

A national leader in behavioral health services —
helping Veterans get the support they need



Easy access to high-quality mental health and substance use disorder services is essential to restoring and maintaining the health and well-being of our Veterans. With that in mind, Optum® Behavioral Health programs are uniquely positioned to help Veterans get the support they need.

Over four million returning Military Service Members report symptoms of a mental health or a cognitive condition.¹ Only about half of U.S. Veterans who need mental health treatment will receive these services.² Reasons for this include:

- Stigma or fear of being seen as weak
- Symptoms not always easily recognized by the Veterans or their loved ones
- Uncertainty about how to approach the health care system
- Long wait times to receive mental health treatment
- Logistical problems, such as long travel distances to receive care
- Lost hope that their condition and life can improve

OptumServe is the federal health services business of Optum and UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH). We are proud to partner with the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs and other organizations to help modernize the U.S. health system and improve the health and well-being of those we collectively serve.

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4M** returning Military Service Members report symptoms of a mental health or a cognitive condition.¹

**About
50%** of Veterans who need mental health treatment will receive the services they need.²

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Optum Behavioral Health understands these challenges, and we work to remove these barriers. We help people reach a stable place and maintain recovery on their terms, so individuals and their families can live their best lives. It is part of our mission to help make the health care system work better for everyone.

As one of the largest managed behavioral health care organizations in the United States, Optum Behavioral Health has the expertise, scope and scale to support any population across the nation. We:

- Provide behavioral health services to 36.7 million Americans
- Offer an extensive behavioral health network with more than 210,000 participating providers nationwide
- Serve 6.4 million Medicaid and 4.9 million Medicare lives
- Achieved NCQA's highest Full Accreditation status as well as URAC accreditation

Our guiding principles

1. Focus on coordinating care for the whole person

The rigors and trauma of military service can make a unique impact on a person's physical and behavioral health, as well as on the social determinants of that person's health (including living environment and work status). Our approach looks at all of these aspects of a person's health and well-being, whether he or she is being treated by a primary care provider or a behavioral health specialist. This ensures better treatment of the whole person by identifying and addressing an individual's physical, behavioral and social issues.

This whole-person approach is particularly important when managing the long-term effects of complex conditions that many Veterans struggle with, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, suicidal ideation and substance use disorders.

Our program works by connecting individuals with the clinicians that have the expertise to address their particular health care needs. We work across the health system to identify untreated and undertreated problems early and then manage conditions following evidence-based practices. We also bring together community social support services that help these people attain and maintain their quality of life and live as independently as possible.

2. Focus care on person-centered recovery principles

The best outcomes are achieved when individuals are fully engaged in their treatment, recovery and well-being. That's why recovery principles are at the heart of our programs.

We listen to individuals and caregivers to understand their goals and what motivates them to take action. Abilities and strengths become part of their recovery plans. Self-care tools and resources (including online Military and Veteran toolkits) keep individuals engaged and support recovery and wellness between visits.

3. Make care accessible and relevant to Military Service Members and Veterans

People respond best to care that meets them where they are. We've invested in the services and capabilities to make this possible, including:

- 24/7 emergency behavioral health care (for mental health and substance use issues)
- Care that is sensitive to gender, cultural and service-related issues
- Services close to home, including virtual telemental health visits
- Family, couple, caregiver and child services to support immediate family members



Enhancing community care for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder

Optum has partnered with the South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma and Resilience (STRONG STAR) to increase access to quality behavioral health care by offering training to Veteran-serving community mental health providers in evidence-based treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder and related mental health conditions.

Our staff of behavioral health clinicians act as case managers who understand the specific needs of the populations we serve, and actively guide individuals to specialized services when needed. These may include:

- Personal and family counseling
- Treatment for substance use disorder, including opioid use disorder
- Suicide prevention services
- Certified peer support specialists, individuals who have personally experienced living with a behavioral health condition, and are familiar with military life
- Care for post-traumatic stress disorder
- Treatment for traumatic brain injuries
- Sexual trauma services
- Home-based evaluations for elder Veterans and those with limited mobility

Optum supports the dedicated VA Community Care Network (VA CCN) in three regions, which encompass 36 states and three U.S. territories. VA CCN is a network of culturally aware health care providers who provide Veterans with behavioral health services that complement services provided by the VA. Additionally, Optum provides a nationwide provider network that offers Veterans access to behavioral health services outside of the VA, usually through an individual's health plan (including Medicare and Medicaid). Optum supports their provider network's service to Veterans by offering:

- Training opportunities in evidence-based treatment modalities for conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorder
- Targeted provider assessment, resource and support materials for Veteran populations
- Screening tools for military service
- Military culture training

These guiding principles — coordinated, whole-person care, person-centered recovery, with relevant and accessible services uniquely positioned to help Veterans — help those who have served get the care they deserve.

Our nationwide network includes providers with specialized expertise³

Over 22K Military and Veteran care

Over 38K Substance use disorder

Over 108K Post-traumatic stress disorder

Over 8K Traumatic brain injury

Over 46K Trauma-informed therapy



Meet Barb: A Veteran's journey to recovery

Barb* is 53 years old and recently retired from the military. She is readjusting to civilian life and is struggling with alcohol use disorder and major depression. Barb has also been admitted to a behavioral health hospital twice in the past year.

1

Shortly after Barb's last hospital visit, she was contacted by an Optum case manager (a licensed behavioral health clinician) who **reviewed her discharge plan with her and made sure she understood it** and had the resources and support to follow the plan. The Optum case manager also **verified that Barb had set an appointment with an Optum network outpatient provider** for follow-up care. The outpatient provider was selected for having expertise in co-occurring disorders.

2

The Optum clinician worked with Barb to **create a crisis plan to help her avoid returning to the hospital** should her depression return.

3

The same Optum case manager contacted Barb to **ensure she kept her scheduled follow-up appointments**. Barb's husband was also engaged to ensure Barb had transportation to her appointments.

5

The Optum case manager **connected Barb to VA services and other local community supports after first reviewing her options and discussing what would work best**. She attended Alcoholics Anonymous and obtained a sponsor. Barb also joined a VA substance use recovery support group. Barb's husband was guided to an AL-ANON family support group.

4

The Optum case manager discussed with Barb the option of **engaging with a certified peer support specialist**, an individual who had a lived experience with a behavioral health condition and treatment similar to Barb. Barb agreed to a peer support referral.

6

The Optum case manager **stayed connected with Barb at regular intervals for six months** to ensure she was actively participating in her plan to stay healthy and out of the hospital.

Recovery

Barb has been able to stay out of the hospital and remain sober and symptom-free. She knows that she can contact the same Optum case manager or certified peer support specialist whenever she needs additional support in her ongoing recovery.

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Optum and its parent company, UnitedHealth Group, are honored to support Military Service Members, Veterans and their families through partnerships, meaningful volunteer opportunities and community service initiatives across the country.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Boys and Girls Club of America

United Health Foundation is partnering with the Boys and Girls Clubs to create an interactive online platform and mobile application for military kids, to help them succeed in their new schools and communities as they transition from military to civilian life.



Fisher House Foundation

Through our partnership with the Fisher House Foundation, we provide free temporary housing and childcare services to families of Military Service Members and Veterans needing medical care at Camp Pendleton, Joint Base Lewis-McChord and the Naval Medical Center San Diego.



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Paralyzed Veterans of America and UnitedHealth Group® have formed a strategic partnership to help Veterans transition to civilian life and navigate the complex landscape of finding jobs.



giveanhour®
giving help and hope

Give an Hour

United Health Foundation has partnered with Give an Hour to ensure our nation's heroes and their families have access to the health care services they so rightly deserve. The network of nearly 7,000 licensed mental health professionals have provided more than 163,000 hours of care and support to those in need.



**Blue Star Families
Fellowship Program**

UnitedHealthcare and Blue Star Families launched Blue Star Families Fellowship Program to support and empower military families. Three military spouses were named ambassadors to serve as a link between military and civilian leadership communities.



**Marine Corps Scholarship
Foundation**

UnitedHealth Group is a national corporate sponsor of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, supporting educational opportunities for the children of wounded Veterans.



**National Military Family
Association**

United Health Foundation's partnership with the National Military Family Association provides scholarships to military spouses working to complete clinical training in mental health and counseling.



WE HONOR VETERANS

We Honor Veterans

Optum® Palliative and Hospice Care participates in We Honor Veterans, a specialized hospice care program for America's Veterans created by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sources:

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Evaluation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi.org/10.17226/24915.
2. Ibid.
3. Based on Optum Behavioral Health network counts as of March 1, 2020. Moore, March 4, 2020.

Learn more:

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