

# Exhibit 1



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON

July 11, 2005

The Honorable Lane Evans  
Ranking Democratic Member  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Evans:

Thank you for your jointly signed letter with Congressman Strickland about the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) effort to conduct outreach to veterans who may have received hazardous chemical, biological, or radiological exposure. VA is committed to this effort as evidenced by previous and on-going departmental activities regarding atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, Project 112/Shipboard Hazard and Defense, and mustard gas. I apologize for the delay in responding to you.

Regarding the information from your staff concerning individuals who may have been exposed in tests at Fort Detrick and Edgewood Arsenal, VA is taking appropriate actions. The following describes the actions VA has taken to date.

VA's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, in conjunction with VA's on-going chemical exposure working group, has contacted appropriate managers at Fort Detrick and Edgewood Arsenal to obtain additional data on those veterans on the list you sent and who may have been exposed.

VA is also working with DoD's Deployment Health Support Directorate to build databases of names and other information for those individuals involved in these tests. The Department is designing these databases so they can be linked to other data that identify up-to-date contact information, previous contact efforts, and past health services and benefits provided by VA. These databases will enable VA to work with Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration to facilitate the identification of address location information. The availability of the veterans' names, including the names on the list enclosed in your letter, and their linked information in a database, is critical to the success of VA's outreach efforts.

In addition to working with staff at Fort Detrick and Edgewood Arsenal, VA is coordinating with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs concerning periods of service that can be used to verify and validate exposures.

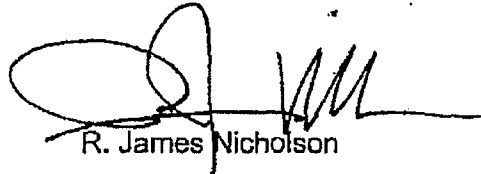
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The Honorable Ted Strickland

VA is still in the early stages of assessing the information that you provided and developing an outreach strategy to contact those individuals who are deemed to have had hazardous exposure. After completing these early efforts and receiving appropriate verification information from the Department of Defense, VA will be able to provide a timeline for sending appropriate notice to veterans. VA anticipates providing you a follow-up report in 60 days on the progress of the Department's efforts.

Thank you for your continued interest in this important veterans' issue. A similar letter has been sent to Congressman Lane Evans.

Sincerely yours,



R. James Nicholson



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
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July 11, 2005

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Ranking Democratic Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations  
Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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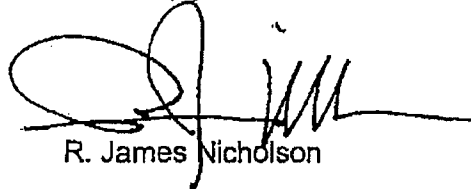
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