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INFORMATION PAPER

ARNG-HRS
7 March 2012

SUBJECT: Vets4Warriors National Peer Support Outreach Program

1. Purpose. To provide information on the Vets4Warriors National Peer Support Outreach Program.

2. Facts.

a. The Vets4Warriors peer support line (1-855-VET-TALK) provides easy access to supportive, non-attributional conversations with trained veteran peers representing all branches of the military. This team of veteran peers has immediate access to mental health clinicians to respond to potentially emergent issues and can offer referrals to local community services, military veteran centers, and military healthcare providers based upon the needs of the Service Member.

b. The program will employ a modern, server based database to facilitate case management and follow-up efforts to ensure continuity in services and outreach efforts. This includes the capability to produce weekly / monthly usage reports and demographic data that maintains the privacy of the callers while identifying the services and support capabilities that are being utilized or are required to optimize Service Member care.

c. The overall program is designed to help achieve and maintain Service Member readiness while promoting resilience and risk reduction through timely outreach, peer support, and referral to service providers or agencies that can address potential issues or risk factors. The Vets4Warriors National Peer Support Outreach Program capabilities include:

- (1) Comprehensive Peer Counseling and Outreach support services comprised of a toll-free peer support line with web-chat capability and available to all Reserve Component Service Members, regardless of status.
- (2) A targeted outreach capability during off-peak periods to proactively contact potential at-risk populations over an extended period including Members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), pre-Basic Training Soldiers within the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP), Inactive National Guard (ING) Soldiers, Pre-Mobilizing / Demobilizing Reserve Component Service Members, etc. Recurring non-contact reports can be generated and provided to state / unit leadership for their action as appropriate.
- (3) A comprehensive state level services database compiled to provide current service and provider data relevant to caller's location. This data will be

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owned by the government and updated on a recurring basis for use by the Peer Counselors. The services can also use this data for their own applications, such as integrating into the Joint Support Services (JSS) Portal geo-mapping application.

3. This program is a component of a larger effort to promote individual resilience, risk reduction, and coping skills through peer support and referrals to community based services. Peer counseling is an effective method to inculcate these self-development skills without the potential stigma that some Service Members may associate with help-seeking behavior. The program will also improve awareness and access to local resources that are relevant to the issues communicated by the Service Member while the utilization data can help share and refine current support programs.

4. Way Ahead: Following the 13 December 2011 launch of the Vets4Warriors peer support line, the Army National Guard plans to continue nationwide promotion efforts. The toll free peer support line, 1-855-VET-TALK (1-855-838-8255), is supplemented with web-chat capability, including comprehensive peer counseling and outreach support services.

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