

**The mission of the War Related Illness and Injury Study Centers (WRIISC) is to provide service to combat veterans who have difficult-to-diagnose disabling illnesses through clinical care, risk communication, education, and research addressing potential environmental exposures and adverse health outcomes.**

This mission relies upon **educational and outreach** activities to veterans and health care professionals, **research** on deployment-related health concerns, advances in **clinical care**, and **risk communication** to translate scientific findings in response to veterans' concerns.



On May 10, 2001, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced the establishment of two War Related Illness and Injury Study Centers (WRIISCs). (They were initially named Centers for the Study of War Related Illnesses or CSWRIs).

The Centers collaborate with Department of Defense personnel and other health care professionals who are engaged in similar post-deployment health issues for active duty service members and veterans.

The WRIISCs were established to respond to the health problems of veterans from both past and future conflicts. Improving the care of patients with war-related conditions demands the same scientific rigor American health scientists have applied to other important problems.

Public Law 105-368 directed VA to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to help develop a plan for establishing national centers for the study of war related illnesses and post-deployment issues.

On November 5, 1999, the NAS recommended that VA establish centers for the study of war related illnesses similar in structure to VA's Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Centers. The NAS came to the conclusion that applying a proven model of care, research, and education to the issue of deployment health "should contribute greatly to the advancement of knowledge in this area."

The Centers have replaced the Gulf War Referral Centers, expanding their mission to offer similar comprehensive clinical care to combat veterans of **all** eras.

We know today that some veterans have persistent unexplained symptoms following deployment to a combat zone. As appropriate, individual veterans who have completed a thorough workup at their local VA Medical Center may be eligible for an in-depth examination and evaluation at one of the WRIISCs.

The Centers are located at the VA New Jersey Health Care System, East Orange Campus and the VA Medical Center, Washington, DC.

These two Centers have strong academic affiliations with medical and public health schools. The Centers undergo continuous review both within VA and from outside consultation with scientific advisors and advocacy groups.

VA primary care providers of veterans with undiagnosed illnesses can request an evaluation at one of the Centers. The referral process is coordinated by VA Central Office. Referral acceptance is a joint decision of VA Central Office, the WRIISC, the referring provider, and the patient. VA health care providers who wish to request a referral must contact:

**Ms. Helen Malaskiewicz**  
**Sr. Environ. Health Coordinator**  
**Environmental Agents Service (131)**  
**VA Central Office**  
**810 Vermont Ave., NW**  
**Washington, DC 20420**

The multidisciplinary evaluation is focused on the particular problems of the individual veteran. Medical diagnoses are made when possible. In all cases, recommendations for management of the veteran's medical problem(s) are given to the referring health care provider.

For patients who are unable to travel, a telemedicine consult may be available through direct contact with WRIISC clinical teams.

Note: Patients interested in a referral should work through their local VA health care provider.

For additional information, see:

<http://www.va.gov/enviroagents>

or call the VA toll-free helpline:

**1-800-PGW-VETS or  
1-800-749-8387**



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## **VA War Related Illness and Injury Study Centers (WRIISCs)**

Specialized Health Care, Research, Education and Outreach for Combat Veterans with Difficult to Diagnose Conditions



**East Orange Campus,  
VA New Jersey  
Health Care System**



**VA Medical Center,  
Washington, DC**