Center of Excellence Concept

(1) The functions of this Center of Excellence shall include, without limitation:

a. Development and maintenance of the Gulf War Illness strategic research plan, identifying specific targets and priorities, for the CDMRP program to translate into Requests for Proposals and fund through studies selected from competitive proposals from investigators;

b. Provision of research methodology expertise and support services, to facilitate the creation of effective proposals by investigators;

c. Establishment and maintenance of a 1990-1991 Gulf War Health Data Repository, for use by all qualified investigators;

d. Scientific co-ordination and management of the program, including ongoing review of research findings and progress, facilitating communications between, and co-ordinating the efforts of the separate research groups and projects funded by the program.

e. Conducting research, including pilot and proof of concept studies, as required to facilitate and advance the above functions, as may be specified in the Request for Proposals to establish the Center;

f. Providing staff support to the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses.

(2) The Center of Excellence shall be affiliated with a major medical institution with recognized expertise in Gulf War illness research and environmental health.

a. The Center shall have its own staff to perform its functions.

b. The Center's management and oversight functions, however, shall be carried out through a council of leading scientists from various institutions with expertise in Gulf War Illness research and related disciplines, including scientists representing the major arms of the program. The council shall include one or more veterans affected by Gulf War Illness.

c. Full-time Center of Excellence staff members shall not be eligible to apply for grant funding or conduct other research in response to Requests for Proposals, but members of the management council may apply and conduct such research.

d. The Center shall engage and co-ordinate with one or more clinical sites where Gulf War veterans are treated, and clinicians actively engaged in treating Gulf War veterans shall be represented on the management council.

(3) The Center of Excellence shall be funded for five years, at which time it shall be reviewed based on the performance and need for the program.

(4) Data Repository.

a. The Center of Excellence may obtain federally-funded data held by federal agencies related to the health of 1990-1991 Gulf War veterans.

b. The Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services shall provide federally-funded research data regarding the health of 1990-1991 Gulf War veterans requested by the Center of Excellence within 120 days of the request.