



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# News Release

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 26, 2019

## **VA enhances research and education efforts related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure with newly restructured research hub**

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently established the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (AHBPCE) as part of its ongoing efforts to improve health care for Veterans.

“VA is addressing Veterans concerns about the health effects of airborne hazards and burn pit exposure,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Establishing this program through the center is a testament to that and we will continue to collaborate with outside partners to ensure its ongoing success.”

The AHBPCE, located at the New Jersey War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, will specialize in clinical and transitional research related to airborne hazards and burn pit exposure. The new center, which formally began operations in May 2019, will initially focus on:

- Expanding understanding of health outcomes and treatments with intensive clinical research to support Veterans that may have been affected by airborne hazards and open burn pits.
- VA providers may consult with the AHBPCE about the assessment and treatment needs of Veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare with airborne hazard and burn pit exposure. When appropriate, Veterans may be invited for a comprehensive, multi-day health evaluation from a specialized team. Referral is done for complex clinical presentations that are unable to be diagnosed or if a development of a medical management plan is impossible to do locally.
- Veterans receiving VA-authorized care in the community may be referred for consultation or an examination for the same clinical reasons.
- Enhancing training and education initiatives to build and expand a network of specialized clinicians
- Analyzing Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry data to monitor VA’s overall clinical response to exposure concerns

The center will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and with academic partners.

For more information about AHBPCE, please visit <https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/WARRELATEDILLNESS/AHBPCE/index.asp>.

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