

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
GULF WAR STEERING COMMITTEE

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: Gulf War Steering Committee (GWSC)

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: GWSC provides advice to the VA Office of Research & Development (ORD) and makes recommendations on the nature and scope of research and development sponsored and/or conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), to include (1) the focus of research on the high priority health care needs of Gulf War Veterans; (2) the balance of basic, applied, and outcomes research; (3) the projects supported by the VA Gulf War research program; (4) the appropriate mechanisms by which ORD can leverage its resources to enhance the research financial base; (5) the rapid response to changing health care needs, while maintaining the stability of the research infrastructure; and (6) the protection of human subjects of research.

B. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COMMITTEE REPORTS: GWSC reports through the National Research Advisory Council (NRAC), the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses (RACGWVI), and the VA Undersecretary for Health.

C. DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE: GWSC (1) advises on matters related to integration of the VA Gulf War research program into global R&D policies, procedures and activities; and (2) conducts analyses and develops reports or other materials as necessary. In order to avoid duplication of effort, GWSC is encouraged to review deliberations of other committees or entities, and may incorporate or otherwise use the results of deliberations of such entities.

GWSC consists of approximately 9 members, including the Chair, selected from or recommended by NRAC and RACGWVI. Members will be selected from knowledgeable VA and non-VA experts, and veterans' community representatives with special qualifications and competence to deal effectively with Gulf War research and development issues in VA. In addition, NRAC will have at least one Gulf War Veteran as a member to ensure an appropriate perspective on the health problems of this Veteran population.

Members will serve for overlapping one- or two-year terms of service and may be reappointed for one additional term. The Chair of the Committee will serve for a two-year term of service, which is also renewable one time.

D. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: GWSC will meet about four times per year, either by teleconference or in person.

Gulf War Steering Committee

Chair

L. Maximilian Buja, M.D.

Dr. L. Maximilian Buja is internationally recognized for his research in cardiovascular pathology. He is author of over 240 research articles, 150 book chapters and two books in his scientific field. Buja served as dean of the UT Medical School at Houston from 1996 to 2003. Dr. Buja holds the Distinguished Chair in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. In 2000, he was named the H. Wayne Hightower Distinguished Professor in the Medical Sciences.

Members

David C. Christiani, MD, MPH, MS

Dr. Christiani is Professor of Medicine, Director of the Harvard Education and Research Center for Occupational Safety and Health, and a Physician at Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Christiani's major research interests are occupational, environmental and molecular epidemiology. He is studying the impact of exposures to various pollutants on health and the interactions between host factors (genetic and acquired susceptibility), and environmental exposures in producing acute and chronic diseases. This research is part of an emerging field known as molecular epidemiology. Dr. Christiani is active in developing new methods for assessing health effects after exposure to pollutants and has an interest in international occupational and environmental health studies.

Tilo Grosser, MD

Dr. Grosser interests are in non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), which relieve pain, inflammation and fever by inhibiting the formation of bioactive prostanoids. Despite their efficacy in the relief of pain and inflammation, NSAIDs may be associated with gastrointestinal complications, including serious bleeds. Selectivity for COX-2 has been shown to reduce the incidence of these serious events, but is more likely to cause serious cardiovascular events than non-selective COX inhibition. Dr. Grosser is studying the mechanisms of these complications using genomics, proteomics, lipidomics approaches in model organisms and in proof-of-concept studies in healthy volunteers. One aim of this research is to identify approaches to the personalization of NSAID therapy.

Anthony Hardie

Mr. Hardie is the former Executive Assistant of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, where he oversaw the agency's external relations, including those with the state legislature, Congress, the media, stakeholders, and the public. He is a Gulf War and Somalia Veteran, and has worked extensively on policy issues related to post-deployment and Gulf War veterans' illnesses, including service on several national boards and committees. He is a former Congressional staff member, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and the recipient of

Wisconsin's AMVETS Legislative Advocacy Award and Disabled American Veterans Department Distinguished Service Award, their highest annual state awards. Mr. Hardie is an appointed member of the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses (RACGWVI).

Robert P. Kelch, MD

Dr. Kelch is Special Assistant to the President and the recently retired Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs at the University of Michigan. In this role, he led all three components of the University of Michigan Health System, including the Hospitals and Health Centers, the Medical School and the M-CARE managed care organization.

Dr. Loren D. Koller

Loren D. Koller is an independent consultant and former professor and dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University. His areas of expertise include pathology, toxicology, immunotoxicology, carcinogenesis, and risk assessment. He is a former member of the NRC Committee on Toxicology and has participated on several of its subcommittees, primarily those involved in risk assessment. Dr. Koller has served on the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Assessment of Wartime Exposure to Herbicides in Vietnam and has been invited to serve on committees for the CDC, EPA, Homeland Security, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the U.S. Army. He is considered one of the founders of the field of immunotoxicology.

James P. O'Callaghan, PhD

Dr. O'Callaghan is Distinguished Consultant and Head of the Molecular Neurotoxicology Laboratory in the Toxicology and Molecular Biology Branch of the Health Effects Laboratory Division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prior to joining CDC, Dr. O'Callaghan founded the molecular and cellular neurotoxicology program in the Neurotoxicology Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. He directs a research program dedicated to the discovery and implementation of biomarkers of neurotoxicity. Dr. O'Callaghan is an appointed member of the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses (RACGWVI).

Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc

Dr. Richard P. Wenzel is Chairman, Department of Internal Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and President, MCV Physicians Virginia Commonwealth University, The Practice Plan of the Health System. He previously was founder and director of the VCU Outcomes Research Institute and the Clinical Trials Institute. Dr. Wenzel holds an appointment as Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, VCU. His research interests include prevention and control of hospital-acquired infections, sepsis, Candida bloodstream infections, and policy development for quality of care of patients. Dr. Wenzel has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards, and he has very actively participated in the training of fellows. He was Lt.

Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, from 1970-1972. He received an M.D. at Jefferson Medical College (Thomas Jefferson University) and M.Sc. (Epidemiology) London University, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Roberta White, PhD

Dr. White is Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental Health at Boston University School of Public Health. She is a neuropsychologist with expertise in environmental and occupational epidemiology. Author of numerous scientific publications, her research interests include evaluation of chronic effects of exposure to neurotoxins, the use of imaging in behavioral toxicology, and gene-environment interactions that mediate the development of neurodegeneration following chronic exposures. Dr. White's current research projects include evaluation of cognitive function in military personnel who worked as pesticide applicators in the Gulf War, cognitive and neuroimaging correlates of Gulf War service, effects of prenatal pesticide exposures in South African children, and effects of metal exposures in the Framingham Heart Study cohort. Dr. White is currently the Scientific Director for the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses (RACGWVI).