

Jan. 9, 2018

President Donald J. Trump signs Executive Order to Improve Mental Health Resources for Veterans Transitioning from Active Duty to Civilian Life

The Secretaries of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security will develop a plan to ensure Veterans' mental health care for the year after separating from service

WASHINGTON – Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order titled, “Supporting Our Veterans During Their Transition From Uniformed Service to Civilian Life.” This Executive Order directs the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security to develop a plan to ensure that all new Veterans receive mental health care for at least one year following their separation from service.

The three departments will work together and develop a Joint Action Plan to ensure that the 60 percent of new Veterans who currently do not qualify for enrollment in healthcare — primarily due to lack of verified service connection related to the medical issue at hand — will receive treatment and access to services for mental health care for one year following their separation from service.

“As service members transition to Veteran status, they face higher risk of suicide and mental health difficulties,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin. “During this critical phase, many transitioning service members may not qualify for enrollment in health care. The focus of this Executive Order is to coordinate federal assets to close that gap.”

The Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Homeland Security will work to expand mental health programs and other resources to new Veterans to the year following departure from uniformed service, including eliminating prior time limits and:

- Expanding peer community outreach and group sessions in the VA Whole Health initiative from 18 Whole Health Flagship facilities to all facilities. Whole Health includes wellness and establishing individual health goals.
- Extending the Department of Defense’s “Be There Peer Support Call and Outreach Center” services to provide peer support for Veterans in the year following separation from the uniformed service.
- Expanding the Department of Defense’s Military One Source (MOS), which offers resources to active duty members, to include services to separating service members to one year beyond service separation.

“We look forward to continuing our partnership with the VA to ensure veterans who have served our country continue to receive the important mental health care and services they need and deserve,” said Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis.

“The Department of Homeland Security is where many Veterans find a second opportunity to serve their country — nearly 28 percent of our workforce has served in the armed forces, in addition to the 49,000 active duty members of the United States Coast Guard,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen.

“This critically important executive order will provide our service members with the support they need as they transition to civilian life. These dedicated men and women have put their lives on the line to protect our nation and our American way of life, and we owe them a debt we can never repay. We look forward to working with the VA and DOD to implement the President’s EO,” said Secretary Nielsen.

“In signing this Executive Order, President Trump has provided clear guidance to further ensure our Veterans and their families know that we are focusing on ways to improve their ability to move forward and achieve their goals in life after service,” said Secretary Shulkin.