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Montana National Guard receives Post Deployment Health Reassessment Recommendations

FORT HARRISON Mont.-The Montana National Guard received the final recommendations on Thursday from the Post Deployment Health Reassessment-Task Force (PDHRA-TF) for improvements in care for returning combat Veterans.

The Task Force was commissioned in April 2007 by Maj. Gen. Randy Mosley, Montana National Guard's Adjutant General, to evaluate the Montana National Guard's Post Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) program. Their mission was to generate recommendations to strengthen the existing procedures throughout the Montana National Guard. The PDHRA-TF provided fourteen recommendations for the Montana National Guard and two recommendations for the Governor's office.

"This report, which is the effort of a multi-disciplined Task Force, provides a comprehensive review of all aspects of the post deployment process. I am thankful for the hard work of the task force and their efforts to help improve the way we do business. I know they have contributed many extra hours for the good of our Soldiers and Airmen. Ensuring our Veterans receive the best possible care is important to all of Montana." said Maj. Gen Mosley.

The Montana National Guard has already adopted several programs to improve the redeployment from combat and reintegration process. "We realized we could make some improvements in the current program. Even before the Task Force recommendations were final, we made a number of internal adjustments in the Montana National Guard to strengthen our organization" stated Maj. Gen. Mosley. Some of these include: aggressive educational and outreach to Guard members and their families, work with the VA-sponsored Vet to Vet program, Family Assistance training, and Supervisor and Employee training to teach leaders how to identify signs and symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD). Also, soldiers and airmen who request to leave the Guard or are having problems attending drills will be evaluated prior to discharge. In addition, numerous web pages are available that provide useful information to help returning guardsmen and their families readjust after deployment.

The Montana National Guard also supports youth programs that help children deal with issues concerning the deployment and redeployment process. Our youth camps and symposiums use teambuilding, self esteem awareness and fun to interact with kids of service-members. The Montana National Guard is using many methods to keep Soldiers, Airmen and their families prepared to handle any situation that arises.

“The leadership of the Montana National Guard is absolutely committed to member care and in ensuring that all veterans receive the support they deserve after their return from combat” concluded Maj.Gen. Mosley .

Background

The Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) program was designed to screen active and reserve component service members between 90 and 180 days after returning from certain deployments. Information from field research indicated that health concerns, particularly those involving mental health, are more frequently identified several months following return from operational deployment. The goal of the PDHRA program is to increase the opportunity for early identification and treatment of emerging mental health and other deployment-related health concerns.

The PDHRA program was launched on March 10, 2005, by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, who directed an extension of the then current Post Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA) program to provide follow-on through a Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA) process. The program was extended on an Army-wide basis on January 16, 2006 and then to the National Guard on April 21, 2006.

Eligibility Criteria

The PDHRA screening is mandatory and is completed three to six months post deployment for all active duty and reserve component service members who redeployed from a combat zone since March 10, 2005. Those service members who redeployed between September 11, 2001 and March 9, 2005, are to be afforded the opportunity to complete the PDHRA.

For more information the following websites are available. www.montanaguard.com, <http://dma.mt.gov/mvad>.

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