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Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) Symposium Identifies Five Top Issues to Advance Care of Soldiers and their Families

Indianapolis, IN —More than 70 severely wounded soldiers, family members and caregivers came together at the fourth Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) Symposium and identified the following top five issues that should be addressed to advance wounded soldier care:

1. Alternative treatment options for wounded warriors
2. Support groups and counseling for wounded warrior families
3. Continuing on Active Duty (COAD)/Continuing on Active Reserve (COAR) Process
4. Treatment of COAD/COAR soldiers by the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB)
5. Eligibility criteria for Warrior Transition Units (WTU)

The final issues were announced at the conclusion of the Symposium, which took place from June 22-27 in Indianapolis. The AW2 Symposium is part of the Army's overall mission to improve care of wounded, injured and ill soldiers, based on the needs and input of wounded soldiers and their families.

The final 2008 AW2 Symposium issues were chosen from more than 80 topics that were discussed in focus groups with categories including: medical services, transition, family, continuation on active duty or active reserve duty, employment, and Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). With subject matter experts on site, each focus group discussed issues in one category and then all the groups came together to vote on the top five overall issues. Previous AW2 Symposium issues and recommendations contributed to the creation and design of the Army's new Warrior Transition Units (WTU) and Soldier Family Assistance Centers, as well as impacted legislation to benefit wounded soldiers.

"Thanks to the participants, the AW2 Symposium this year was a big success," said Col. Jim Rice, Director of the Army Wounded Warrior Program. "The process worked exactly as it should, with wounded soldiers and their families discussing soldier care issues and making recommendations on how to improve services. I am confident that the work done at this year's Symposium will contribute to the overall advances in soldier and family care."

As part of the focus on the families of the severely wounded, this year for the first time, the children of AW2 delegates were included in the Symposium. The children participated in a day camp for the duration of the Symposium, made possible by collaboration with the National Military Family Association's (NMFA) Operation Purple, as well as provided their own issues for consideration.

For the last four years, AW2 has served the severely wounded, injured, and ill soldiers and their families. AW2 assists and advocates for the most severely wounded soldiers by providing individualized support for as long as it takes, wherever they are located – regardless of their military status. AW2 assists the unique population of soldiers who have, or are expected to receive, an Army disability rating of 30% or more in one of several specific categories.

For more information about the Army Wounded Warrior Program, call 1-800-237-1336 toll-free or visit <http://www.AW2@.army.mil>.

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