

April 27, 2007 2:00 PM

Information Paper

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Mental Health Task Force Status Report

1. Section 723 of the FY 2006 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Secretary of Defense to “establish within the Department of Defense a task force to examine matters relating to mental health and the Armed Forces.” This Mental Health Task Force was charged to “submit to the Secretary a report containing an assessment of, and recommendations for improving, the efficacy of mental health services provided to members of the Armed Forces by the Department of Defense
2. The Task Force consists of fourteen members: seven from the Department of Defense, seven non-Department of Defense. The DoD co-chair from May 2006 through the time of his retirement in March 2007 was LTG Kevin Kiley, Surgeon General of the Army. The current DoD co-chair is VADM Donald C. Arthur, Surgeon General of the Navy. The non-DoD co-chair is Shelley MacDermid, PhD, a professor of Family Studies at Purdue University.
3. Based on the need to properly incorporate the new DoD co-chair, VADM Arthur, into the process and the product, the Task Force extended the delivery date of the report to the Secretary of Defense to 15 June 2007.
4. The Task Force has had nine meetings of the full Task Force membership. These meetings have included informational briefings from subject matter experts on topics of concern to the Task Force, open “town hall” sessions at which the public was provided an opportunity to address the Task Force, and closed working sessions at which the Task Force developed the contents of the report.
5. The Task Force sent delegations of 2-5 members on site visits to 38 military installations from all four Services in the continental United States, Europe, and the Far East.
6. A webpage on the OASD(Health Affairs) website, accessible to the public, hosts announcements about Task Force meetings and accepts written comments from the public.
7. A draft of the Task Force report will be deliberated in open session by the Defense Health Board on May 3, 2007.