

Maintaining Mental Wellness While Serving in the Military

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

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- It's no surprise that war and conflict can lead to unique and significant mental health challenges for the service men and women protecting our country. An unfortunate and increasing number of military personnel are returning from deployment with conditions such as post-traumatic stress and substance abuse disorders, yet some reports estimate that only half of those who need treatment seek it despite a variety of resources available from the military and other organizations. Historically high suicide rates among active duty service members have also called attention to the mental health challenges that service members face while on duty.

May is both National Mental Health Awareness Month and National Military Appreciation Month, and Magellan Health Services 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 distinct and complex mental wellness issues that specifically affect the military community by striving to create an understanding of the military population's challenges, while working to combat the stigma that too often accompanies mental illness.

Mental Wellness On Duty

The military has made many advances in how it prepares our service men and women for the mental wellness challenges they may face on duty. Excellent resources are available that support the entire military community, including both service members and their families. Everyone needs help from time to time in order to manage day-to-day stressors, anxiety, the separation from family and normal routines, and more serious traumatic events.

"Mental health issues can develop more gradually and subtly than other, physical injuries or illnesses, making them easy to miss or ignore, but without support or treatment they can develop into very serious conditions, significantly impacting the individual and their loved ones," said Anthony Kotin, M.D., chief medical officer at Magellan Health Services. "Excellent behavioral health resources are available to members of the military, but we have to do more to raise awareness that help is available and to reduce the stigma around seeking behavioral health support."

When confronting stress and anxiety on duty:

- Find your "go-to" solution. Understand what you find to be most calming, such as meditation, listening to music or exercising and use these tools at appropriate times to help release tension.
- Monitor your mind and body. Recognize changes in your mood, feelings of hopelessness and sadness, loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy or even physical symptoms such as fatigue or insomnia. These may be signs of depression and you'll want to seek support.
- Maintain physical fitness and diet. Whenever possible, make healthy food choices, don't skip meals, limit caffeine after lunchtime and avoid nicotine and alcohol. Regular exercise can also help lower stress levels, in addition to other techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, or meditation.
- Take advantage of your resources. Turn to family, friends, a chaplain, counselor or other resources. Sometimes talking about things is the best way to confront, understand and cope with them. If you're not ready to open up to another person, consider keeping a journal or writing down a few thoughts, which might help you identify what's bothering you and address it.

When mental health challenges are left unchecked, they can become more serious issues and may sometimes escalate to thoughts of suicide. If you or someone you know are having thoughts of suicide:

- Remove all weapons from the area.
- Seek immediate help from emergency medical personnel, a counselor, chaplain or even a friend who can arrange assistance.
- Find treatment options and stay committed to the treatment plan after the immediate danger has passed.

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](http://www.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 theme for the inaugural 2011 program focuses on mental wellness for members of the military and their families. On 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.

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