UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

SEP 2 7 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (HEALTH AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Expediting Veterans Benefits to Members with Serious Injuries and Illnesses

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) identified an initiative to expedite data exchange between the DoD and the VA for "seriously injured" members, and those members entering the Physical Evaluation Board Process. The goal is to assist the VA in its efforts to better ensure members are aware of their benefits and that these benefits start as soon as possible when the member is eligible.

I request the Military Departments initiate a data report that includes member's name, social security number, unit identification, current location, contact information, and brief explanation of condition on all members where a Medical Evaluation Board dictates submission to the Physical Evaluation Board. Please provide this information once every three weeks, securely (virtual private network or secure system) and electronically to the DVA (Office of Seamless Transition), through Health Affairs, TRICARE Management Activity (TMA), Clinical Information Technical Project Office.

In addition, I request the U.S. Army Surgeon General (Decision Support Center) initiate an all Service data report that includes member's name, social security number, unit identification, current location, contact information, and brief explanation of condition, once every three weeks, as outlined above, on the attached categories of individuals.

The provisions of DoD 6025.18-R, "DoD Health Information Privacy Regulation," January 2003, including paragraph C7.11.7.2, authorize the required disclosure of information described above.

First reports are requested no later than October 15, 2005. My point of contact is Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Ruscio at (703) 681-1703 or Bruce.Ruscio@ha.osd.mil.

David S. C. Chu

Attachment:
As stated

cc:
Assistant Secretary of the Army (M&RA)
Assistant Secretary of the Navy (M&RA)
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (M&RA)
Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force

Categories of Service Members to be Reported

Seriously Ill or Injured (SI). The casualty status of a person whose illness or injury is classified by medical authority to be of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern, but there is no imminent danger to life.

Very Seriously Ill or Injured (VSI). The casualty status of a person whose illness or injury is classified by medical authority to be of such severity that life is imminently endangered.

Special Category (SPECAT) The casualty status of a person with a severe injury, such as loss of sight or limb; a permanent injury and unsightly disfigurement of a portion of the body normally exposed to view; an incurable and fatal disease and has limited life expectancy; an established psychiatric condition; requiring extensive medical treatment and hospitalization; is paralyzed.

Enabling Care Patient A patient admitted with any of the following medical conditions: amputation, traumatic head injury, eye injury, and post traumatic stress disorder.