



## BACKGROUND

On June 28, 2019, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in support of Presidential Executive Order 13822 addressing the complex challenges faced by transitioning Service members and Veterans. The MOU sets forth a framework of cooperation between NGB and VA to provide outreach and services, such as RCS, for eligible National Guard (NG) Service members<sup>1</sup>. This Vet Center (VC) model leverages VA resources to decrease barriers associated with receiving care by providing services during non-traditional hours or in non-traditional settings.

## PROCESS

VC staff can provide on-site outreach, counseling, and referrals for NG Service members and their families during *locally agreed upon drill weekends*<sup>2</sup>.

- + To schedule RCS<sup>3</sup> support during drill weekends:
  - The NG can connect with local VC staff via [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov) (search “Locations”)
  - VC staff can connect with NG Behavioral Health contacts via [www.nationalguard.mil/wrf](http://www.nationalguard.mil/wrf)
- + VC staff can provide direct counseling during the drill weekend, utilizing either an onsite Mobile Vet Center (MVC) or space designated by the local NG unit/wing.
- + If Service members need more than adjustment counseling, VC staff can work with NG and Reserve units/wings and refer members to appropriate resources or other VA organizations (e.g. Veteran’s Health Administration).

## ELIGIBILITY

- + All Veterans are encouraged to use RCS resources<sup>4</sup>. Any Veterans and Active Duty Service members, to include NG and Reserve members, are eligible for ongoing services if any of the following applies:
  - Have served on Active Duty in any combat theater or area of hostility.
  - Experienced a military sexual trauma while serving on Active Duty or during inactive training periods.
  - Provided direct emergent medical care or mortuary services, while serving on Active Duty, to the casualties of war.

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<sup>1</sup> These services are provided through the 300 Vet Centers (VCs), 83 Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs), and the Vet Center Call Center (877-WAR-VETS).

<sup>2</sup> Due to the essential nature of NG training schedules, VC staff will remain flexible in providing services, and will deliver those services during non-traditional hours when needed.

<sup>3</sup> RCS support includes referrals to other available VA resources within the local community when individuals are not eligible for services from VA.

<sup>4</sup> VC staff will make every effort to connect non-eligible Service members to services and resources for which they would benefit.



- Served as a member of an unmanned aerial vehicle crew that provided direct support to operations in a combat zone or area of hostility.
- Vietnam Era Veterans who have accessed care at a Vet Center prior to January 1, 2014.
- + RCS support is also provided to family members of Veterans and Service members to help cope with the deployment of a loved one. This includes bereavement counseling for families who experience an Active Duty death.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***Will VC staff participate in all NG drill weekends?***

No. There are more than 3,000 Army National Guard (ARNG) units and more than 90 Air National Guard (ANG) wings drilling throughout a month. VC staff will be available as needed and requested. (See the Process section above for scheduling details.)

### ***Will there always be a MVC present during drill weekends?***

No. There are 83 MVCs nationwide. VC staff receive many requests throughout the year to support Veteran and Service member related events. If a MVC is not available, VC staff will work with local NG unit/wing leadership to designate an appropriate space.

### ***Are counseling staff (as opposed to outreach and referral) at each drill weekend?***

No. Counseling staff are available as needed. The psychological health point of contact will coordinate with their local VC staff to determine which RCS will be needed during the drill weekend.

### ***Will VC staff see non-eligible Service members during drill weekend?***

Yes. No Service member will be turned away for services. Although the VC has specific eligibility criteria, for example, combat deployment, any NG Service member can be seen for assessment and referral to community resources.

### ***Will VC staff assist with benefits, education, or GI bill questions?***

Yes. VC staff are knowledgeable about VA benefits and can answer basic questions as needed. They are not benefits experts though they can work to make appropriate connections to VA benefits staff.

### ***Will VC staff assist with writing temporary profiles, providing documentation for Line of Duty, etc.***

No. VC staff are not credentialed with NG to provide this service.

### ***Will VC staff share Service member information with NG unit/wing leadership?***

No. Only in a situation where the Service member is in an immediate crisis and is a threat to himself/herself or others will this information be shared.