

# Q&A About the New Gulf War Illness Diagnostic Code



*Effective October 1, 2025*

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## What is the new ICD-10-CM designation for Gulf War Illness, and when does it take effect?

The new ICD-10-CM diagnostic code is, “**T75.830**, *Gulf war illness*”. [According to the CDC](#), the new code is effective as of October 1, 2025. It falls under the newly created section, “T75.8, *Other specified effects of external causes*”, subsection (also new), “T75.83, *Effects of war theater*”.

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## What are the implications of this new diagnostic code for treatment of Gulf War Illness?

Utilizing this ICD-10-CM code will enable clinicians and researchers to identify which veterans have Gulf War Illness.

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## Why is this new Gulf War Illness diagnostic code important to Gulf War veterans?

Having an ICD diagnostic code validates Gulf War Illness as a medical disorder, provides a means of diagnosis, allows for medical tracking of those with the illness, allows for identifying co-occurring (comorbid) and potentially related health conditions, and allows for tracking of treatments tried for Gulf War Illness with and without success. Prior this new diagnostic code, Gulf War veterans were often told “there is no such thing” as Gulf War Illness.

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## What will this new diagnostic code mean for healthcare providers of patients with Gulf War Illness?

The Gulf War Illness ICD code provides a means to codify the problem being addressed in a clinical visit, and to share that information with other providers. Absence of an ICD code for Gulf War Illness has compromised care for Gulf War veteran patients, such as for patients with objective neurological signs but no clinical diagnostic label that has then led to failure to adequately treat the patient’s illness. Recognition of Gulf War Illness through a diagnosis should obviate such problems that arise when providers are not aware of the reality of Gulf War Illness.

## **What problems arose from Gulf War Illness not having its own diagnostic code?**

No diagnostic code for Gulf War Illness meant an inability to identify, monitor, track, or treat patients with the condition, inside and outside the VA healthcare system.

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## **Who were the members of the Consortium of GWI Clinicians, Researchers and Patient Advocates that championed the Gulf War Illness ICD code?**

Dr. Beatrice Golomb (MD, PhD), University of California-San Diego; Mr. Anthony Hardie, Director, Veterans for Common Sense; Dr. Lea Steele (PhD), Baylor College of Medicine; Dr. Kimberly Sullivan (PhD), Boston University School of Public Health; Dr. Nancy Klimas (MD), Nova Southeastern University; Dr. Maxine Krengel (PhD), Boston University School of Medicine

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## **How long did the Consortium of Clinicians, Researchers, and Advocates work on getting this code?**

The work began on June 16, 2022 – the day the first individuals who were to become the Consortium first learned it was possible for a non-governmental group to initiate the request. Gulf War veteran advocate Anthony Hardie, director of the advocacy group Veterans for Common Sense initiated the process by reaching out to two researchers, Dr. Beatrice Golomb and Dr. Kimberly Sullivan. By the following day, Dr. Golomb as a clinician, had prepared the first draft proposal, which was circulated to members of the growing Consortium for their review and input. After Consortium review, she formally submitted it to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in December 2022, and as the lead clinician for the Consortium formally presented it at the March 8, 2023 meeting of the federal government's *ICD-10 Coordination and Maintenance Committee*. The request went through several additional cycles of Committee meetings, public comments, Consortium responses, and revisions.

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## **What likely persuaded the CDC to approve the code changes?**

Overwhelming evidence from over 30 years of research is now available and was presented, tying the health problems of Gulf War veterans to their exposures, showing that the unique health condition by the definition used is markedly elevated in those who were deployed, documenting that many objective markers are altered in affected veterans, and showing that those with the illness are at heightened risk of multiple other health problems. Together, these factors clearly show that Gulf War illness is real, tied to Gulf exposures, and clinically important. The membership of the supporting consortium, with their powerful track record in Gulf War Illness research, clinical care, and advocacy may also have had an impact.

## What diagnostic criteria were presented to support creation of the ICD code?

From the meeting record, the diagnostic criteria the Consortium presented to the approving CDC Committee are as follows: *“This health condition requires deployment to the Gulf War Theater of Operations anytime between August 1, 1990, and July 31, 1991. It requires chronic symptoms for  $\geq 6$  months, arising during or after this deployment, in  $\geq 3$  of the 6 Kansas [case definition] criteria questionnaire symptom domains of fatigue/sleep; neurological/cognitive/mood; pain; gastrointestinal; respiratory; and dermatologic. For a domain to qualify for this condition, symptoms in the domain must be either of at least moderate severity (not mild) and/or there must be multiple symptoms in that domain.”*

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## What will having this diagnostic code mean should diagnostic criteria evolve?

Diagnostic codes provide a foundation for diagnosis. For many conditions, diagnostic criteria have evolved over time – but having a first ICD code provides a basis for adjusting criteria as evidence evolves.

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## Did the CDC also add any other related codes?

The CDC also added new exposure-related codes including **“Z77.3, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to war theater”**, and, **“Z77.31, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to Gulf War theater (Contact with and (suspected) exposure to Persian Gulf War theater)”**. The CDC also added, **“Z77.39, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other war theater, Agent Orange exposure”**.

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## How does a Veteran obtain VA medical care?

Download, complete, and submit VA’s healthcare enrollment form, [VA Form 10-10EZ](#). The VA or a VA-accredited service officer can assist you.

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## How does a Veteran file a VA disability claim for Gulf War illness or other Gulf War-related conditions?

Work with a [VA-accredited claims agent or Veterans Service Organization representative who is officially recognized by VA to assist you with preparing and submitting a claim](#). Then mention to the service officer that you deployed to Southwest Asia and would like to file a claim for service-connection. The service officer should review your medical conditions and past VA claim history. From there,

the service officer should assist you with collecting evidence, completing VA forms, and then submitting your claim to VA. **Note:** Do not pay anyone to assist you with filing a VA disability benefit claim. [Predators who charge fees violate the law and are called “claim sharks.”](#)

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## What is the Gulf War geographic area for VA disability claims?

For the purposes of VA claims and benefits eligibility, the region is called **Southwest Asia**. It is defined by VA regulations ([38 CFR 3.317\(e\)\(2\)](#)): The Southwest Asia theater of operations refers to: **Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia**, the **neutral zone** between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, **Bahrain, Qatar**, the **United Arab Emirates, Oman**, the **Gulf of Aden**, the **Gulf of Oman**, the **Persian Gulf**, the **Arabian Sea**, the **Red Sea**, and **the airspace above** these locations.

The *Honoring Our PACT Act* added additional Southwest Asia locations associated with undiagnosed illness and Medically Unexplained Chronic Multisymptom Illness (MUCMI): **Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria**, and **Jordan**. ([Public Law 117-168, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022](#)) (Note: Per VA, until 38 CFR 3.317 is updated, the provisions regarding compensation for Persian Gulf War Veterans are governed by the statutory authority described in [38 U.S.C. 1117](#).)

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## What is the Gulf War time frame for VA disability claims?

For qualifying service in the Gulf War geographic area, the time frame is from August 2, 1990, to the present. Note: The time frame for the ICD code is a subset of the legal definition of the Gulf War, which is August 2, 1990, to the present because the war has not yet legally been ended (see 38 USC 101(33)).

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**Veterans for Common Sense** is a nonpartisan non-profit organization founded in 2002 by U.S. war veterans who honorably served our nation. Its principal purpose is to collect, analyze, and disseminate information relevant to U.S. foreign and military policy for the use of the public in better decision making. Veterans for Common Sense derived its name from the seminal “Common Sense” publication advocating for American independence authored by Founding Father Thomas Paine in 1776.

