

2. Use this program as a model for VA medical surveillance programs for Veterans exposed to other potentially hazardous substances.
3. Continue to monitor the health of Veterans exposed to Depleted Uranium (DU) fragments and other Toxic Embedded Fragments at the DU follow-up program and Toxic Embedded Fragment Study Center, Baltimore VA Medical Center (VAMC), with the laboratory support of the DoD Joint Pathology Center (once the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, which currently supports these programs, is closed). Expand upon the current flow of computable data from DoD to VA to assist in the Toxic Embedded Fragments Study Center efforts beyond TMDS-VTA (Theater Medical Data Store-Veterans Tracking Application), to include active-duty, Guard/Reserve, and retiree medical care data. Develop two-way flow of data between DoD and VA to enhance visibility and epidemiology of these cohorts, because these individuals may be "dual users" of DoD and VA medical care.

#### **Research and Development:**

1. Pursue a multi-pronged approach that balances the urgency of understanding and finding new treatments for ill Veterans of the 1990 -1991 Gulf War (short-term) with the need to do new studies on a national cohort/community of Gulf War Veterans (long-term).
  - Short-Term Plans: Re-issue new initiative Requests for Applications (RFA) twice a year to regularly request submission of new proposals and revisions of previously reviewed, but not funded, applications and maintain the current level of effort on four previous research initiatives from 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2009.
  - Long-Term Plans: Design and implement a new study of a National cohort of Gulf War Veterans to include a Genome Wide Association Study (GWAS) and other elements. This project is being developed and reviewed within the VA Cooperative Studies Program, which has extensive experience in developing multi-site VA clinical trials and clinical studies. The target for completion of the study design and implementation of this new study is September 2010.
2. Maintain funding levels for Gulf War research as close as possible to the \$15M per year recommended in the report language of the appropriation bill for VA Medical and Prosthetics Research. Redirect unobligated funds from the third University of Texas Southwestern (UTSW) contract period to other VA-funded Gulf War research projects moving in similar directions to the UTSW research and using research capacities within VA.

#### **Outreach:**

1. Identify Internal and External Key Constituents/Stakeholders required to help better inform these Veterans.
2. Engage stakeholders with an outreach tool to solicit their ideas and concerns for developing a successful communication strategy to improve the level of knowledge within the Veteran community regarding VA modifications to the rating schedule and presumptions related to the Gulf War Veterans' illnesses.