

## Revocation and Determination

of

## Statement of Principles concerning

# GASTRO-OESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE

ICD-10-AM CODE: K21

### *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*

1. The Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(2)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act):
  - (a) revokes Instrument No.121 of 1995; and
  - (b) determines in its place the following Statement of Principles.

#### **Kind of injury, disease or death**

2. (a) This Statement of Principles is about **gastro-oesophageal reflux disease** and **death from gastro-oesophageal reflux disease**.
  - (b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, “**gastro-oesophageal reflux disease**” means the presence of regurgitation of gastric content into the oesophagus together with resultant symptomatic and/or histologic evidence of oesophageal inflammation, attracting ICD-10-AM code K21.

#### **Basis for determining the factors**

3. The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **gastro-oesophageal reflux disease and death from gastro-oesophageal reflux disease** can

be related to relevant service rendered by veterans, members of Peacekeeping Forces, or members of the Forces.

#### **Factors that must be related to service**

4. Subject to clause 6, at least one of the factors set out in clause 5 must be related to any relevant service rendered by the person.

#### **Factors**

5. The factors that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting **gastro-oesophageal reflux disease** or **death from gastro-oesophageal reflux disease** with the circumstances of a person's relevant service are:

- (a) being treated with a smooth muscle relaxant drug for a condition for which the drug cannot be ceased or substituted, at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (b) suffering from hiatus hernia at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (c) undergoing an intra-abdominal surgical procedure in the area of the lower oesophageal sphincter within the 24 hours immediately before the clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (d) suffering from scleroderma at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (e) suffering from Zollinger-Ellison syndrome at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (f) smoking at least five cigarettes per day or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products and having smoked at least one pack year of cigarettes or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products, at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (g) suffering from alcohol dependence or alcohol abuse and consuming alcohol at the time of clinical onset of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (h) being treated with a smooth muscle relaxant drug for a condition for which the drug cannot be ceased or substituted, at the time of clinical worsening of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (j) suffering from Zollinger-Ellison syndrome at the time of clinical worsening of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or

- (k) smoking at least five cigarettes per day or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products and having smoked at least one pack year of cigarettes or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products, at the time of clinical worsening of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (m) suffering from alcohol dependence or alcohol abuse and consuming alcohol at the time of clinical worsening of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; or
- (n) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for gastro-oesophageal reflux disease.

### **Factors that apply only to material contribution or aggravation**

- 6. Paragraphs **5(h) to 5(n)** apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease where the person's gastro-oesophageal reflux disease was suffered or contracted before or during (but not arising out of) the person's relevant service; paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e), 70(5)(d) or 70(5A)(d) of the Act refers.

### **Inclusion of Statements of Principles**

- 7. In this Statement of Principles if a relevant factor applies and that factor includes an injury or disease in respect of which there is a Statement of Principles then the factors in that last mentioned Statement of Principles apply in accordance with the terms of that Statement of Principles.

### **Other definitions**

- 8. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

**“alcohol abuse”** means the presence of cognitive, behavioural or physiological symptoms indicating the use of alcohol despite significant alcohol-related problems, however these symptoms have never met the criteria for alcohol dependence. Additionally, signs of tolerance or withdrawal are absent;

**“alcohol dependence”** means the presence of a constellation of cognitive, behavioural and physiological symptoms indicating the continuing or past consumption of alcohol despite significant alcohol-related problems. The pattern of repeated self administration may result in tolerance, withdrawal and compulsive alcohol use behaviour;

**“area of the lower oesophageal sphincter”** means the region immediately surrounding the intra-abdominal oesophagus and the diaphragmatic crura;

**“cigarettes per day or the equivalent thereof, in other tobacco products”** means either cigarettes, pipe tobacco or cigars, alone or in any combination where one tailor made cigarette approximates one gram of tobacco; or one gram of cigar, pipe or other smoking tobacco by weight;

**“death from gastro-oesophageal reflux disease”** in relation to a person includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person’s gastro-oesophageal reflux disease;

**“hiatus hernia”** means a herniation of part of the stomach into the thoracic cavity through the oesophageal hiatus in the diaphragm;

**“ICD-10-AM code”** means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM), effective date of 1 July 1998, copyrighted by the National Centre for Classification in Health, Sydney, NSW, and having ISBN 1 86451 340 3;

**“pack year of cigarettes or the equivalent thereof, in other tobacco products”** means a calculation of consumption where one pack year of cigarettes equals twenty tailor made cigarettes (being the “standard” cigarette pack contents) per day for a period of one calendar year, or 7 300 cigarettes. One tailor made cigarette approximates one gram of tobacco or one gram of cigar or pipe tobacco by weight. One pack year of tailor made cigarettes equates to 7 300 cigarettes, or 7.3kg of smoking tobacco by weight. Tobacco products means either cigarettes, pipe tobacco or cigars smoked, alone or in any combination;

**“relevant service”** means:

- (a) operational service; or
- (b) peacekeeping service; or
- (c) hazardous service;

**“scleroderma”** means a multisystem disorder characterised by the association of vascular abnormalities, connective tissue sclerosis and atrophy, and auto-immune changes;

**“smooth muscle relaxant drug”** means an anti-cholinergic drug, a beta-adrenergic drug, a nitrate, or a calcium channel blocker drug, and the drug aminophylline;

**“Zollinger-Ellison syndrome”** means a condition characterised by gastric hypersecretion of acid, ulceration of the upper gastro-intestinal

mucosa and usually the presence of a gastrinoma (a tumour, secreting the hormone gastrin) or a diffuse hyperplasia of the gastrin secreting beta cells of the pancreas;

**“terminal event”** means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes:

- a) pneumonia;
- b) respiratory failure;
- c) cardiac arrest;
- d) circulatory failure; or
- e) cessation of brain function.

### **Application**

9. This Instrument applies to all matters to which section 120A of the Act applies.

Dated this *Twenty-seventh* day of *August* 1999

The Common Seal of the )  
Repatriation Medical Authority )  
was affixed to this instrument )  
in the presence of )

KEN DONALD  
CHAIRMAN