



County of Ventura Veteran Services Office



Mental Health Care

For Other-than-Honorable (OTH) Administratively Discharged Former Service Members

You may have heard the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced his intention to expand provisions for urgent mental health care needs to former service members with other-than-honorable (OTH) administrative discharges. On June 27, 2017 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released finalized plans that lay the framework for providing the aforementioned care.

This is the first time a VA Secretary has implemented an initiative specifically focused on this group of former service members who are in mental health distress.

“Suicide prevention is my top clinical priority,” said Secretary Shulkin, also a physician. “We want these former service members to know there is someplace they can turn if they are facing a mental health emergency — whether it means urgent care at a VA emergency department, a Vet Center or through the Veterans Crisis Line.”

Effective July 5, all Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical centers, such as the one located in Los Angeles and our Oxnard CBOC (1690 Universe Circle, Oxnard), will be prepared to offer emergency stabilization care for former service members who present at the facility with an emergent mental health need. Under this initiative, former service members with an OTH administrative discharge may receive care for their mental health emergency for an initial period of up to 90 days, which can include inpatient, residential or outpatient care.

During this time, VHA and the Veterans Benefits Administration will work together to determine if the mental health condition is a result of a service-related injury, making the service member eligible for ongoing coverage for that condition. This applies only to mental health and not treatment for physical conditions. If treated for any physical ailments, the veteran will be charged.

Mike McManus, retired Air Force Senior Master Sergeant, is the Veteran Services Officer for Ventura County. Please visit our website at www.vchsa.org/veterans and call (805) 477-5155 for assistance.