

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Question 1: What is Executive Order 13822?**

Answer 1: Executive Order 13822, “Supporting Our Veterans During Their Transition from Uniformed Service to Civilian Life,” was issued to help transitioning service members and Veterans access mental health care and suicide prevention resources in the first year after separation from service. VA research shows the year following separation from active duty military service can pose many transition-related challenges — such as homelessness, family reintegration, employment, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance misuse — that can increase the risk for suicide.

### **Question 2: Why was Executive Order 13822 issued?**

Answer 2: Providing mental health resources and preventing service member and Veteran suicide is a top priority for this administration. As transitioning service members become Veterans, they may have a higher risk of mental health difficulties and suicide – especially within the first year after separation from military service. The health and well-being of our nation’s Veterans is VA’s highest priority. Our goal is to reduce suicide rates and suicidal behavior among Veterans. For that reason, VA is working diligently to promote wellness, increase protection, reduce mental health risks, and promote effective treatment and recovery as part of a holistic approach to suicide prevention.

### **Question 3: What does the Executive Order mean for Veterans?**

Answer 3: The Executive Order has several major impacts for Veterans.

- Service members will learn about VA benefits and start the application process for enrollment in VA healthcare *before* becoming Veterans.
- Any newly transitioned Veteran who is eligible can go to a VA medical center (VAMC), Vet Center, or community provider and start receiving mental health care *right away*.
- Former service members with *other than honorable (OTH)* discharges may receive mental health care from VA in emergency situations, and certain former service members with OTH discharges are eligible for mental health care for conditions incurred or aggravated during active duty service.
- Some DoD resources available to service members, such as Military OneSource, will now be available to Veterans for one year following separation.

- Veterans will have access to Whole Health Orientation groups, giving them the opportunity to connect with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and, if appropriate, receive a referral for VA mental health care.
- After the first year, eligible Veterans may *still receive mental health care support* through VA, Vet Centers, the Veterans Crisis Line, or from a referred community resource.
- Veterans will also be able to receive support through VA partners, like VSOs and faith-based organizations.

#### **Question 4: What is the Joint Action Plan?**

Answer 4: The Executive Order mandated the development of a Joint Action Plan by the Departments of Defense (DoD), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Homeland Security (DHS) to provide transitioning service members with access to mental health treatment and suicide prevention resources, in the first year after separation. The Plan was submitted to the White House on May 3, 2018 and is available here: <https://www.va.gov/opa/docs/Joint-Action-Plan-05-03-18.pdf>. Consistent with the Plan, DoD, VA, and DHS are working together to identify and meet the needs of at-risk Veterans during the critical one-year period after separation.

#### **Question 5: What is the significant impact of the Joint Action Plan?**

Answer 5: Transitioning service members and Veterans will receive more information about mental health resources and increased access to those resources due to the combined efforts of DoD, VA, and DHS. Ultimately, the Joint Action Plan provides an agreed upon way forward for all agencies to expand access to mental health care for transitioning service members and to help address needs that no agency can accomplish independently.

#### **Question 6: Does a transitioning Service member or Veteran have to be enrolled in the VA health system prior to receiving mental health care services?**

Answer 6: Not necessarily. Some Veterans are eligible for care without enrolling. However, VA strongly encourages ALL Veterans who may be eligible to apply for enrollment in the VA health care system.

#### **Question 7: How do transitioning Service members or Veterans become enrolled in the VA health care system?**

Answer 7: Transitioning service members and Veterans can quickly and easily learn about eligibility and access to VA care online at <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/transitioning->

[service/resources.asp](#) or they can contact their local VA medical center (VAMC), Vet Center, or Veterans Service Organization (VSO).

**Question 8: Can Veterans receive mental health care outside of the services of the VA health care system?**

Answer 8: Yes, Veterans can also get support outside of VA through VA's partners, like faith-based organizations and VSOs, to make sure they have the right resources and the support they need, whenever and wherever they need it.

**Question 9: What happens after the one-year mark if someone is receiving care?**

Answer 9: The Executive Order focuses on the first year after separation from active military duty. However, access to VA mental health care services for eligible Veterans is not time-limited. For individuals determined ineligible for VA health care, VA will guide Veterans to resources outside of VA for the proper help and care they need within their community.