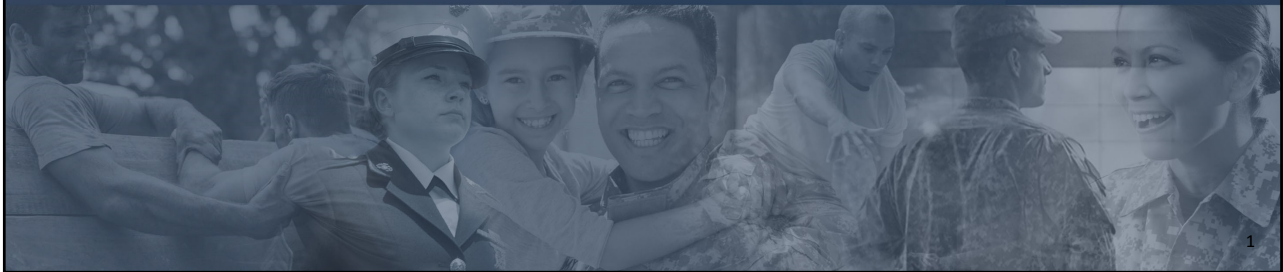


Mental Health Care Access for MHS Beneficiaries

Alex B. Valadka, MD
Chair, Neurological/Behavioral Health Subcommittee
November 30, 2022



Overview



- Membership
- Tasking
- Background
- Objectives and Scope
- Summary of Subcommittee Activities to Date
- Areas of Interest
- Ways Ahead

Membership



CHAIR
Alex Valadka, MD*



Sonia Alemagno, PhD, MA



Jennifer Belding, PhD, MA



Jeremy Lazarus, MD*




Raghu Upender, MD

*Board Member

Defense Health Board

Tasking



On May 5, 2022, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs directed the Defense Health Board ("the Board") to **provide recommendations to enhance the Military Health System (MHS) capacity and capabilities to meet beneficiaries' mental health needs.**

Defense Health Board

Background



- Access to mental health care is increasingly a concern for family beneficiaries in the MHS.
- Family member mental health & Service Member mental health are interrelated.
- The supply of military mental health resources (e.g., providers and treatment options) has not kept pace with the needs of the MHS beneficiary population.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the gap between demand and supply for MHS mental health care.
- Advances in tele-behavioral health and new therapies offer opportunities to improve access to mental health treatment.

Objectives and Scope



- Provide recommendations to enhance MHS capacity and capability to meet beneficiaries' mental health care needs, and to eliminate barriers to accessing and delivering mental health care for both adult and child beneficiaries
- Provide recommendations to promote innovative mental health care research and treatment strategies for PTSD and other behavioral health conditions

Summary of Activities to Date



Meeting Date	Discussion Topics
Mar 30, 2022: DHB Meeting	Child and adolescent mental health crisis
Jun 6, 2022: DHB Meeting	Mental health access from the DoD's perspective
Jun 28, 2022: NBH Subcommittee Kickoff Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 DoD Inspector General's Report on beneficiary mental health access challenges • Blue Star Families' Military Lifestyle Survey
Jul 14, 2022: NBH Meeting	Mental health needs of military families
Aug 10, 2022: DHB Meeting	Update of report to DHB members
Aug 18, 2022: NBH Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRICARE for Kids Coalition priorities • Mental health care access in the direct care system
Sep 8, 2022: NBH Meeting	Review report outline and Chapters 1 & 2
Oct 13, 2022: NBH Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army Spiritual Readiness Initiative and Mission-100 to Alaska • Air Force's Targeted Care Initiative
Nov 10, 2022: NBH Meeting	TRICARE reimbursements for mental health

Defense Health Board

7

Emerging Themes



- **Improve access** to mental/behavioral health services
- **Increase/expand pools of providers** to increase workforce diversity
 - Not every MH/BH condition needs a physician psychiatrist
- **Improve salaries** of MH/BH professional positions within the MHS
- **Increase MH/BH training program complements**
- **Increase MH/BH funding and research**
- **Ensure quality of care** is maintained in both direct care and purchased care

Defense Health Board

8

Way Ahead



- Monthly subcommittee meetings with briefings and report development

Questions

