

VFW Teams Up with Humana, PsychArmor to Educate Veterans about Benefits, Support from Veterans Service Officers

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ARLINGTON, Va. – The VFW and Humana are joining forces with multiple veterans organizations to collaborate on a new initiative focused on raising awareness about Veterans Service Officer (VSO) programs.

With Humana's support, PsychArmor, a national nonprofit and preferred training provider specializing in military culture awareness, is creating an online, video-based curriculum to educate about VSOs and to offer guidance on how to access support and maximize veteran entitlements across the full range of non-profit providers.

"The VFW is excited to see that Humana and PsychArmor see the value of VSOs and the human impact that this network of professional and trained advocates offers to the veterans' community free of charge," said Ryan Gallucci, VFW Deputy Executive Director. "We look forward to working with Humana, PsychArmor and our VSO partners on this project to make sure veterans, military-connected families, and the American public know how to easily access the care and benefits to which they are entitled."

During the collective impact strategy meeting here Jan. 11, leaders from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO)

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brainstormed with the Humana and PsychArmor teams to determine the overarching goals for the developing curriculum.

The training PsychArmor is developing will leverage the collective strength of these organizations around whole-person health in military-connected communities.

“I am proud Humana is taking an important role in bringing together various veteran service organizations to have critical discussions on how to better educate and coordinate transitions of those leaving active service as well as support the many existing veterans who are unaware of or apprehensive about accessing benefits and services available to them,” said Dan Maltese, Vice President of Retail Career Distribution for Humana MarketPoint. “Our veteran community is in need of trusted, easy-to-access and understandable resources that will give them a path of care, support and services that can stand as proud as the service our veterans gave to our country.”

The group agreed there is a significant knowledge gap when it comes to general understanding of the benefits and services available to those who have served in the military, meaning many veterans are not accessing the financial compensation or health care to which they are entitled through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VSOs are in communities across the country to help veterans navigate federal, state and local resources and benefits. Their services are free of charge through national veterans non-profit organizations, like those working to develop this educational training with PsychArmor.

“This is yet another building block in our work to reduce barriers to care for veterans and their families,” said Dr. Tina Atherall, CEO of PsychArmor. “We’re applying a public-health approach to an identified health equity need – getting veterans in touch with their VSO peers who can help them navigate the complexities of VA claims and benefits. We also believe that the resulting social connections and their impact on health outcomes will be a secondary benefit of VSO engagement and advocacy.”

The new course being developed, *15 Things Veteran Service Officers Want You To Know*, will be based on feedback from this meeting as well as surveys and focus groups with VSOs and learners. In addition to raising awareness about VSO programs, the curriculum aims to counter misconceptions about the VSO program and will address concerns that many veterans do not self-identify or file VA claims.

The VSO course will follow a similar format as PsychArmor’s cornerstone course, [*15 Things Veterans Want You To Know*](#).