

Panel Dissects Findings from 2015 WWP Alumni Survey Survey Shows Increasing Need for Mental Health Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 12, 2015) – The nation took a moment this week to honor the men and women who have bravely served our country in wartime and peace. From parades on 5th Avenue in Manhattan to Poyntz Avenue in Manhattan, Kansas, families gathered to salute veterans from all uniformed services. Also this week, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) took the time to help the nation understand some of the challenges facing today's generation of wounded veterans.

Monday, Nov. 9, WWP partnered with the Center for New American Security (CNAS) to shed light on the 2015 annual WWP Alumni Survey. The survey looks at issues with mental health, physical and economic challenges, as well as gets a pulse on today's injured service members. CNAS brought together a panel of experts to talk about veteran care issues, from the delays in mental health care to how the military culture may make it tough for some veterans to ask for help, to how traumatic brain injuries today could create bigger health care demands in years to come.

"This data serves as a needs assessment," LTC Paula Smith, from the Army's Soldier for Life Program said. "How often do we get this kind of look at their needs, we're blessed to have this information to act on."

Jennifer Silva, executive vice-president for Strategy and Innovation at WWP started the panel by talking about some of the findings of the survey of more than 23,000 WWP Alumni. More than 3 in 4 of respondents are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). More than 2 in 3 have anxiety. Nearly 30% need the aid and attendance of another person because of their post 9/11 injuries and health problems.

"Our mission is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors," Silva said. "To do that, we need this kind of information."

The data collected in the survey informs WWP, the government, and any other agency wishing to use the information.

Dr. Rajeev Ramchand is a senior behavioral specialist and scientist at RAND Corporation, a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis. He joined the panel to talk about how the survey findings can lead to better options for mental health care. "Whatever works for you, works for you, and we will work to find the right treatment option," Ramchand said.

Ralph Perpignan, an Army Reserve Veteran, and WWP Alumnus, attended the panel. He talked about how important a chance introduction was for his life. “Another soldier that WWP helped brought me around,” Perpignan said. “I wouldn’t be here if it were not for WWP. Through Soldier Ride, I started getting healthier and started losing weight, it gave me hope.”

Soldier Ride® is a unique 4-day event that combines long-distance cycling, with adaptive bikes when needed, with other events to encourage camaraderie and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Ralph’s story is one of chance, not just with finding WWP, he worked in the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001. He says he was deployed with the reserves when the terror attacks occurred.

He hopes findings like those in the survey will help lead VA hospitals to alternative treatments for mental health problems.

For WWP, the survey provides a chance to ensure it is serving wounded veterans in the best way possible.

“We want to be impactful,” Silva said. “If we’re going to help as much as possible, we have to be able to shift to meet the needs of injured veterans. Where are the challenges? Where should we focus our resources?”

Wounded Warrior Project recently released the findings of its 6th annual WWP Alumni Survey.

Read the full report or download the executive summary at woundedwarriorproject.org/survey.

Contact: Rob Louis – Public Relations Specialist

Email: rlouis@woundedwarriorproject.org

Phone: 904.627.0432

About Wounded Warrior Project

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP’s purpose 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, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit woundedwarriorproject.org.

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2015-11-12-Panel-Dissects-Findings-from-2015-WWP-Alumni-Survey-Survey-Shows-Increasing-Need-for-Mental-Health-Service>