2007 ASSEMBLY BILL 75


1 AN ACT to create 21.19 (15) and 45.03 (21) of the statutes; relating to: assistance for veterans affected by depleted uranium.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the adjutant general and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to assist national guard members and veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium in obtaining the best practice health screening test from the federal government to test for exposure to depleted uranium.

Under the bill, DVA, with the help of the adjutant general, must provide information to veterans, upon their discharge from active duty, regarding the health and safety issues concerning depleted uranium exposure, the tests used to detect that exposure, the treatments available for that exposure, and the federal and state benefits available to veterans affected by that exposure. The bill also requires DVA to provide that information to DVA staff, veterans organizations, health care providers, and county veterans service officers, and to put that information on the Internet.

The bill creates a committee to study the affects of exposure to depleted uranium and other hazardous materials on veterans and national guard members and to submit a report with any recommended legislation to the governor and legislature.
For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 21.19 (15) of the statutes is created to read:

21.19 (15) The adjutant general shall assist national guard members who may have been exposed to depleted uranium in obtaining the best practice health screening test from the federal department of veterans affairs to test for exposure to depleted uranium using a bioassay procedure involving methods sufficiently sensitive to detect depleted uranium at low levels.

SECTION 2. 45.03 (21) of the statutes is created to read:

45.03 (21) DEPLETED URANIUM; ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS. The department shall do all of the following for veterans who may have been affected by exposure to depleted uranium while on active duty:

(a) Assist veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium to obtain the best practice health screening test from the federal department of veterans affairs to test for exposure to depleted uranium using a bioassay procedure involving methods sufficiently sensitive to detect depleted uranium at low levels.

(b) With the assistance of the department of military affairs, provide information to veterans upon their discharge from active duty regarding the health and safety issues concerning depleted uranium exposure, including the types and efficacy of tests to detect depleted uranium exposure, the treatments available for veterans affected by exposure to depleted uranium, and the federal and state benefits that are available for veterans exposed to depleted uranium.
(c) Provide information to departmental staff, interested veterans organizations, health care providers, and county veterans service officers regarding the effects of depleted uranium exposure, the detection programs that are available to determine if a veteran has been exposed to depleted uranium, the federal treatment programs that are available to veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium, and the federal and state benefits that are available to veterans who have been exposed to depleted uranium.

(d) Create information on the Internet about the health effects of depleted uranium exposure, the detection programs that are available to determine if a national guard member or veteran has been exposed to depleted uranium, the federal treatment programs that are available to those who may have been exposed to depleted uranium, and the federal and state benefits that are available to those national guard members or veterans who have been exposed to depleted uranium.

**SECTION 3. Nonstatutory provisions.**

(1) **Depleted Uranium Study Committee.** There is created a depleted uranium study committee, which shall consist of one member appointed by the senate majority leader, one member appointed by the senate minority leader, one member appointed by the speaker of the assembly, one member appointed by the assembly minority leader, one member appointed by the adjutant general, one member appointed by the secretary of the department of veterans affairs, one member appointed by the secretary of the department of health and family services, 2 members appointed by the committee who are veterans with knowledge of or experience with exposure to hazardous materials, one county veterans service officer appointed by the County Veterans Service Officer Association of Wisconsin, and 2 members appointed by the committee who are physicians or scientists with
knowledge of or experience with exposure to hazardous materials. The committee
shall designate one of its members as the chairperson. The committee shall study
the health effects on veterans of the U.S. armed forces, including members of the
national guard activated into the U.S. armed forces, to exposure to depleted uranium
and other hazardous materials. The committee shall evaluate the current
information provided to national guard members and veterans regarding exposure
to depleted uranium and other hazardous materials, the tests and medical
treatments available for national guard members and veterans exposed to depleted
uranium and other hazardous materials, and the federal and state benefits available
to national guard members and veterans exposed to depleted uranium and other
hazardous materials. The departments of health and family services, military
affairs, and veterans affairs shall assist the committee in fulfilling its
responsibilities under this subsection. On or before January 15, 2009, the committee
shall submit a report, with any recommended legislation, regarding the training,
medical treatment, and benefits available to national guard members and veterans
exposed to depleted uranium and other hazardous materials, to the governor and to
the legislature for distribution to the appropriate standing committees in the
manner provided under section 13.172 (3) of the statutes. The committee shall cease
to exist when the committee has submitted the report or on January 15, 2009,
whichever occurs sooner.

(END)