



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Veterans' Affairs Encourages All to "Make the Call"

With the Holiday Season in full swing, Commissioner Linda Schwartz reiterates that which was stated in the New London Day on December 22nd: "Rate of suicide in military sounds an alarm"

The darkness of winter in and of itself does have an effect on people's outlook. Short days and long nights can be cause for negative feelings and isolation. Coping in a healthy way with some of our emotional needs is indeed a challenge.

Commissioner Linda Schwartz and the staff at the Department of Veterans' Affairs are reaching out with a reminder that the holiday season can be both an enjoyable and stressful time. We want to take this opportunity to remind folks that there are several services which are set aside to support recently returning military personnel, veterans and their families who might be experiencing symptoms of depression, post traumatic stress and problems coping during this time of year.

Often friends, coworkers and family members are the first to notice when a veteran or military member is experiencing difficulties. If you have any of these concerns about a veteran, we want you to know that there are several avenues available to help you help your veteran or their families.

Several State agencies in Connecticut and the Federal VA have services to address the very special emotional and mental health needs of veterans. Many times people feel that these issues are none of their business, however we are asking for everyone to be a "Battle Buddy" by taking steps to approach any veteran you see in need.

Coaching into Care is a new program supported by the Federal VA which offers professional counseling for friends and relatives on how to speak to veterans if they are concerned about their welfare. Another program exclusively for Connecticut veterans is our **Military Support Program** which is a 24/7 hotline answered by individuals who are available to connect callers with mental health services and programs sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The **Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs** has a toll free number which is available to assist in guidance and support services. Very recently, **2-1-1**, Connecticut's free information and referral service has collected a

comprehensive listing of services and programs specifically directed to assist military members, veterans and their families.

Please help us get the word out especially during this holiday season. Commissioner Schwartz has been receiving numerous calls for help and people who wish they had known about these special services. We are asking people to have the courage to take the steps to “**Make the Call**” and reach out to veterans who can use this help. We want a Happy Holiday for everyone.

Coaching into Care: 888-823-7458

Email: CoachingIntoCare@va.gov

Military Support Program: 866-251-2913

Department of Veterans’ Affairs: 866-928-8387

2-1-1: 211 (Ask for Military/Veteran Listings)