

SYSTEM LOCATION:

Character-based data from Ionizing Radiation Code Sheets are maintained in a registry data set at the Austin Automation Center (AAC), 1615 Woodward Street, Austin, Texas 78772. Since the data set at the AAC is not all-inclusive, *i.e.*, narratives, signatures, etc., noted on the code sheets are not entered into this system, images of the code sheets are maintained at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Agents Service (131), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. These are electronic images of paper records, *i.e.*, code sheets, medical records, questionnaires and correspondence that are stored on optical disks.

The secure web-based data entry system is maintained by the AAC and provides retrievable images to users. The optical disk system is currently being utilized where there is no access to the secure web-based system. However, the optical disk system is scheduled to be discontinued in 2004 and all access to the Ionizing Radiation Registry (IRR) system will be through the secure web-based data entry system.

CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THIS SYSTEM:

Veterans who may have been exposed to ionizing radiation while on active military duty and have had an IRR examination at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility under conditions described in Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1710(e)(1)(B) and 1720E. These conditions include:

1. On-site participation in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear device at a nuclear device testing site—the Pacific Island, *e.g.*, Bikini, New Mexico, Nevada, etc. (whether or not the testing nation was the United States);

2. Participation in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, from August 6, 1945, through July 1, 1946;

- (a) Internment as a POW in Japan during World War II which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines resulted in an opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of veterans involved in the occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan;

3. Treatment with nasopharyngeal (NP) radium irradiation while in the active military, naval or air service; and

4. Participated in radiation-risk activities at the:

- (a) Department of Energy gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or K25 area at Oak Ridge, TN, for at least 250 days before February 1, 1992;

- (b) Underground nuclear tests at Amchitka Island, AK, before January 1, 1974.

CATEGORIES OF RECORDS IN THE SYSTEM:

These records consist of code sheet records containing VA facility code identifier where the veteran was examined or treated; veteran's name; address; social security number; military service serial number; claim number; date of birth; telephone number; sex; report of birth defects among veteran's children or grandchildren; dates of medical examinations; consultations; radiogenic related diseases; and name and signature of examiner/physician coordinator.

In addition, there may be medical records with information relating to the examination and/or treatment, including laboratory findings on vision, hearing, blood tests, electrocardiograms, chest x-rays, urinalysis, laboratory report displays, medical certificates to support diagnosis; progress notes; military unit assignments; questionnaires; correspondence relating to veteran's exposure history; personal history, *e.g.*, education, marital status, occupational history, family history, complaints/symptoms; personal medical history, habits, recreation, reproductive and family history, physical measurements; military discharge records; and VA claims for compensation.

AUTHORITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE SYSTEM:

Title 38, United States Code (U.S.C.) 1710(e)(1)(B) and 1720E.

PURPOSE(S):

The records will be used for the purpose of providing information about veterans who have had an IRR examination at a VA facility; assisting in generating hypotheses for research studies; providing management with the capability to track patient demographics, and radiogenic related diseases; and planning and delivery of health care services and associated costs. The records are used to assist in generating hypotheses for research studies. Because of the self-selected nature of the registry participants, *i.e.*, the individuals decide themselves to be part of the registry rather than being "chosen" in a scientific manner, this group cannot be used for scientific research. However, the IRR may assist researchers by providing clues or suggestions of specific health problems that then form the basis for the design and conduct of specific scientific studies.

ROUTINE USES OF RECORDS MAINTAINED IN THE SYSTEM, INCLUDING CATEGORIES OF USERS AND THE PURPOSES OF SUCH USES:

VA may disclose protected health information pursuant to the following routine uses where required by law, or required or permitted by 45 CFR parts 160 and 164.

1. The record of an individual who is covered by this system may be disclosed to a member of Congress or staff person acting for the member when the member or staff person requests the record on behalf of, and at the written request of, that individual.

2. Disclosure of records covered by this system, as deemed necessary and proper to named individuals serving as accredited service organization representatives, and other individuals named as approved agents or attorneys for a documented purpose and period of time, to aid beneficiaries in the preparation and presentation of their cases during the verification and/or due process procedures, and in the presentation and prosecution of claims under laws administered by VA.

3. A record containing the name(s) and address(es) of present or former members of the armed services and/or their dependents may be released from this system of records under certain circumstances:

- (a) To any nonprofit organization if the release is directly connected with the conduct of programs and the utilization of benefits under Title 38, and

- (b) To any criminal or civil law enforcement governmental agency or instrumentality charged under applicable law with the protection of the public health or safety if a qualified representative of such organization, agency or instrumentality has made a standing written request that such name(s) or address(es) be provided for a purpose authorized by law; provided, further, that the record(s) will not be used for any purpose other than that stated in the request and that the organization, agency or instrumentality is aware of the penalty provision of 38 U.S.C. 5701(f).

4. Disclosure may be made to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in records management inspections conducted under authority of Title 44 U.S.C.

5. Disclosure of information, excluding name and address (unless name and address is furnished by the requestor) for research purposes determined to be necessary and proper, to epidemiological and other research facilities approved by the Under Secretary for Health.