

Review of the Department of Veterans Affairs Presumption Decision Process

Committee

Bruce N. Calonge

Chair

Bruce N. Calonge, M.D., M.P.H. (Chair) is the Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and a Professor of Epidemiology at the Colorado School of Public Health, and an Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the Colorado School of Medicine, in Aurora, Colorado. He previously served as the President and CEO of The Colorado Trust, a private grant-making foundation dedicated to achieving health equity for all Coloradans. Dr. Calonge chairs the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice and is a member of the Roundtable on the Advancement of Health Equity. Dr. Calonge has substantial expertise and experience in evidence assessment, synthesis, and causal decision making, having developed and updated methods in past roles as chair of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Preventive Services Task Force, chair of the U.S Preventive Services Task Force, chair of the CDC's Evaluating Genomic Applications for Practice and Prevention Working Group, and founding member of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children, for which he is now the chair. Dr. Calonge also previously served as the Chief Medical Officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Dr. Calonge has served on five National Academies' consensus committees and as chair for three of them; four of these required developing novel evidence synthesis and causal-related recommendation frameworks. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Calonge received his M.D. from the University of Colorado and his M.P.H. from the University of Washington, where he also completed his preventive medicine residency. He completed his family medicine residency at the Oregon Health Sciences University.

Lawrence Deyton

Member

Lawrence Deyton, M.S.P.H, M.D., is the Murdock Head Professor of Medicine and Health Policy and the Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Public Health at The George Washington University's School of Medicine and Health Sciences. He previously served at several federal agencies, including as the founding director of the Center for Tobacco Products at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) where he created scientific, research, regulatory and enforcement framework for FDA tobacco product regulation in the United States. Prior to joining FDA, Dr. Deyton held several national leadership positions at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for 10 years (1999-2009) and was the chief public health and environmental hazards officer (2005-2009) where he oversaw VA's public health programs, including environmental hazards programs, women's health, occupational health, emergency preparedness and response of VA's health system. While serving in this position, Dr. Deyton presented to the National Academies' Committee on Improving the Presumptive Disability Decision-Making Process for Veterans and wrote a white paper about the process of how Institute Of Medicine reports on exposures and health outcomes of Vietnam and Gulf War veterans were reviewed internally by VA once received to be used in the presumption determination process, but he was not involved in revising the presumption decision process and left VA soon after the report was received. Dr. Deyton has been a volunteer physician for the Washington DC VA medical center for 23 years and continues to see and treat patients, specializing in HIV and AIDS. He has not performed compensation and pension examinations. Since leaving VA, he has not consulted for or had research collaborations with VA. Dr. Deyton also served for 11 years in leadership positions at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 6 years in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services, and as a legislative aide with the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Health and the Environment in the 1970s. Dr. Deyton was a founder of the Whitman Walker Clinic, now a community-based AIDS service organization in Washington, DC, in 1978. In 2011, Dr. Deyton was a finalist for the prestigious Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal for his outstanding contributions to the health, safety, and well-being of Americans and in 2019 he received the James Bruce Award for Distinguished Contributions in Preventive Medicine by the American College of Physicians. He earned his M.D. from The George Washington University and his M.S.P.H. at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Javier I. Escobar

Member

Javier I. Escobar, M.D., M.Sc., is Professor, Departments of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences and Health, Humanities & Society, Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine at Florida International University. He has been an active researcher in clinical psychopharmacology, psychiatric epidemiology, psychiatric diagnosis, cross-cultural medicine, mental disorders in primary care, somatic symptom disorders, and global mental health. He has been the Principal Investigator of several National Institute of Health (NIH)-funded grants (medically unexplained symptoms, mental health in primary-care and global mental health). He has published more than 250 scientific articles in books and journals, and he has served on several advisory committees and task forces for NIH, World Health Organization, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and American Psychiatric Association (DSM-5 Task Force). Dr. Escobar served on two National Academy committees focusing on veterans' health issues (Gulf War and Health volume 10 and Treatment of Chronic Multisymptom Illness). His career included previous positions of full professor of psychiatry at University of California, Los Angeles; University of Connecticut; and Rutgers University. He was also previously the Chair of Psychiatry and Associate Dean for Global Health at Rutgers University Biomedical Health Sciences. He received his M.D. from Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Colombia, completed his specialty training in psychiatry and obtained a M.Sc. degree in psychiatry/medical genetics at the University of Minnesota.

James Giordano

Member

James Giordano, Ph.D, is Pellegrino Center Professor in the Departments of Neurology and Biochemistry; Chief of the Neuroethics Studies Program; Director of the Program in Biotechnology, Biosecurity and Ethics of the Cyber-SMART Center; and Chair of the Sub-program in Military Medical Ethics at Georgetown University. In these roles he provides education and training, consultation, and oversight in ethical issues focused on clinical medicine and biomedical research. He is Bioethicist-in-Residence of the U.S. Defense Medical Ethics Center; Senior Fellow in Biosecurity, Technology, and Ethics at the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI; and Distinguished Fellow in Science, Technology and Ethics of the Stockdale Center of the U.S. Naval Academy. He is also Senior Scientific Advisory Fellow for Neurocognitive Sciences in the Strategic Multilayer Assessment Branch of the Joint Staff. Dr. Giordano is an elected member of the European Academy of Science and Arts and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine (U.K.). A former U.S. Naval officer, holding designations as an aerospace physiologist, research physiologist, and research psychologist, he served with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, holding the rank of lieutenant (O-3). He maintains no current affiliation with the Department of Veterans Affairs for medical or other benefits. Dr. Giordano received his Ph.D. (with highest honors) in biopsychology from the City University of New York, received post-graduate training in ethics and health policy at Loyola University (IL), and completed post-doctoral fellowship in neuropathology and toxicology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health.

Francine Laden

Member

Francine Laden, Sc.D., is Professor of Environmental Epidemiology and Associate Chair of the Department of Environmental Health at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and an Associate Professor of Medicine at the Harvard Medical School and the Brigham & Women's Hospital. Her research interests focus on the environmental epidemiology of chronic diseases, including cancer, respiratory, and cardiovascular disease, and exposures of air pollution (from ambient and occupational sources), persistent organic pollutants, secondhand smoke, and the contextual environment (e.g., built environment and green spaces). She studies the geographic distribution of disease risk and all cause and cardiovascular mortality among large cohorts. Dr. Laden has served on five National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine committees including three of the Gulf War and Health series (volumes 4, 8, and 10), and Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune. She is a past member of the Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board and past president of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology. Dr. Laden received her Sc.D. in Epidemiology and M.S. in Environmental Health from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Juleen Lam

Member

Juleen Lam, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at California State University East Bay in the Department of Public Health. Her research focuses on environmental epidemiology, evaluation of population exposures to environmental contaminants, risk assessment, and reproductive and developmental health. Over the past decade, Dr. Lam has been closely involved in the development of systematic review methods for environmental health data and has played a pivotal role in implementing, publishing, and disseminating these approaches in academic and government settings. Dr. Lam contributed to the development and implementation of the University of California, San Francisco systematic review methodology (Navigation Guide) and has been involved with the Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, and Evaluations (GRADE) working group. To date, Dr. Lam has published four case studies illustrating the implementation of systematic review methodology in environmental health, as well as numerous other publications focused on specific aspects of systematic review (such as evaluating risk of bias, developing systematic evidence maps, incorporating semi-automated machine learning software). Dr. Lam has served on four National Academies committees. She received her M.S. in environmental engineering management from George Washington University, and her M.H.S. in biostatistics and Ph.D. in environmental health policy from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Roger J. Lewis

Member

Roger J. Lewis, M.D., Ph.D., is a senior physician in the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, professor of Emergency Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and a statistical editor for The Journal of the American Medical Association. He is the Senior Medical Scientist at Berry Consultants, LLC, a group that specializes in innovative clinical trial design. Dr. Lewis's expertise is on adaptive and Bayesian clinical trials, including platform trials; translational, clinical, health services and outcomes research methodology; data and safety monitoring boards, and the oversight of clinical trials. He has broad expertise in the interpretation of experimental and observational clinical data. Dr. Lewis has served as a member of several advisory committees, including Food and Drug Administration's Blood Products Advisory Committee, the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Medicare Evidence Development & Coverage Advisory Committee. He has chaired data and safety monitoring boards for numerous federally funded, industry-sponsored, and multinational clinical trials. He has also served on multiple National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine consensus committees. Dr. Lewis is a Past President of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine and served on the Board of Directors for the Society for Clinical Trials. He is also the former Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. He is a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the American Statistical Association, and the Society for Clinical Trials. Dr. Lewis is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. He received both his Ph.D. in Biophysics and his M.D. from Stanford University.

Jennifer S. Lin

Member

Jennifer S. Lin, M.D., M.C.R., F.A.C.P., is a board-certified practicing general internist in primary care with Northwest Permanente and the director of the Kaiser Permanente Evidence-based Practice Center. Dr. Lin's career interests have focused on evidence-based medicine and health care policy in primary and preventive care. She serves as the principal investigator on several contracts to support the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, including work conducting systematic review, methods development, and portfolio management. She is recognized as an expert in systematic review methodology, evidence-based medicine, and clinical prevention. Dr. Lin has significant experience conducting reviews across a wide range of areas including complex interventions, care of older adults, screening and evaluation of medical testing, prognosis, and risk prediction. Dr. Lin also serves on the American College of Physicians Clinical Guideline Committee and has done consultant methods work for international and national guideline committees, federal and non-governmental agencies, and systematic review groups. Dr. Lin received her medical degree from New York University School of Medicine.

Lorenz R. Rhomberg

Member

Lorenz R. Rhomberg, Ph.D., is an advising principal at the consulting firm Gradient. He is an expert in quantitative human health risk assessment, including dose-response analysis, pharmacokinetic modeling, probabilistic methods, and extrapolation of toxic effects from animals to humans. He has published several high-profile risk assessments of industrial chemicals, with particular expertise in chlorinated solvents and endocrine-active agents, that have been used to revise national-level environmental exposure standards for these agents. His experience encompasses work relating to a variety of regulatory programs, including the Comprehensive Environmental Response; Compensation and Liability Act; the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; and the Toxic Substances Control Act. Before joining Gradient, Dr. Rhomberg was on the faculty of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and before that spent 10 years as a risk assessor at the Environmental Protection Agency. Dr. Rhomberg is a fellow of the Academy of Toxicological Sciences and was recognized by the Society for Risk Analysis in 2009 as Outstanding Practitioner of the Year and was awarded the 2017 Arnold V. Lehman award. He has served as member of four previous National Academies' consensus committees, including one on strategies to protect the health of deployed U.S. forces. Dr. Rhomberg received his Ph.D. in population biology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

Daniele Wikoff

Member

Daniele Wikoff, Ph.D., is the Health Sciences Practice Director at the consulting firm ToxStrategies, Inc. She specializes in the use of evidence-based methods in support of hazard and risk assessment applications for a wide variety of consumer products, food ingredients and additives, pharmaceuticals, and industrial chemicals. She has applied these methods across evidence streams (human, experimental animal, mechanistic) and to heterogeneous data sets to examine a variety of outcomes. Dr. Wikoff is well-versed in frameworks and guidance from authorities around the world, including NTP-OHAT, EPA-TSCA and EPA-IRIS, EFSA/ECHA, IOM, WHO, GRADE, Cochrane, and others that are used to manage and facilitate the systematic review process. Dr. Wikoff uses both qualitative and quantitative integration techniques to characterize confidence and/or uncertainty in hazard analyses, points of departure, estimates of relative potency, and dose-response relationships. She has particular interest in methods development related to the definition and evaluation of data quality, and how elements of internal, construct, and external validity can be used to transparently inform conclusions and provide critical information to decision makers. Dr. Wikoff is a board member and chair of the Science Advisory Council for the Evidence-Based Toxicology Collaboration (EBTC), and she is an associate editor for Toxicological Sciences and Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology. Dr. Wikoff previously served as a member of the National Academies' Committee to Evaluate the IRIS Protocol for Inorganic Arsenic. She received her Ph.D. in toxicology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.