



22 February 2016

To: Legislative Committee on Veterans, Seniors and Seniors with Special Needs

From: David O. Carpenter, MD

Subject: Veterans and Toxic Encephalopathy

Background: I am a public health physician who graduated from Harvard Medical School and served as the Director of the New York State laboratories of the Department of Health and then became the founding Dean of the School of Public Health at the University at Albany. I have a long career of study of the nervous system and human disease resulting from exposure to environmental contaminants, including chemicals and ionizing and non-ionizing radiation.

Idiopathic environmental intolerance or toxic encephalopathy is a series of syndromes that are characterized by headaches and other forms of chronic pain, fatigue, mental dullness or "brain fog" and ringing in the ears. These symptoms are triggered by exposure to chemicals or electromagnetic fields. Toxic encephalopathy includes Gulf War Illness, fibromyalgia, chemical sensitivity, electrohypersensitivity and chronic fatigue syndrome. I have testified on these issues to both houses of the US Congress and to the President's Cancer Panel and co-hosted a meeting last summer in Brussels that examined all of these syndromes. I have just completed a study funded by the Department of Defense on Gulf War Illness, and am the Co-Editor of the Bioinitiative Report (www.bioinitiative.org), a comprehensive web document on health effects of electromagnetic fields.

Another characteristic of these syndromes is that many people who are sensitive to one environmental factor are also sensitive to others. This is particularly true for electromagnetic field sensitivity and sensitivity to chemicals. We do not know exactly how many people in the population exhibit these sensitivities, but it is a significant number.

We must recognize these syndromes as being the real diseases that they are, because they are not just psychological problems. And in doing so we must recognize that it is imperative to protect the sensitive members of our society from environmental exposures that harm them.



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