



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

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Secretary Shinseki Announces Expansion of Counseling for Combat Veterans *Additional 28 New Community Vet Centers*

WASHINGTON – Today, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced that combat Veterans will receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in 28 additional communities across the country where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will establish Vet Centers in 2010.

“VA is committed to providing high-quality outreach and readjustment counseling to all combat Veterans,” Secretary Shinseki said. “These 28 new Vet Centers will address the growing need for those services.”

The community-based Vet Centers -- already in all 50 states -- are a key component of VA’s mental health program, providing Veterans with mental health screening and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) counseling.

The existing 232 centers conduct community outreach to offer counseling on employment, family issues and education to combat Veterans and family members, as well as bereavement counseling for families of servicemembers killed on active duty and counseling for Veterans who were sexually harassed on active duty.

Vet Center services are earned through service in a combat zone or area of hostility and are provided at no cost to Veterans or their families. They are staffed by small multi-disciplinary teams, which may include social workers, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, master’s-level counselors and outreach specialists. Over 70 percent of Vet Center employees are Veterans themselves, a majority of whom served in combat zones.

The Vet Center program was established in 1979 by Congress, recognizing that many Vietnam Veterans were still having readjustment problems. In 2008, the Vet Center program provided over 1.1 million visits to over 167,000 Veterans, including over 53,000 visits by more than 14,500 Veteran families. More information about Vet Centers can be found at www.vetcenter.va.gov/index.asp.

New Vet Centers 2/2/2/2

A list of the new Vet Center locations is attached.

Communities Receiving New VA Vet Centers

American Samoa

Arizona -- Mohave and Yuma Counties

California -- San Luis Obispo County

Delaware – Sussex County

Florida –Marion, Lake, Collier, Okaloosa and Bay Counties

Georgia – Muscogee and Richmond Counties

Hawaii – Western Oahu

Indiana – St. Joseph County

Louisiana – Rapides Parish

Michigan – Grand Traverse County, also serving Wexford County

Missouri – Boone County

Montana – Cascade and Flathead Counties

Ohio – Stark County

Oregon – Deschutes County

Pennsylvania – Lancaster County

South Carolina – Horry County

Texas – Jefferson and Taylor Counties

Utah – Washington County

Washington – Walla Walla County, also serving Umatilla County, Oregon

Wisconsin – LaCrosse County, also serving Monroe County

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