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VA will propose adding rare cancers to the presumed service-connected list as related to military environmental exposure

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs intends to propose adding certain rare respiratory cancers to the list of [presumed service-connected disabilities](#) in relation to military environmental exposure to particulate matter.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence there is biologic plausibility between airborne hazards, specifically particulate matter, and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract, and that the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

Based on these findings, VA's Secretary is proposing a rule that will add presumptive service connection for several rare respiratory cancers for certain Veterans. The cancers under consideration include:

- Squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx.
- Squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea.
- Adenocarcinoma of the trachea.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea.
- Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung.
- Large cell carcinoma of the lung.
- Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung.
- Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung.
- Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

"This is the right decision. The rarity and severity of these illnesses, and the reality that these conditions present a situation where it may not be possible to develop additional evidence prompted us to take this critical action," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We'll continue to hold ourselves accountable to Veterans to provide more care, more benefits and more services to more Veterans than ever before."

VA intends to focus its rule on the rare respiratory cancers above in Veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and other locations. VA will invite and consider public comments as part of this process.

Once rulemaking is complete, VA will conduct outreach to impacted veterans and survivors to inform them about potential eligibility.

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