



VA Secretary Formalizes Expansion of Emergency Mental Health Care to Former Service Members With Other-Than-Honorable Discharges

JULY 2017

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has released final plans that lay the framework for providing emergency mental health coverage to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges. This is the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on this group of former service members who are in mental health distress.

“Suicide prevention is my top clinical priority,” said Secretary Shulkin, also a physician. “We want these former service members to know there is someplace they can turn if they are facing a mental health emergency — whether it means urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line.” Effective July 5, all Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers are prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergent mental health need. Under this initiative, former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

During this time, VHA and the Veterans Benefits Administration will be working together to determine if the mental health condition is a result of a service-related injury, making the service member eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition.

Since Secretary Shulkin announced his intent in March to expand VA mental health coverage to service members with OTH administrative discharges, VA has worked with key internal and external stakeholders, including members of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations and community partners on the issue.

If you fall under this category or know a veteran that does, do not hesitate to contact us or any VA medical facility with questions. We are here to help!

WHERE TO CONNECT WITH US:

Tuesdays, 8:30am to 3pm, VA Menlo Park

Building #348

July 20th - 8:30am-3pm, VA Palo Alto

Building #4, Room #B210

July 21st, 8am-4pm, Peninsula Vet Center

SAVE THE DATE: July 15th from 9am - 12pm
Veterans Benefits Seminar at the American Legion Post 585 1159 Bush St. in San Carlos

If You Served, You Earned!

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
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