



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 273-6000  
www.va.gov

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 31, 2007

## **VA, DoD Announce “Recovery Coordinators” *New Resource for Seriously Injured on Care, Federal Benefits***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) today signed an agreement to provide “federal recovery coordinators” to help ensure medical services and other benefits are provided to seriously wounded, injured and ill active duty service members and veterans.

The agreement puts into place one of the top recommendations of the President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors, co-chaired by former Sen. Robert Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

The agreement initially establishes that the first federal recovery coordinators will be provided by VA in coordination with DoD and will be located at top military treatment facilities throughout the nation. They will coordinate services between VA and DOD and, if necessary, private-sector facilities, while serving as the ultimate resource for families with questions or concerns about VA, DoD or other federal benefits.

“This agreement ensures our nation’s active duty service members and veterans who have been wounded receive the very best care during their recoveries,” said Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield. “Service members, veterans and their families can be assured they will have an ultimate resource they can rely on whenever help is needed from VA or DoD.”

Job postings for the new positions have been made at [http://www.va.gov/JOBS/Fed\\_Recover\\_Coord.asp](http://www.va.gov/JOBS/Fed_Recover_Coord.asp), with the first 10 federal recovery coordinators scheduled to be hired by Dec. 1. Plans call for the new employees to be trained and in place at four of the military’s major health care facilities during January 2008.

**- More -**

## **Recovery Coordinators 2/2/2/2**

The coordinators will ensure the appropriate oversight and coordination is provided for care of active duty service members and veterans with major amputations, severe traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, severe sight or hearing impairments and severe multiple injuries. The coordinators will also work closely with family members to take care of services and needs.

The first 10 coordinators will work at military health care facilities and at any other locations where patients are later assigned. They will be located at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.; the Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.; the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas; and Balboa Park Naval Medical Center in San Diego. Additional recovery coordinators will be added in the future as needs are determined.

The coordinators will have a background in health care management and work closely with the clinicians and case management teams to develop and execute another major recommendation from the Dole-Shalala panel, individual federal recovery plans for the wounded. Those plans specify what services are needed across the continuum of care, from recovery through rehabilitation to reintegration to civilian life.

The coordinators will have access to and support from the VA's Under Secretary for Health, VA's Under Secretary for Benefits, DoD's Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, as well as the commanders of facilities where service members and veterans receive treatment.

“The coordinators will have the training, resources and support from the highest levels of VA and DOD to help remove any barriers to care and benefits for the service members, veterans and their family members,” said Dr. Michael J. Kussman, VA's Under Secretary for Health. “VA provides the best health care available anywhere. This will ensure returning Global War on Terror heroes receive the care they deserve.”

These federal recovery coordinators are in addition to 105 patient advocates VA has hired, trained and put in place since June 2007. Those advocates, most veterans of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, ensure a smooth transition of wounded service members through VA's health care system, while also cutting red tape for other benefits.

# # #