

## United States Senate

January 23, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1010 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Denis McDonough  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretaries Austin and McDonough,

I write today to express my concern with recent reports on the alarming incidence of cancer among Missileers who served at Malmstrom Air Force Base. Given the reported timeframe of potentially cancer-causing exposures, the unknown number and current status - servicemember or veteran - of potentially affected individuals, and the seriousness of the reported health outcomes, I urge the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to work urgently together to ensure every potentially impacted individual is made aware of this situation, receives the appropriate health assessment and is offered the appropriate care he or she needs. I would also appreciate any relevant information from DoD about this situation, including steps that are being taken or have been taken to identify an exposure or exposures, establish a timeframe for exposure, recognize potentially affected individuals and address health concerns of those individuals.

Particularly concerning are reports that former Missileers of Malmstrom AFB, who are still serving on active duty, are experiencing a rate of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma that is nearly 100 times greater than the national average for new cases. Additionally, these active duty members are well below the median age of 67 for a Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma diagnosis. Have active duty servicemembers of any branches, in particular the Air Force, who may have served as Missileers at Malmstrom AFB reported diagnoses of Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma? In addition to Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, have any other cancers, diseases or conditions been identified as suspect among former Missileers of Malmstrom AFB? Please provide information on those cancers, diseases or conditions along with any available data on incidence rate. Additionally, have the reported incidents been narrowed to a particular timeframe – if so, how was that determined?

The Departments must clearly determine whether this increased rate of cancer is unique to those who served at Malmstrom Air Force Base, or if Missileers who served or are serving at Minot and F.E. Warren Air Force Bases are suffering from a similarly increased risk of cancer or other diseases or conditions. Further, are there other sites, for example training locations or living quarters, that are unique to Missileers that should also be investigated?

Most importantly, comprehensive health assessments must be made available to all servicemembers and veterans who served as a Missileer at any location to identify any potential adverse health outcomes. Given the seriousness of the reported health conditions of affected individuals, the Departments must work with haste to address this matter. DoD must also ensure

JON TESTER  
MONTANA

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
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INDIAN AFFAIRS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

SENATE HART BUILDING  
SUITE 311  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
202-224-2644

[tester.senate.gov/contact](mailto:tester.senate.gov/contact)

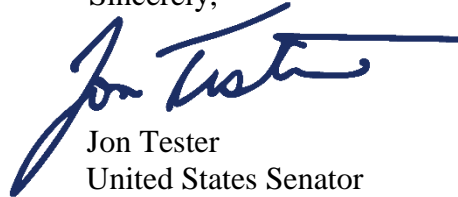
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VA has the information it needs to ensure prompt decision-making if and when claims for service-connection are made as a result of potential exposures.

Finally, have your Departments previously been alerted to or reviewed the health outcomes, particularly cancer, of Missileers? If yes, what was the follow up on those concerns and/or findings of those reviews? Please provide any relevant documents or reports related to this matter.

I look forward to your response, including next steps and a timeline for completion, and stand willing to assist your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Tester  
United States Senator