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PRESS RELEASE

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IOM Releases *Veterans and Agent Orange, Update 2014:* *Bladder Cancer, Hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like Symptoms, Hypertension, and Stroke Upgraded; Spina Bifida in offspring Downgraded*

(Washington, D.C.)—Today, the Institute of Medicine released *Veterans and Agent Orange Update 2014*, the tenth biennial evaluation of relevant scientific studies--published between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2014--on Agent Orange and other herbicides used during military operations in Vietnam.

“Vietnam Veterans of America thanks the IOM’s Veterans and Agent Orange Committee for upgrading the status of **Bladder cancer** and **hypothyroidism** to the Limited/Suggestive Category of Association; for clarifying that **individuals with Parkinson-like symptoms** without other known etiology should **be included in the presumption for Parkinson’s disease**; and for firmly supporting the VAO’s prior decisions--but not yet recognized by VA as presumptive conditions: **hypertension** and **stroke**,” said VVA National President John Rowan.

“VVA calls on President Obama and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald to immediately initiate the process for adding all of these conditions to the service-connected, presumptive list for those who served in Vietnam and elsewhere in the Southeast Asia theater of operations,” said Rowan.

“Most disturbing,” noted Rowan, “is the rationale behind the Committee’s recommendation to **downgrade Spina Bifida to Inadequate or Insufficient Evidence**. As stated on Page 10 of *Update 2014*, ‘since *Update 1996*, no new analyses of birth defect data, finding increased rates of spina bifida among children of men exposed to the chemicals of interest have become available.’ IOM, in previous updates, has repeatedly called for the VA to conduct research on this issue. The VA has not spent a dime on this vitally needed research.”

Of the more than 7,600 abstracts of scientific and medical articles related to **Agent Orange, Agent Blue, and Agent White**, none of these studies were funded by VA,” said Rowan. “It is time for Congress to demand that the VA do their job by passing the Toxic Exposures Act (S. 901/ HR 1769) before Memorial Day.”

Vietnam Veterans of America is the nation’s only congressionally chartered veterans’ service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA’s founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.”