

## Wounded Warrior Project Releases New Data From Largest Survey of This Generation of Veterans

### **Injured veterans are increasingly looking to VA for their healthcare needs, yet report access to care continues as a major issue**

**Jacksonville, FL (September 15, 2014)** – Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) today released the results of their 2014 Annual Alumni Survey. Based on the responses of more than 21,000 wounded veterans, it includes the largest sample size of service members injured since 9/11 and is the most statistically relevant survey response of that population to date. Among the survey's findings, the 2014 results indicate the recent passage of sweeping legislation to improve care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) comes at a time when more and more injured veterans are seeking that care as they move further away from their military service.

While not exclusive to VA care, the two most common problems in accessing both physical and mental healthcare were difficulty in scheduling appointments and lapsed or inconsistent treatment because of canceled appointments and switches in providers. The survey also showed the primary type of current health insurance or coverage cited included Veterans Affairs at 59.2 percent, up from 52.7 percent in 2013. The percentage of warriors receiving VA disability benefits is 72 percent, up from 62.8 percent in 2013. Alumni with a VA disability rating of 80 percent or higher rose to 42.6 percent in 2014, from 36.2 percent in 2013. The top resource used since deployment for addressing mental health concerns was VA medical centers at 62.5 percent, up from 54.1 percent in 2013.

“When our nation’s injured veterans speak to us, we must listen,” said Steve Nardizzi, CEO of Wounded Warrior Project. “Our survey data tells us where our warriors continue to struggle, allowing us to improve and strengthen our programs, and identify gaps in existing services and support. It is our sincere hope VA will do the same – listen to our injured veterans and rise to meet the challenge.”

Additional key findings in the 2014 results include:

- The top five reported injuries and health problems experienced during post-9/11 service were 1) sleep conditions (75.8 percent), 2) posttraumatic stress disorder (75.2 percent), 3) back, neck, and shoulder problems (72.3 percent), 4) depression (67.1 percent), and 5) anxiety
- 4 out of 5 warriors have a friend who was seriously wounded or killed in action.
- Nearly 75 percent of warriors report the memory of an upsetting military experience has haunted them in the past month.
- 59.2 percent of warriors say talking with another veteran is in their top five ways for coping with stress
- 3 out of 4 warriors have less than a bachelor’s degree.
- The unemployment rate for respondents in the labor force is 13.9 percent.

- 43.2 percent of warriors report having a traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- 3 out of 10 warriors need the aid and attendance of another person because of their injuries and health problems; among them, more than one-fourth need more than 40 hours of aid per week.
- As a result of their injuries, 7 percent of warriors are permanently housebound.
- 82.3 percent of warriors are overweight or obese.

This is the fifth consecutive year WWP has conducted this research, providing a robust, longitudinal snapshot of this population of injured veterans. The year-over-year data will allow WWP to establish a baseline; identify trends; compare these outcomes with those of other military populations; and measure the impact of and inform changes to WWP programs and services.

Programs such as Peer Support, Project Odyssey<sup>®</sup>, Soldier Ride<sup>®</sup>, and Warriors to Work<sup>™</sup> were created based on previous feedback from Alumni, and focus on peer mentorship, mental health, physical well-being, and economic empowerment, respectively. The survey also helped inform the creation of the Independence Program and Long-Term Support Trust, two programs designed to safeguard care and support as veterans and their families confront their long-term needs and goals.

[Click here](#) to download the full report.

### **About Wounded Warrior Project**

Wounded Warrior Project is recognizing its ten-year anniversary, reflecting on a decade of service and reaffirming its commitment to serving injured veterans for their lifetime. The mission of Wounded Warrior Project is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP currently serves over 56,000 warriors and nearly 8,000 family members through its 20 unique programs and services. The purpose of WWP is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit [woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

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