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I am one of the few Army veterans who proved service connected Hepatitis C due to needleless Jetgun inoculations. Today I am currently undetected of the Hepatitis C virus because I was able and eligible to receive treatment through VA. I am deeply grateful.

I still have the primary and secondary symptoms from having this systemic viral infection for over 40 years, from being symptomatic with flu like symptoms every day for 10 years, and from the after effects to the treatment medication.

I now have the chance of being healthy. Many veterans will never have that chance. They are still living with and suffer from the progressive physical symptoms of chronic fatigue, pain, and systemic damage of Hepatitis C. This disease often leads to psychological symptoms of depression, self-medication, and suicide as veterans simply wait to die of this disease or its complications. Many veterans cannot perform their usual jobs and have to change their occupation or profession to support their family financially.

I can remember standing in line, seeing soldiers ahead of me with bleeding arms. I do not remember anyone cleaning my arm or the Jetgun before or after being injected. The reason that needles associated with drug use, transfusions, tattoos, and piercings are included as a risk factor is that they break/puncture the skin. Any veteran who has stood in line with blood running down both arms from the needleless Jetguns can tell you, our skin was punctured. My service medical records indicate a sick call for flu-like symptoms within the incubation period after both Jetgun inoculations. Contamination leads to contagion. In accordance with medical opinion and lack of other risk factors, the VA granted me service connection for my Hepatitis C due to Jetgun inoculation recognizing and acknowledging the Jetgun as a viable cause of infection.

Today, veterans are shamed, rejected, and humiliated, being treated like addicts having to prove service connection due to Jetgun inoculation to the disbelief of VA because the Jetgun is not acknowledged or listed as a potential risk factor. Many veterans and VA medical staff still did not know about the possibility of infection by contaminated Jetguns. Many veterans with Hepatitis C will never be eligible for treatment because they are unable to negotiate the paperwork maze to prove service connection for an unlisted risk factor and will silently accept their fate and defeat.

If you truly want to make good on helping thousands of those who have served, please update and include the needless Jetguns as an eligibility criteria to be considered for service connected Hepatitis C.

Thank you.

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