RESOLUTION 16 – 29

VA MENTAL HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, over the past decade the VA Office of Mental Health Services has evolved a comprehensive set of mental health services while seeing a significant increase in the number of veterans receiving those services; and

WHEREAS, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) identified key barriers that deter veterans from seeking mental health care, including: stigma; lack of understanding or awareness of the potential for improvement; lack of child care or transportation; and work or family obligations; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 VA provided specialized mental health services to more than 1.4 million veterans and has integrated mental health into primary care settings; and

WHEREAS, despite progress in hiring additional mental health staff, AMVETS remains concerned about how VA plans to resolve its mental health staffing issues to meet demand and provide timely access for these critical services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that AMVETS calls on Congress to require VA to develop performance measures and provide an assessment of resource requirements, expenditures and outcomes in its mental health programs, as well as a firm completion date for full implementation of the components of the full Uniformed Mental Health Services package; and be it further

RESOLVED, that AMVETS strongly encourage both the VA and DoD to ensure that veterans and service members receive adequate screening for their mental health needs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that AMVETS strongly encourage VA to ensure that all professional staff are provided specialized training and orientation to the current roles and experiences of the men and women returning from theaters of combat, taking care to acknowledge the unique post-deployment mental health challenges faced by women; and be it further

RESOLVED, AMVETS strongly recommends Congress appropriate more dedicated funding for mental health care and related programs and services during the next five fiscal year budgets and to annually review the effectiveness of said services in order to effectively treat servicemembers suffering from psychological trauma.

SOURCE: Departments of AZ,ND,NJ,VA,FL,MO,IL,KY,NM,AK,CA,MA,WA,IA,OH,TN