



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

December 14, 2018

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Executive Order 13822 of January 9, 2018, established requirements for the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a Joint Action Plan describing actions to provide (to the extent consistent with law) seamless access to mental health care and suicide prevention resources for transitioning uniformed Servicemembers during the year following discharge, separation, or retirement.

The enclosed status report, which has been coordinated with the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, describes the implementation of the Joint Action Plan to date. While much work remains, the Executive Order provided the foundational impetus for the three aforementioned agencies to expand coordination efforts to address the issue of suicide among Veterans and transitioning Servicemembers. Collectively, we are committed to the vision you have described. Thank you for your continued support of our Veterans and Servicemembers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Wilkie".

Robert L. Wilkie

Enclosure

**EXECUTIVE ORDER 13822
STATUS REPORT:
SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS
DURING THEIR TRANSITION FROM
UNIFORMED SERVICE TO CIVILIAN
LIFE**

December 11, 2018

Status Update

On March 9, 2018, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) submitted a Joint Action Plan in response to Executive Order (EO) 13822. The Joint Action Plan contains three overarching goals and 16 individual actions with associated metrics and targets. The 16 actions outlined (and numbered) in the Joint Action Plan are bucketed into four areas: Outreach (1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 3.3), Transition (1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.3), Monitoring (2.2, 2.7, 3.2), and Access (2.4, 3.1, 3.4).

All 16 actions are on track with key milestones met, and near-and-far term tasks well underway. As the task leads began the work to implement each action, metrics have evolved to better measure the needs of our transitioning Servicemembers and Veterans. The improvements are described in this report.

The three Departments are currently working through several project-specific requirements that are essential to fulfilling the requirements of the EO. Outstanding actions include the potential need for additional non-clinical and case management staff to conduct outreach; potential staffing to support Clay Hunt Peer Specialist Community Outreach Pilots; and the need for the Office of Management and Budget's approval for survey questions required for follow-up and satisfaction data. Other barriers and challenges were addressed through creative solutions by subject matter experts (SME), such as collaborating to address gaps, while also mitigating duplication in effort.

Senior leaders from VA, DoD, and DHS continue to provide guidance and support to implement the objectives of the Joint Action Plan.

Action Item Status

A review of each action item and its status is provided below, and where relevant, the evolved metrics are noted.

Outreach

1.1 Early and Consistent Contact: Current actions are underway to use Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) call centers for outreach calls. An implementation plan is in development and anticipated to be finalized in December 2018.

1.4 Messaging Campaign: This action is well underway with internal and external messaging occurring at key intervals and at various forums.

2.1 Warm Hand Off for Peer Support: This action is on track with full implementation by May 2019, based on the Joint Action Plan. DoD initiated actions for this effort to occur through the capabilities of Military OneSource.

- **Original Metric:** Total number of contacts made by peer support specialists in response to referrals.
- **Evolved Metric:** Total number of connections to peer support offered.

2.5 Peer Support Outreach: This action is on track for implementation and sustainment through DoD efforts by December 2019. DoD merged what was formerly

referred to as the “BeThere” peer support call center into the Military OneSource peer support center.

- **Original Metric:** Number of Veterans reached by a peer support specialist between 90 – 180 days post-separation.
- **Evolved Metric:** Number of Veterans reached by Military OneSource offering Veterans peer support at key determined intervals post-transition.

2.6 Peer Specialist Community Outreach Pilot: This action is complete.

3.3 Expanding Military OneSource: This action is complete. DoD initiated all actions to implement and sustain this effort. Section 558 of the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act legislated expansion of Military OneSource to 365 days post-transition.

- **Original Metric:** Percentage of Veterans accessing Military OneSource post-service. Percentage referred to medical services and to clinical mental health care upon enhancement of case management system.
- **Evolved Metric:** 100 percent of Veterans are eligible to access Military OneSource up to 365 days post-transition. Percentage of transitioning Servicemember respondents on the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Participant Assessment who report being informed on expanded Military OneSource services post-separation. Data will be collected quarterly on the TAP Participant Assessment beginning October 2018. Number of Veterans accessing Military OneSource post-service. Number of Veterans referred to medical services and to clinical mental health care upon enhancement of case management system.

Transition

1.2 Pre-Transition VA Health Care Registration: This action is fully implemented and has transitioned to the data collection phase.

1.3 Modification of TAP: This action is fully implemented and has transitioned to the data collection phase.

1.5 Increased VSO Engagement Pre-Transition: This action is underway with no identified barriers. Full implementation is expected by January 2019.

2.3 Readiness Standards: This action has been initiated and is underway, with implementation by July 2019.

- **Original Metric:** Total number of contacts made by peer support specialists in response to referrals, and total number of warm hand-offs to clinical care. Patient satisfaction self-reports on peer and clinical care.
- **Evolved Metric:** Total number of connections to peer support offered and total number of warm hand-offs to clinical care. Customer satisfaction on peer and clinical care.

Monitoring

2.2 Screening and Identification: The Departments are expected to implement by December 31, 2018, with a baseline of 70 percent and full implementation target of 100 percent.

2.7 Predictive Analytics: This action is well underway with no identified barriers. Tracking for execution by July 2019. Predictive analytics models were shared in July 2018 and a gap analysis was completed in September 2018, per Joint Action Plan metrics.

- **Original Metric:** VA/DoD/DHS will share all predictive analytics models by July 2018. Departments will document any gaps to improve predictive analytics models (e.g., data sources, data integrity) by September 2018. Departments will document a way forward for an integrated data environment and interagency analytical platform that could adequately support development of a single predictive model by April 2019.
- **Evolved Metric:** VA/DoD/DHS will share all predictive analytics models by July 2018. Departments will document any gaps to improve predictive analytics models (e.g., data sources, data integrity) by September 2018. Departments will document a way forward for an integrated data environment and interagency analytical platform by April 2019 that could adequately support development of a **joint approach** to predictive modeling.

3.2 Improved Monitoring: This action will be underway by February 2019. Task Leads decided the best approach for this was to separate into subtasks 3.2a and 3.2b, with evolved metrics for both. 3.2b has since been absorbed by 1.1, Early and Consistent Contact, due to duplication of efforts.

- **3.2a Original Metric:** Percentage of Veterans reporting improvement on individual measures (specific focus on transition stressors) and symptoms assessed over time throughout care.
- **3.2a Evolved Metric:** All transitioning Servicemembers will be invited to participate in the Veterans Outcome Assessment within 2 weeks of beginning mental health treatment (or at discharge from an acute inpatient mental health program). Those who accept the invitation to participate will be contacted 3 months afterwards to repeat the outcomes assessment.
- **3.2b Original Metric:** Follow-up phone calls at key intervals of 30-60-90-365-days to ensure Veterans are receiving the services they need.
- **3.2b Evolved Metric:** Follow-up contact at determined key intervals (minimum of two times) to ensure Veterans are receiving the services they need.

Access

2.4 Whole Health Peer Groups: This action began implementation in February 2018 and was fully implemented in advance of the July 2018 date. There have been monthly increases in the number of transitioning Servicemembers in Whole Health Groups since initiation of the task.

- **Original Metric:** Collect data on percentage of recently transitioned Servicemembers who attend monthly orientation groups, satisfaction with groups, and the number of those attending who are then referred into mental health care.
- **Evolved Metric:** Total number of Veterans participating in *Introduction to Whole Health* that also enroll and participate in Whole Health Group Sessions.

3.1 Easy Button: This action was implemented in November 2018, in advance of the Joint Action Plan target date of December 2018. The button was built on the modernized VA Web site and, when clicked, leads Veterans to links to mental health resources at VA and in the community.

3.4 Build and Expand Community Partnership Models: This action is well underway and expected to meet full sustainment in accordance with the actions detailed in the Joint Action Plan by June 2019.

Way Forward

Throughout the execution of the Joint Action Plan, desired future states have been realized, particularly related to modalities for peer support, coordinating outreach to Servicemembers and Veterans, and predictive analytics (joint approach versus multiple approaches).

The efforts initiated by this EO and the resulting Joint Action Plan will continue to be prioritized, executed, and sustained. An annual update on the initiatives will be provided until all actions in the Joint Action Plan have met full implementation.