

DRAFT – VCSA Sends

4 AUGUST 2009

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Subject: Web-Based Behavioral Health Initiative Launched 1 August

1. References.

A. The Army Campaign Plan for Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, and Suicide Prevention (ACPHP), 16 APR 09.

2. We have been actively attacking the issue of stigma this year to remove it as a barrier to Soldiers seeking the care they need. On 1 August, the TRICARE Management Activity launched two new Behavioral Health Care Services. The first is the TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP), and I believe this is a phenomenal step in using available technology to enhance our Soldier and family well-being .

3. This initiative allows TRICARE beneficiaries to speak with a licensed counselor 24/7 from the privacy of their own home or any other location of choice that has a computer, Internet and Webcam. Eligible beneficiaries are active duty service members, those eligible for Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) for six months following demobilization, members with TRICARE Reserve Select, as well as spouses and other eligible family members 18 years of age or older.

4. The program provides unlimited short-term, non-medical, problem solving counseling for individuals dealing with personal problems impacting their work performance, health and well-being. Mechanisms are in place to conduct warm handoffs to medical providers if it is determined the individual needs more comprehensive medical care or if they are considered a danger to themselves or others.

5. This initiative is the first step in an evolving effort to provide comprehensive behavioral health services online. The second initiative is TRICARE's development of a civilian network of telemedicine mental health providers to provide medically-supervised, secure audio-visual conferencing to link beneficiaries with offsite providers for all aspects of behavioral health services, including psychotherapy and medication management. While most service members will still get face-to-face care in a military treatment facility (MTF), this program will enhance access to care by providing additional options for Soldiers and family members. TRICARE currently has 251 originating sites and is working hard to expand both the number of originating sites and the network of online providers.

6. I am rolling out a command information program this week to get the word out to our Soldiers and families about this new resource. In addition to this email, I am posting a blog entry on the Army Blog web site and conducting interviews for Army News Service, Defense Media Agency and Army Times. I'm asking all leaders to help spread the word by talking about the program and by publishing the available information in your installation papers.

7. Soldiers and family members can get information about the program and link to their regional TRIAP site at <http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP>. For additional information about more comprehensive care under the TRICARE telemental health options, go to the getting care link at <http://tricare.mil/mybenefit/home/MentalHealthAndBehavior>. A complete guide to the TRICARE and Department of Defense existing behavioral health services is available for download at the link <http://www.tricare.mil/tricaresmart>.

8. Army Strong!