

VA Extends "Agent Orange" Benefits to More Veterans - Relying on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secretary Shinseki decided to establish a service-connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses based on the latest evidence of an association with the herbicides referred to Agent Orange. The illnesses affected by the recent decision are B cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's disease; and ischemic heart disease. In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness don't have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits. The Secretary's decision brings to 15 the number of presumed illnesses recognized by the VA. Other illnesses previously recognized under VA's "presumption" rule as being caused by exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War are: Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2), Hodgkin's Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Porphyria Cutanea Tarda, Prostate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers, and Soft Tissue Sarcoma. Additional information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for Veterans exposed to the chemical are available at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange