

Thank you very much for providing a presentation or other information earlier this year to help inform the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Making Best Use of the Agent Orange Exposure Reconstruction Model as it carried out its work. The committee very much appreciated the observations and materials you shared.

The committee's report was publicly released this morning in prepublication form, and is now available to read on the internet through this address:

<http://www.iom.edu/CMS/26761/40592/51947.aspx>

A report brief, summarizing the report for a lay audience, is also available at this address.

A brief description of the report:

THE UTILITY OF PROXIMITY-BASED HERBICIDE EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT IN EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDIES OF VIETNAM VETERANS

A lack of information about Vietnam veterans' level of exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides has been a fundamental challenge in past studies evaluating whether veterans' health problems might be linked to herbicide exposure during the war. A new Institute of Medicine report, *The Utility of Proximity-Based Herbicide Exposure Assessment in Epidemiologic Studies of Vietnam Veterans*, presents the conclusions and recommendations of a committee that was convened to provide guidance to the Department of Veterans Affairs about the best use of an exposure assessment model that was developed to address this problem.

The committee concluded that despite shortcomings in the model's current form and inherent limitations in its proximity-based approach, the model holds promise for supporting informative epidemiologic studies of herbicides and health among Vietnam veterans and should be used to conduct studies. The committee offers criteria that VA should draw on as a basis for developing a request for proposals, and recommends that VA work with other agencies to facilitate use of military records in the studies.

Thank you again for your assistance as the committee carried out its work.

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