

# **DoD Response to the Department of Defense Task Force on the Care, Management, and Transition of Recovering Wounded, Ill, and Injured Members of the Armed Forces**

RWTF Business Meeting, April 2-3, 2013

Office of Warrior Care Policy

Mrs. Donna Seymour, Acting Principal Director

10:30 – 12:00 April 3, 2013



**PERSONNEL AND READINESS**



## DoD's Implementation of RWTF FY12 Report Recommendations

DoD's implementation plan addressing the RWTF recommendations will be submitted to Congress by May 31, 2013.

The RWTF asked WCP to discuss DoD's plan to implement the following 16 recommendations:

Category	Recommendation #
• Restoring Wellness and Function:	1, 3
• Restoring into Society:	12, 13, 16
• Optimizing Ability:	17, 18, 19, 22, 25
• Enabling a Better Future:	28, 29, 30, 32, 33, & 34



## Restoring Wellness and Function Guidance on Administrative and Clinical Care

**Recommendation 1:** DoD's failure to publish guidance on administrative and clinical care of Recovering Warriors (RW) is unacceptable. DoD should publish timely guidance to standardize care to RWs without delay.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### Implementation:

- ✓ DoDI 1300.25, "Guidance for the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation Warfighter (OWF)", was published March 25, 2013
- ✓ Air Force Instruction 34-1101, "Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care", was published June 21, 2012
- Interagency instruction for complex care coordination remains a high priority



## Restoring Wellness and Function Recovering Warrior Bill of Rights

**Recommendation 3:** DoD should draft an RW Bill of Rights or content for a commander's intent letter to guide expectations for communication and treatment of RWs and their families.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### **Implementation:**

- USD P&R will provide a Bill of Rights to Military Departments by June 30, 2013
- The Office of the Warrior Care Policy (WCP) will also prepare content for the Services to use in communicating Service members' rights and responsibilities related to expectations and treatment of recovering Service members and their families



## Restoring into Society Definition of WII Category 2

**Recommendation 12:** DoD should adopt a new definition of WII Category (CAT) 2 as below: WII Service members of every Service should be designated as CAT 2 if they meet any of the following four criteria:

- Identified as seriously ill/injured (SI) or very seriously ill/injured (VSI) on a casualty list;
- Referred to IDES for PTSD and/or TBI;
- RC retained for more than six months on medical Title 10 orders;
- RC returned to Title 10 orders for medical conditions related to deployment.

Direct the Services to adopt the new definition as the criteria for assignment of an RCC or an NMCM.

**Evaluation:** Non-Concur

### **Implementation:**

- Existing definitions accurately differentiate severity of conditions and level of care / interaction required
- Recovering Service members are assigned an RCC / FRC if they are in a Wounded Warrior program and are categorized as a CAT 2 or CAT 3



## Restoring into Society

### Attendance at the joint DoD - RCC training course

**Recommendation 13:** All RW squad leaders, platoon sergeants, fleet liaisons, Navy Safe Harbor NMCMs, AW2 advocates, section leaders, and AFW2 NMCMs should attend the joint DoD RCC training course.

**Evaluation:** Concur

#### **Implementation:**

- ✓ Completed review of existing curriculum
- Review compliance with existing policy requiring standardized DoD training for RCCs, Advocates and Non-Medical Care Managers by July 31, 2013
- Update curriculum and training delivery methods by September 30, 2013



## Restoring into Society

### Potential Benefit Changes Upon Separation

**Recommendation 16:** Upon RW entrance into the IDES, the Services should educate family members/caregivers on potential benefit changes upon separation, the VA Caregiver Program, Vet Centers, and other federal/state resources for which families may be eligible. The Services should use social media, apps, fact sheets, pamphlets, videos, or other communication tools to educate family members on these topics.

**Evaluation:** Concur

#### **Implementation:**

- ✓ Evaluate content and effectiveness of PEBLO communications to recovering Service members, families and caregivers
- ✓ Developed and distributed communication tools to the Services to increase availability of information on resources and benefits to recovering Service members, family members and caregivers (e.g., WCP blog, social media (Facebook / twitter), WCP fact sheet, installation specific outreach plan, National Resource Directory (NRD) widget
- Publish PEBLO training standards and learning objectives by June 30, 2013



## Optimizing Ability Potential Loss of TRICARE ECHO Benefits

**Recommendation 17:** The Services should require that, upon RW entry into IDES, Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLO's) brief families/caregivers enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) on the potential loss of TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) benefits upon completion of IDES if discharged.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### **Implementation:**

- DoD / Services will ensure all Service members enrolled in EFMP are referred to TRICARE benefits counselors upon referral into IDES
- Update PEBLO training objectives and learning standards, by June 30, 2013, on the requirement to advise families and caregivers to contact the Director of TRICARE for detailed information concerning their benefits





# Optimizing Ability

## Unify Family Members / Caregivers and RWs

**Recommendation 18:** The Services should seek every opportunity to unify family members/caregivers and RWs. It is important to preserve family dynamics and keep family members engaged in the recovery process.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### Implementation:

- DoD will emphasize to the Military Departments that the Services should unify families with recovering Service members, when possible, to aid in the member's recovery
  - Relocating Service members closer to home when possible
  - Co-locating family with recovering Service members when possible



## Optimizing Ability Rename the NRD

**Recommendation 19:** WCP should rename the NRD to reflect its target audience. Market the newly named portal with a goal to more than double the usage.

**Evaluation:** Non-Concur

### Implementation:

- ✓ National Resource Directory (NRD) has approximately 100,000 visits per month
- ✓ NRD commercials began appearing on National Capital Region (NCR) InfoNet kiosks in March 2013
- ✓ Utilize GovDelivery features to share resources directly with NRD partners
- Launch a campaign to get the NRD widgets loaded onto high profile web sites
- Collaborate with eBenefits in order to share NRD resources



## Optimizing Ability Rapid Issuance of Title 10 Orders

**Recommendation 22:** DoD must establish policies that allow for the rapid issuance of Title 10 orders to RC RWs who have sustained line of duty injuries/illnesses. Delays in Title 10 orders have resulted in the interim use of Incapacitation (INCAP) pay. DoD should define specific criteria for the appropriate use of INCAP pay that will be consistent across all Services.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### Implementation:

- DoDI 1241.2, “Reserve Component Incapacitation System Management”, May 30, 2001, and DoDI 1241.1, “Reserve Component Medical Care and Incapacitation Pay for Line of Duty Conditions”, February 28, 2004 (certified current as of April 23, 2007), will be consolidated into a single issuance.
- Reserve Component (RC) members with line of duty injuries or illnesses to be retained on active orders until the member is fit for duty, or the condition cannot be materially improved with continued treatment and the member has received a final disposition from the DES



## Optimizing Ability Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Counseling

**Recommendation 25:** DoD and VA should expand their existing memorandum of understanding (MOU), in accordance with Section 1631 of the Wounded Warrior Act, so that all RWs receive Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) counseling upon entering the IDES process.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### Implementation:

- DoD Instruction 1300.25, “Guidance for the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation Warfighter (OWF)”, March 25, 2013, guides Service member opportunities to receive earlier access to counseling
- DoD Instruction on Vocational, Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) counseling for Service members transitioning through IDES is in coordination, with publication targeted for September 2013
- DoD and VA working to place VR&E counselors at several Military installations
  - 105 counselors placed at Military Installations in FY 2012
  - 95 VR&E counselors being hired in FY 2013



## Enabling a Better Future

### Ensure Only Those RWs Likely to Separate Enter the IDES

**Recommendation 28:** DoD should continue to evaluate processes to ensure only those RWs likely to separate enter the IDES process

**Evaluation:** Concur

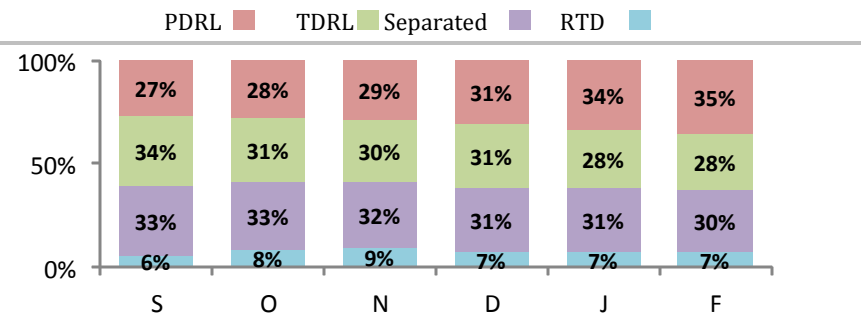
#### Implementation:

- ✓ WCP measures Return to Duty (RTD) rates as a benchmark for IDES referrals
- ✓ WCP publishes monthly IDES Performance Report and provides bi-monthly briefs to the Disability Improvement Working Group and Benefits Executive Committee, which provide oversight of the IDES
- 7% of all cases in February 2013 resulted in RTD, down from 18% in February 2012

**Key Statistics**

	February		1-mth. ?	12-mth.?
	Count	%		
PDRL	856	35%	+2%	+13%
TDRL	668	28%	-1%	-0%
Separated	723	30%	-1%	-2%
RTD	174	7%	+0%	-11%

**Disposition Outcomes**





## Enabling a Better Future Individual Electronic Records and Common Standards for Storage

**Recommendation 29:** DoD should create individual electronic records of all IDES information and establish common standards for storage and retention of these records.

**Evaluation:** Concur

### **Implementation:**

- ✓ DoD and VA began testing an IDES Electronic Case File Transfer (eCFT) capability in September 2012 at 4 military installations, all 5 DoD Physical Evaluations Board locations, and 2 VA Disability Rating Activity Sites (DRAS)
- Results will be presented to the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) in October 2013 with recommendations regarding further implementation



## Enabling a Better Future

### Utilize Survey Results to Improve the IDES Program

**Recommendation 30:** WCP should utilize survey results to improve the IDES program. Improvement goals should be balanced across three areas: timeliness, satisfaction (process vs. disability rating), and effectiveness.

**Evaluation:** Concur

#### **Implementation:**

- DoD restarting survey in 2013
- Improvements were made to better measure extent to which IDES is meeting customer satisfaction goals
- Revised survey instruments incorporate feedback and guidance from Congress, Government Accountability Office (GAO), Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and RWTF



## Enabling a Better Future

### Joint Adjudication, Replacing Service FPEBs with a Joint FPEB

**Recommendation 32:** DoD should consider a joint board modeled after the Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) to allow joint adjudication that replaces the Service Formal Physical Evaluation Board (FPEB) with a joint FPEB. The post Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) process would remain unchanged with appeals to the Board for the Correction of Military Records (BCMR) adjudicated by the Service Secretary.

**Evaluation:** Non-Concur

**Implementation:**

- DoD is staffing a study on the Consolidated DES





## Enabling a Better Future

### PEBLO Work Intensity Staffing Models

**Recommendation 33:** The current PEBLO staffing formula is inaccurate. DoD should develop new and more accurate PEBLO work intensity staffing models. The Services should ensure a minimum manning of two PEBLOS (of any Service) at every Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) site to prevent potential process delays due to a PEBLO being unavailable (e.g., leave).

**Evaluation:** Non-Concur

#### **Implementation:**

- Congress directed a PEBLO study to determine adequacy of the current ratio and staffing levels
  - The ASD (HA) has requested that the Services conduct a manpower study to support data collection for this effort
  - Manpower study will determine optimal PEBLO ratio necessary to meet installation-level mission requirements
  - PEBLO Addendum Report targeted for delivery to Congress in February 2014



## Enabling a Better Future

### 100 Percent Contact of RWs by a MEB Outreach Lawyer

**Recommendation 34:** The Services should ensure that 100 percent of RWs are individually contacted by a MEB outreach lawyer (in-person, phone, email, mail, etc.) upon notification to the PEBLO that a narrative summary (NARSUM) will be completed.

**Evaluation:** Non-Concur

**Implementation:**

- PEBLOs currently inform recovering Service members that legal counsel is available
- Requirement will be included in PEBLO training objectives and learning standards to be published by June 30, 2013



## Education & Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation Warfighter (OWF)

DoD Instruction 1300.25, “Guidance for the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation WARFIGHTER (OWF)”, was signed on March 25, 2013.

### Current active caseloads

OWF – 532

E2I – 262

### Cumulative caseloads since August 2012

OWF – 859

E2I – 832

### Challenges:

- Access to non-Federal internships

### Best Practices

- Co-location of E2I and OWF regional coordinators with Service representatives, such as Transition Coordinators and Recovery Care Coordinators



Questions??