

Supporting Mental Wellness for Military Families While a Loved One is Deployed Away from Home

Take Mental Health To Heart campaign from Magellan Health Services, National Military Family Association and Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc., provides information for members of the military and their families

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- For each of the more than two million service members who make up the United States' active duty and National Guard and Reserve units, there are millions more spouses, parents, children and friends who await them at home, hoping for the safe return of their brave loved ones who selflessly defend our country. A growing number of studies have shown that having a member of the family serving in the military can have a psychological impact on the family, potentially creating stress, anxiety, or more serious mental health issues.

May is both National Mental Health Awareness Month and National Military Appreciation Month, and Magellan Health Services, Inc. (NASDAQ: MGLN) has launched an initiative called [Take Mental Health To Heart](#) in conjunction with the National Military Family Association and Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc., to raise awareness about mental wellness topics impacting Americans. In its inaugural year, the initiative highlights the unique and complex mental wellness issues that specifically affect the military community by striving to create an understanding of the military population's challenges and humanize the issue to help combat the stigma that too often accompanies mental illness.

Mental Wellness for Children, Family and Friends of Those Serving in the Military

Having a loved one serving away from home, particularly for extended periods of time or in potentially dangerous situations can lead to stress, anxiety and even depression for family and friends. Military spouses can feel a range of emotions, from stress and anxiety to resentment and depression. Stress from financial management issues is often one of the top challenges facing spouses while their partner is away. Children of any age can also have difficulty expressing their emotions, but even if they don't talk openly about their feelings, changes may occur in their school work, relationships or behaviors.

"The compounded stress of having a loved one away from home while also having to manage the household and family matters can take a toll on partners and family members," said Anthony Kotin, M.D., chief medical officer at Magellan Health Services. "Many military families can find comfort in turning to others in the same situation for support and guidance, and organizations like the [National Military Family Association](#) can help families tap into a variety of resources to help ease the strain while a loved one is away."

A number of resources are available to help families plan for a loved one's deployment away from home. Being prepared and knowing the support systems that are available can help relieve some stress and worry and provides a place to turn to for extra assistance during difficult times. Tips for preparation include:

- Review household responsibilities. Cover basic household operations with loved ones before they depart. Discuss financial management, home maintenance and childcare so that you know what to expect while the person is away. Also, ensure that all necessary legal and financial documents, such as a will or power of attorney, are in order so that a family member can act on behalf of the service member while he or she is away.
- Create a communications plan. Letters, phone calls, emails or online chats are all ways to stay in touch. Know when to expect a message in order to create some "routine", but don't worry if an anticipated call does not occur; sometimes communication channels are closed for short periods of time due to security or technology issues. Service members can prepare envelopes and address labels in advance to make it easy to send postcards, letters or packages.
- Check in with children and youth often. Talk to children and proactively ask them questions, as they may not always express what's bothering them due to a misunderstanding or out of fear of adding more stress to the situation. It's helpful if you assist them in maintaining their normal routines as much as possible.
- Develop a support system. Reach out to other families or groups who also have loved ones serving in the military. Military families often cite these groups as one of their most valuable resources, and the [National Military Family Association](#) offers many ways to help you get started.
- Ask for help. Whether it's turning to friends and family for help with errands or talking to a chaplain or professional counselor about some of the challenges you're facing, don't be embarrassed or ashamed about asking for help.

For more on this topic and other mental wellness information for members of the military and their families, visit www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com.

Spreading the Word for a Good Cause

The interactive section of TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com features free electronic "post cards" with a variety of images, messages and a link to additional campaign resources. Cards are designed for family and friends to send to loved ones in the military offering words of encouragement and appreciation, as well as for those in the military to send to friends and family who have provided support during their service. For every e-postcard sent, Magellan and Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc. will each donate \$1 to support the National Military Family Association, up to a combined total of \$50,000. The site also features a digital message wall where visitors can share their stories, encouragement and words of gratitude for members of the military and their families.

About *Take Mental Health To Heart*: In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month this May, Magellan Health Services has launched *Take Mental Health To Heart*, a program to promote good mental health as a key component to total wellness. The focus of the inaugural 2011 program highlights mental wellness for members of the military and their families. Each Wednesday in May, Magellan and its campaign partners — the National Military Family Association and Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc. — will provide new resources and information on topics from various phases of military service such as preparing family and friends for a loved one's deployment; mental wellness on duty; dealing with trauma, loss and grief; and the transition to life after service. Information, videos, online assessment tools and interactive elements are available at www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com.

About the National Military Family Association: The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit organization committed to strengthening and protecting the families of the men and women currently serving, retired, wounded or fallen. The Association provides families of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Commissioned Corps of the USPHS and NOAA with information, work to get them the benefits they deserve, and offer programs that improve their lives. With more than 40 years of service and accomplishments, the National Military Family Association is a trusted resource for military families and the Nation's leaders. To learn more, visit www.MilitaryFamily.org.

About Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc.: Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc., New Jersey's oldest and largest health insurer, is a not-for-profit health services corporation. Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc. serves approximately 3.6 million members and is headquartered in Newark with offices in Wall, Mt. Laurel, and West Trenton. Horizon Healthcare Services, Inc., provides a wide variety of health and dental insurance products and services, including Medicare and Medicaid products, for businesses and individuals.

About Magellan: Headquartered in Avon, Conn., Magellan Health Services, Inc., is a leading specialty health care management organization with expertise in managing behavioral health, radiology and specialty pharmaceuticals, as well as public sector pharmacy benefits programs. Magellan delivers innovative solutions to improve quality outcomes and optimize the cost of care for those we serve. Magellan's customers include health plans, employers and government agencies, serving approximately 31.5 million members in our behavioral health business, 18.5 million members in our radiology benefits management segment, and 4.9 million members in our medical pharmacy management product. In addition, the specialty pharmaceutical segment serves 41 health plans and several pharmaceutical manufacturers and state Medicaid programs. The Company's Medicaid Administration segment serves 25 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit www.MagellanHealth.com.

Magellan Health Services, Inc.
Chris Pearsall, 860-507-1923
CMPearsall@MagellanHealth.com

Source: Magellan Health Services, Inc.

News Provided by Acquire Media

<https://magellanhealth.mediaroom.com/2011-05-04-Supporting-Mental-Wellness-for-Military-Families-While-a-Loved-One-is-Deployed-Away-from-Home>