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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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03 July 2014

## **National Veterans Groups Challenge VA on C-123 Agent Orange Claims Obstruction**

On June 27, using the letter below, all six major veterans organizations firmly challenged the Veterans Administration (VA) for inappropriate use of a particular consulting firm. The firm represented the VA in a June 16 Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee meeting evaluating C-123 Agent Orange exposure issues. Veterans leaders dispute the consultant's findings, and insist the firm was cherry-picked for its known opposition to veterans' exposure claims, which in this case had been expressed by the firm for years.

Veterans and Agent Orange experts reviewing the statements and documents submitted by the consultant to the IOM on behalf of the VA complain to the Secretary that the input was unscientific and failed to meet VA's published standards for quality, utility, integrity and objectivity of information released by the Department.

VA was called upon to reverse the impact of this consultant's work against C-123 veterans, which can only be done at this point by VA informing the IOM that it disavows that firm's input and requests it be disregarded, or that the VA cancels the IOM study altogether for irreparable harm caused by the consultant in representing the VA.

As of today, no response has been offered by the Acting Secretary. This group letter follows publication in the [Sunday Boston Globe of a front page feature article about a C-123 veteran, Dick Matte](#) had a heart transplant, lost his left leg in February and is increasingly ill but his Agent Orange exposure claims were denied, just as with all of other C-123 vets.

Other news impacting the issue was the [C-123 Veterans Association release of a "Casualty List" of ten deceased veterans](#) who flew or maintained these former Agent Orange spray transports. [All died after being refused VA care...turned away by VA, the veterans had to do their best seeking medical care elsewhere.](#)

That's not right! In the many ways VA is wrong in preventing exposed veterans' access to VA facilities , we leave it to the department's Inspector General or the Secretary himself to address.