

# **Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-168)**

On August 10, 2022, the *PACT Act* was signed into law. The legislation includes the presumption of service connection for a list of 20 illnesses and cancers from the *Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act of 2021*, legislation that Senator Rubio introduced last year. Senator Rubio voted yes on the *PACT Act* every step of the way, and he stands ready to assist you in navigating the law's implementation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has established a website to answer your questions on eligibility, which includes helpful information about applying for benefits: [www.va.gov/PACT](http://www.va.gov/PACT). You may also call 1-800-698-2411 if your question cannot be answered by the website.

## ***What changes does the PACT Act make?***

### ***The PACT Act:***

- Expands access to free hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care under Priority Group 6 to all toxic exposure veterans and requires the VA to notify veterans of their changed eligibility status
- Requires the VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to veterans enrolled in VA healthcare
- Directs the VA to annually publish its plan to formally evaluate and assess toxic exposure
- Creates a process for the nomination of new presumption conditions
- Improves resources and training for VA staff to better identify signs of toxic exposure, more efficiently provide needed care, and further automate claims decisions

## ***For what conditions did the PACT Act add a presumption of service connection?***

The *PACT Act* added a presumption of service connection for 23 conditions associated with exposure to burn pits and other toxins. As of August 10, 2022, the following illnesses now have a presumption of service connection:

- Asthma diagnosed after service, respiratory cancer of any type, brain cancer, constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, emphysema, granulomatous disease, interstitial lung disease, pleuritic, pulmonary fibrosis, sarcoidosis, chronic sinusitis, chronic rhinitis, and glioblastoma, hypertension, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, head cancer of any type, neck cancer of any type, gastrointestinal cancer of any type, reproductive cancer of any type, lymphoma cancer of any type, lymphomatous cancer of any type, pancreatic cancer, kidney cancer and melanoma, monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

The *PACT Act* includes a number of other presumptive conditions, including for veterans who:

- Participated in the cleanup of the Air Force B-52 carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of Palomares, Spain; the cleanup of Enewetak Atoll from January 1, 1977 – December 31, 1980; or Response to fire onboard an Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons near Thule Air Force Base in Greenland from January 21, 1968 to September 25, 1968
- Were exposed to herbicide agents in Thailand or at Royal Thai bases from 1962-1976; in Laos from 1965-1969; in Cambodia at Mimot, Krek, or Kompon Cham Province in 1969; in Guam or American Samoa from 1962-1980; and on the Johnston Atoll (or a ship that called at the Johnston Atoll) from 1972-1977

If you have any questions about this guidance, or need help with a federal agency, please contact the VA or contact Senator Rubio's Orlando office at (407) 254-2573.