



The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

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DVS Cabinet Secretary Smith Appointed to VA's Research Advisory on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses Committee

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)— New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) Cabinet Secretary Sonya Smith has been selected by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to serve on its Research Advisory on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Committee (RACGWVI).

The committee provides advice and makes recommendations to the VA secretary on proposed research studies, research plans, and research strategies relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

This region encompasses Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). Also included are those who served in the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and airspace above the above locations.

"I am so honored and humbled to be selected by VA to serve on this committee," said Secretary Smith, who as an Air Force medical technician was stationed in Oman in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. "There is important work to be done. I am well aware that many servicemen and women who have served in this region have developed health issues—and I want to help come up with solutions to help them heal."

Secretary Smith joins a committee that includes VA and non-VA physicians and researchers with expertise in chronic multi-symptom illness, prominent community leaders, and Gulf War veterans

Since the conclusion of the Gulf War, defined by VA and the U.S. Department of Defense as the period from August 2, 1990-February 28, 1991, many veterans who

served in the region have developed chronic respiratory, neuromuscular, neurological, psychological and chronic fatigue issues. The committee will conduct briefings as it acquires data. Secretary Smith's appointment runs until March 31, 2025.

Gulf War veterans who are experiencing any of the above symptoms should contact DVS at (505) 383-2400 or nmdvs.info@state.nm.us for help.

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The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services

The New Mexico Department of Veterans Services (DVS) provides support and services to New Mexico's 148,000 veterans and their families. DVS treats every veteran, regardless of their rank achieved during military service, with the respect and gratitude befitting someone who has served our country. We strive every day to live up to our agency's official motto: *Serving Those Who Served*