

# Veteran's Task Force Issues Recommendations

A veteran's mental health task force has completed its work and issued a number of recommendations for the Iowa Legislature to consider. The task force was established to look at ways to improve mental health services for returning veterans.

In 2007, the Legislature created the Iowa Veterans Benefit Study Report. The study was focused on identifying the needs of Iowa's veterans. From that study the idea of the task force was created.

The task force is comprised of stakeholders from the mental health and substance abuse fields, as well as stakeholders of veterans groups.

The task force made the following recommendations to the Legislature to improve mental health services for returning veterans:

- Provide mental health first aid training to veteran stakeholders.
- Enhance the veterans' database by capturing veterans' information through existing data collection systems.
- Develop a social marketing and outreach strategy for veterans' behavioral health issues.
- Advise the law enforcement academy to integrate crisis intervention team training with an emphasis on veterans' issues.
- Create community-base peer support pilot programs for veterans and their families.
- Initiate a process to create a jail diversion program for veterans in Iowa.
- Support efforts to secure a mobile outreach vehicle to serve veterans in Iowa.

During the 2010 Legislative session, the Iowa Legislature completed the Department of Defense's top ten quality of life issues for military families regarding education, health care, employment, custody issues, and voting. The Legislature will continue to do all it can to support Iowa veterans.