§ 2475. Special policies with respect to dioxin exposure. 1. For the purpose of identifying persons who were exposed to an herbicide containing dioxin and for the purpose of compiling data on the health effects of this exposure, the commissioner of health shall:

(a) establish, promote and maintain a public information program on dioxin. Such program shall include, but may not be limited to, an effort to contact Vietnam era veterans and employees of the public and private sectors within the state who were exposed to an herbicide containing dioxin;

(b) initiate an epidemiological study of the health effects of exposure to herbicides containing dioxin;

(c) maintain a central data bank within the department for information collected on the health effects of exposure to dioxin and for the cataloguing of existing scientific and medical literature on the health effects of this exposure; and

(d) initiate education for health professionals to assist them in understanding the potential risks and state-of-the-art knowledge with regard to detection, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic symptoms associated with dioxin exposure.

2. The commissioner may request and shall receive from any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the state or of any political subdivision thereof such assistance and data as will enable him to properly carry out his activities hereunder and effectuate the purposes herein set forth. The commissioner may also enter into any contract for services as he deems necessary with a private agency or concern upon said terms and conditions as he deems appropriate. Information concerning patient and medical data provided to the commissioner pursuant to this subdivision shall be kept confidential according to the provisions of paragraph (j) of subdivision one of section two hundred six of this chapter.