

5/07/2003 Defense Department Improves Troop Health Protection

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Moran Hearings on Troop Health Leads to Change in Policy

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today commended the Department of Defense (DoD) for making improvements to the health assessment process for U.S. military men and women. The changes to the system came after Moran, as Chairman of House Veterans Subcommittee on Health, held hearings last year to look at how the DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) handled troop health screening after soldiers returned from deployment.

"The DoD and VA are taking steps towards a more thorough health assessment so that today's soldiers, coming home from Iraq and other deployments, can receive better follow-up care and attention," Moran said.

Last year, Moran held hearings with top health officials from the DoD and VA to look into how they were monitoring the health of the troops who could be exposed to chemical and biological weapons. A month ago, Moran took part in an additional Veterans Health Subcommittee hearing where these same officials reported on new research on deployment health and force protection.

According to the DoD, the new health screening process will consist of a more thorough examination to better assist medical personnel in evaluating the health of returning service members, including Kansas National Guard and Reserve members. This assessment will include discussion of mental health issues commonly associated with deployments, special medications taken during deployment and concerns about possible environmental exposures. In addition, medical record keeping procedures and environmental surveillance has been improved.

"We have a duty to protect the health and safety of those who have bravely fought for our freedom," Moran concluded. "With these changes, we hope that our troops will be better served in the future."

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