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WARRIOR TREATMENT TODAY

Bridging Gaps to PTSD/TBI Treatment for Veterans

Warrior Treatment Today is a USA Cares program designed to bridge the gap between personal financial demands and the need to receive treatment. Specifically, our program seeks to remove the financial barrier that exists for many service members who suffer from PTSD and/or TBI, but cannot afford to leave their employment for treatment. National Guard and Reserve personnel are particularly vulnerable to this barrier as they resume their civilian lives upon return from deployment. Should they be referred for treatment of a significant duration, they have to not only keep their jobs, but also acquire the dollars necessary to continue to meet their financial obligations.

USA Cares will take on the responsibility for paying essential household bills (rent/mortgage/utilities/car payment) while the service member is attending residential type PTSD/TBI treatment. In so doing, USA Cares will facilitate attendance to mandated/recommended treatment programs by removing the financial obstacles many face today. The recent Rand study suggests over 300,000 suffer from PTSD/TBI, with fewer than half of these cases actually identified. Thus, the magnitude of the problem is significant. We believe any program that will help diagnosed service members attend necessary treatment is of great value and deserves our full support.

Due to the potential size of the PTSD/TBI treatment problem, no one sector can be expected to adequately cope with the problem. A public – private sector partnership is essential if this problem is to be resolved. Military treatment facilities, the VA hospitals and clinics, and respected civilian hospitals must all work together to even begin to make a dent in the caseload. USA Cares has teamed up with a Houston hospital, TIRR Memorial Herman, a leading rehabilitation facility, to provide care to TBI-type sufferers. A fellow member of the Coalition for Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans, TIRR Foundation collaborated with TIRR Memorial Hermann to create the Project Victory program. Project Victory provides treatment for military personnel, and veterans of recent military service, who served in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom, and who have screened positively for, or have been diagnosed with, post concussive symptoms or traumatic brain injury while in combat or stateside. As good as the Project Victory program is, a financial barrier to an 8 to 10 week treatment program remains for many would-be attendees. University Behavioral Health of El Paso, Texas has also joined with USA Cares as a provider of PTSD/TBI treatment to the military. The basic structure of the Warrior Treatment Today Program is outlined below:

Stage 1: Identification and Verification

Scenario ONE: Service members seeking support will come to USA Cares in our traditional manner via the World Wide Web and complete a simple application that details how we can contact them, and the nature of the problem or issue. The client will be contacted by our Staff,

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who will discuss the requirements and needs of the family. Should the issue of PTSD/TBI be revealed by the client, the case will be passed to our Advocacy Center who will suggest screening (if it has not been done) and provide references to locate screening facilities. The goal is to not let the family plunge into financial crisis.

Scenario TWO: A service member is referred for residential PTSD/TBI treatment by competent medical authority (VA in the case of veterans, Title 32 Guard, and inactive Reserve). He may have gone for screening as a result of Scenario ONE, or any other number of ways. At the time of referral to residential treatment, the service member must be made aware of USA Cares and our program to help with finances while at treatment. (Lacking the ability to support the family due to absence from work for an extended period, the referral will likely not be accepted/executed). The service member applies to USA Cares under our Warrior Treatment Today program which includes the below general guidelines:

Qualifying Elements:

- 🇺🇸 Injury is connected to service in Iraq or Afghanistan
- 🇺🇸 Service member has been diagnosed by competent medical authorities, either military or civilian
- 🇺🇸 Employment and income loss is not covered by medical or unemployment insurance
- 🇺🇸 Family will be in danger of losing their home if they don't receive assistance
- 🇺🇸 Service member has been accepted into qualifying treatment center for recovery and rehabilitation

Stage II: Determining Requirements & Gaining Approval

- 🇺🇸 USA Cares will assist in housing, food, utilities and transportation related costs as required
- 🇺🇸 USA Cares will require documentation that supports the need
- 🇺🇸 Food costs will be developed along the required amounts from the USDA, which an example says that a family of four requires about \$518 a month
- 🇺🇸 Case will be reviewed and approved by a USA Cares Virtual Committee

Stage III: Implementation and Assistance

- 🇺🇸 Approved cases are moved to accounting where each month the approved amounts are paid directly to the provider
- 🇺🇸 Incremental assistance can be extended out over the period of treatment not to exceed 180 days.
- 🇺🇸 The Family Resource Coordinator will maintain contact with the client throughout the case length

Stage IV: Continuum of Care

Two weeks prior to discharge from the PRRP, the case manager will contact the client and spouse to complete a survey focused on needs for the post PRRP period. This survey will include all aspects of quality of life, for example, housing, food, income, employment, respite time, etc. An analysis of the survey results will provide the basis for a follow up care plan. The plan will identify resources lined up to be applied against identified needs. The plan will be provided to the client for approval/consultation and forwarded to the gaining OIF/OEF Coordinator. The hope is that the plan can

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allow USA Cares to draw on numerous resources, both public and private, that can be brought to bear in the cause of returning this service member and family to normalcy.

In the future, USA Cares is working to involve other top flight civilian hospitals in the program. Working with our partner, Mercy Flights, we can transport an invisibly wounded warrior anywhere in the US at no cost to the service member. We envision a network of such hospitals all working to treat the enormous caseload that PTSD and TBI represent from today's war. Bound together by information technology that can quickly handle referrals and locate treatment centers, this program is exportable to any state. We believe that a number of states will consider this opportunity to give their state's military the treatment they deserve while not endangering their financial future. This program is being initiated in Texas using facilities in Houston, El Paso, and, Dallas. The Texas program will serve as a model for other states—Kentucky has now signed on. No American service member and their family should have to choose between paying the bills and getting treatment. USA Cares plans to see that they don't.

