestinal, neurological, dermal, and respiratory effects), with the most commonly reported symptoms being headaches, diarrhea, dry skin, and mental health concerns.

While some individuals have reported persistent symptoms, the long-term health effects of jet fuel exposure are currently not well understood.



VA Health Outcomes Military Exposures

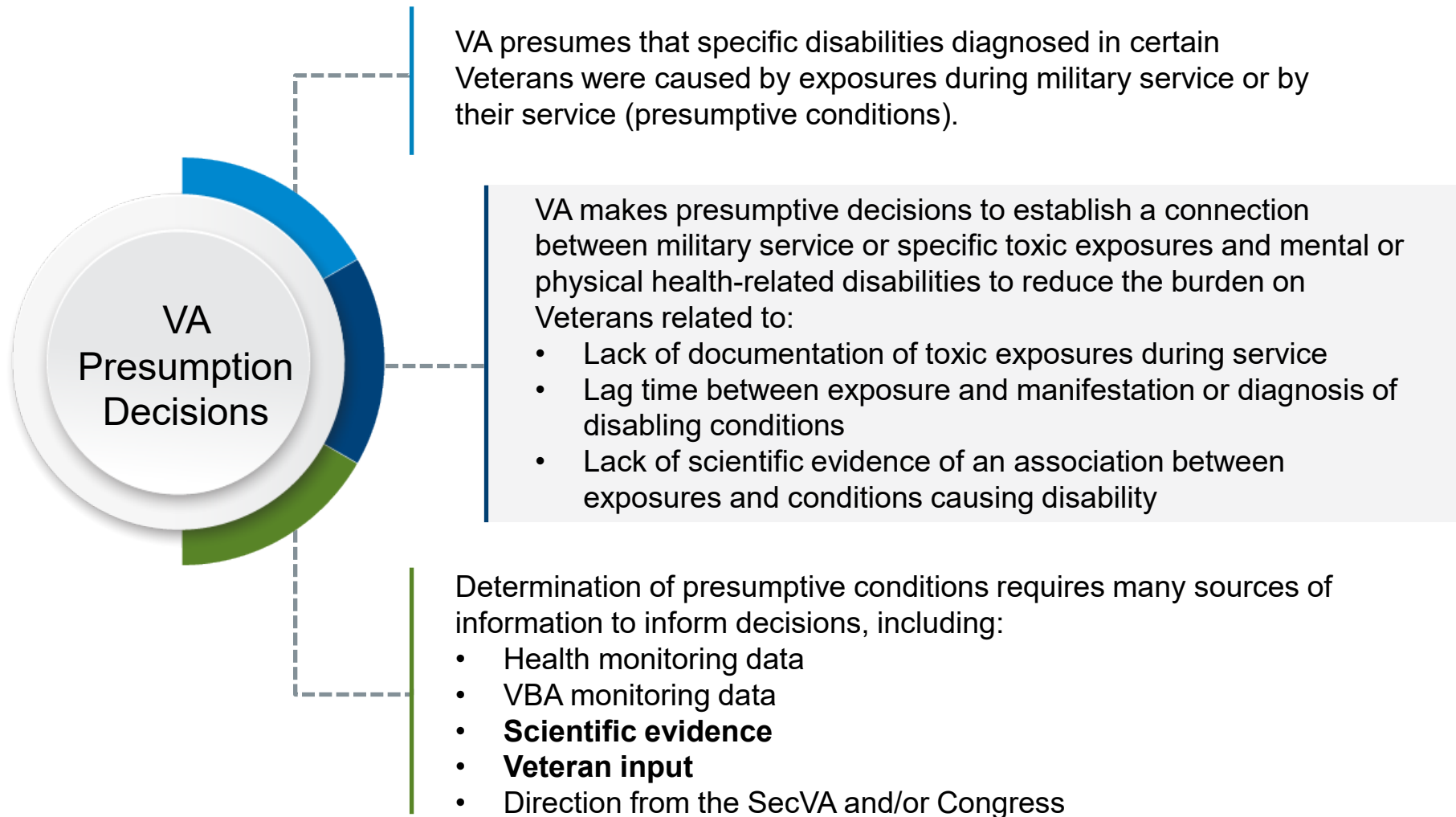
The VA **Health Outcomes Military Exposures** (HOME) Program Office:

- Governs Congressionally mandated programs related to environmental, occupational, and garrison exposures that may have affected U.S. Veterans and some family members during military service
- Conducts surveillance and research pertaining to Veterans' health and health care outcomes to
 - ✓ Inform clinical care provided by health professionals
 - ✓ Provide sound science to support decisions by policymakers, including VA and Congress
 - ✓ Improve health care best practices and policy decisions regarding Veterans' benefits

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VA Presumption Decisions



Purpose of the National Academies Review of Red Hill

Clinical Follow-Up and Care for Those Impacted by the JP-5 Releases at Red Hill

1



Engage with affected community members exposed during the November 2021 release of JP-5 aviation fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility into the JBPHH water distribution system

2



Review the health risks associated with JP-5 exposure

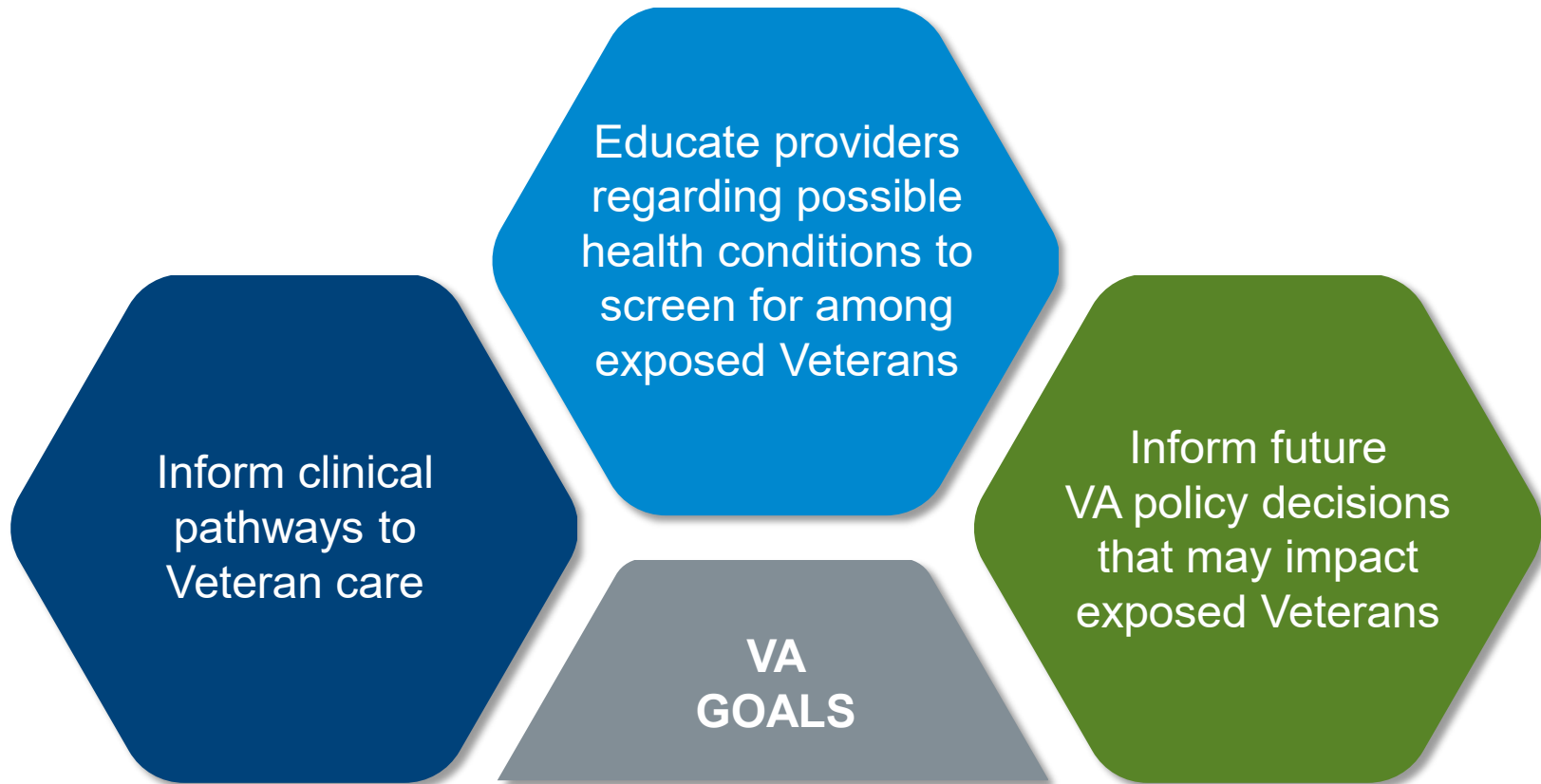
3



Make recommendations to the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding clinical actions that can be taken to monitor the health of those exposed

VA Information Needs

VA may use the information provided by the National Academies review of Red Hill to:



Charge to the Committee

An ad hoc committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (the National Academies) will recommend guidance on clinical actions that can be taken to monitor the health of community members exposed during the November 2021 release of Jet Propellant 5 (JP-5) aviation fuel from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility into the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam water distribution system. Specifically, the committee will undertake the following tasks:



Engage with those exposed during the Red Hill fuel release, to gain knowledge and understanding of the issues, such as health conditions and symptoms; experiences with clinical care following the Red Hill exposure; and other pertinent information.



Review current scientific evidence to determine potential long-term health risks of exposure to JP-5. The review will consider reports from authoritative bodies (such as the Veterans Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, National Toxicology Program, International Agency for Research on Cancer, and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) that describe putative health effects following JP-5 exposure.



Determine the strength of evidence for the spectrum of putative health effects following the Red Hill exposure, based on the review of current evidence. The committee will pay particular attention to health conditions and symptoms noted by those exposed during the Red Hill fuel release.

Charge to the Committee (cont'd)



Review existing clinical guidance for the health risks associated with exposure to JP-5, and, considering the harms and benefits of potential increased clinical follow-up for patients, issue evidence-informed clinical management recommendations in caring for patients exposed during the fuel release.



Review any available exposure assessments and models created during the public health response to the Red Hill fuel release to determine how estimates of an individual's exposure level could best inform clinical follow-up and care of patients.



Provide recommendations on clinical surveillance, testing, and care for those exposed at Red Hill that the sponsoring agencies can consider when developing their clinical guidance for exposed patients.



Identify research needs to support improved patient follow-up and decision-making for benefits for those exposed at Red Hill.

QUESTIONS

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For more information on the jet fuel spill at Red Hill, visit:
[Red Hill - Public Health](#)

