



## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT**

Heather Cobb  
202.684.7457 x277  
HeatherC@TheNationalCouncil.org

**DATE**

May 23, 2013

**National Council Commends VA, DoD, HHS Efforts to Address Veterans Mental Health Services**

WASHINGTON (May 23, 2013)—This week, the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Health and Human Services released an interim report on their interagency collaboration to expand access to behavioral health services for veterans and their families, drawing attention to the great strides made following President Obama’s August 31, 2012 executive order.

“We congratulate the VA, DoD, and HHS for their efforts to meet the needs of America’s servicemen and women, and their families,” said Jeannie Campbell, US Navy Retired, and Executive Vice President at the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, which represents the nation’s safety net mental health and addiction providers. “By combining their collective expertise and resources and creating new collaborations with community based agencies, they are ensuring that those who have given so much to our country get the high quality care, they so deserve.”

While the labors and successes of this joint endeavor are wide, the agencies have successfully:

- Ensured veterans greater access to crisis services by increasing manpower of the Veterans Crisis Line by 50%.
- Piloted projects in seven states where the VA works with community behavioral health providers to improve timely access to services.
- Expanded the VA’s behavioral health workforce with roughly 1,700 new behavioral health professionals.
- Strived to decrease veterans’ suicide by establishing a national campaign to connect veterans with behavioral health services.

“To date, the VA has partnered with 15 community based behavioral health organizations,” continued Campbell. “Our nation’s 3,000 plus behavioral health treatment organizations are located in communities across the country and are often in rural and frontier areas where the VA is not. They are ready, willing, and able to support our veterans and look forward to partnering with the VA.”

---

*The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare is the unifying voice of America’s community mental health and addictions treatment organizations. Together*

*with our 2,000 member organizations, we serve our nation's most vulnerable citizens — the more than 8 million adults and children living with mental illnesses and addiction disorders. We are committed to ensuring all Americans have access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery and full participation in community life. The National Council pioneered Mental Health First Aid in the U.S. and has trained nearly 100,000 individuals to connect youth and adults in need to mental health and addictions care in their communities. Learn more at [www.TheNationalCouncil.org](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org).*

###