

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Commanding Officer Addresses OMC Regarding Public Health Assessment – Sept. 9, 2015

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba (NNS) -- Naval Station (NS) Guantanamo Bay's Commanding Officer, Capt. David Culpepper, met with Operation of Military Commissions (OMC) personnel during a staff meeting as part of an ongoing effort to keep personnel informed of the status of the public health review (PHR). The PHR is taking place in response to concerns brought to leadership's attention alleging that military and civilian personnel who worked in the OMC of NS Guantanamo Bay were likely exposed to carcinogens.

Culpepper explained to the staff what the follow-on steps will be.

"Based on the health records review and available documentation, the walk-through and air sampling conducted by health professionals from the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) in early August, it has been determined that the buildings, tents and trailers where you all live and work are habitable for occupancy," said Culpepper.

Culpepper went on to say that, based on the preliminary findings that the types and number of cancers observed and other associated factors, it is unlikely that an environmental or occupational exposure is associated with these cancers. A formal cancer cluster investigation is not supported because the number and various types of cancer cases validated in the review do not meet the criteria established by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, which is the criteria being used by the NMCPHC team.

Culpepper also shared with the staff what the plans are moving forward.

"The review of existing environmental records (for Camp Justice) found no record of contamination, but the team did find that data gaps exist in available historical documentation. In order to fill those gaps, the experts recommend follow-on testing," explained Culpepper. "So, we are proceeding to develop a testing plan and are tentatively planning on having contractors on the ground in late September to finalize the environmental sampling."

Culpepper concluded by emphasizing the health and safety of personnel at the base is a priority and leadership will do it's very best to keep everyone informed as the public health review moves along.

For updates on the public health review, visit

http://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrse/installations/ns_guantanamo_bay.html