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January 8, 2025

Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420

On behalf of the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN) and the veteran patients, caregivers, and families we serve, I am writing to express our profound gratitude for the inclusion of urinary bladder, ureter, and related cancers in **38 CFR § 3.320(a)**. As the CEO of BCAN—the nation’s oldest and largest bladder cancer patient advocacy organization—I commend the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for this pivotal step in extending presumptive service connection for these cancers due to exposure to fine particulate matter.

Bladder cancer is the fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer among veterans, disproportionately impacting countless brave men and women who have served our nation. For years, we have heard from veterans who have been forced to navigate the exhausting and often disheartening process of attempting to prove a service connection between their bladder cancer diagnosis and exposure to toxins, such as fine particulate matter from burn pits. Tragically, many have faced denial after denial, further compounding the emotional and financial toll of their illness.

Your recognition of the “strong scientific rationale [to] add the urinary bladder, ureters, and associated structures” reflects not only a commitment to scientific integrity but also a deep understanding of the unique sacrifices and challenges faced by our veteran community. This Interim Final Ruling lifts an immense burden from veterans and their families, allowing them to focus on their health and recovery rather than navigating bureaucratic hurdles.

At BCAN, we are dedicated to improving the lives of all those impacted by bladder cancer. We applaud the VA for demonstrating leadership and compassion in addressing this critical issue. This decision reaffirms that the sacrifices of our veterans are not forgotten and that their health and well-being remain a national priority.



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On behalf of the bladder cancer community, thank you for this momentous step forward. We look forward to continued collaboration to support the health and dignity of all who have served.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Deoudes", is positioned above the printed name.

Meri-Margaret Deoudes  
Chief Executive Officer