



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MAR 14 2003

The Honorable John Warner
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman

I am pleased to provide you with this report in response to language contained in the House Appropriations Committee Report 107-532 regarding Pseudofolliculitis Barbae (PFB). The Department of Defense recognizes the military's need to identify more effective treatment and control of PFB. Currently, the most effective control for this condition is allowing facial hairs to grow outward, resulting in beard growth. Unfortunately, this may lead to an ineffective seal when using a protective mask, thereby affecting readiness. It is, therefore, imperative that promising methods of controlling this condition be explored.

You will be interested to note the Department has identified a novel, home-based approach which takes accepted office-based laser technology into a consumer-operated, home sized laser device. Availability of such a tool for home use could impact greatly upon medical, administrative, and readiness challenges associated with PFB. I have directed the U S Army Medical Research and Materiel Command to evaluate this technology for development from a prototype which might one day lead to commercial production.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of the Military Health System

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Winkenwerder, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Winkenwerder, Jr, MD

cc Senator Levin