For Immediate Release

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**VA Announces the first Industry Innovation Competition for 2014**

***Targeting Innovations in Veteran Mental Health***

WASHINGTON - ­The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced the first of multiple Industry Innovation Competitions in 2014, which identifies, tests, and evaluates promising innovations that enhance the accessibility and quality of mental health care and services delivered to Veterans.

“VA has established a track record as an innovative organization that welcomes new ideas,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This competition represents an important way for us to tap the significant pool of talent and expertise inside and outside of government to improve mental health care and services for our Nation’s Veterans, their families, and survivors.”

The innovations from this competition will add to VA’s already extensive mental health programs, which can be found at [www.mentalhealth.va.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov)

The competition is part of the VA Center for Innovation (VACI),a department-wide program that seeks the most promising innovations from employees, the private sector, non-profits, and academia to increase Veterans’ access to VA services, improve the quality of services delivered, enhance the performance of VA operations, and reduce or control the cost of delivering those services.

“With this competition we are focused on challenges that affect a population much larger than our Veterans; these are challenges facing our entire nation as we rethink our approaches to mental health care and services,” said Patrick Littlefield, Acting Director, VA Center for Innovation. “We anticipate these efforts will benefit a very large community of providers and customers. Here at VA, we continue to be focused on bringing to bear the best-of-breed solutions to serve our Veterans and their mentally healthy futures.”

This Industry Innovation Competition seeks creative solutions in three areas of significant importance to VA. Public and private companies, entrepreneurs, universities and non-profits are encouraged to propose new ways to respond to Veteran mental health challenges specific to the topics:

* Upstream Suicide Intervention
* Improving Veterans Receptivity to Mental Health Care to Promote Treatment, Engagement, and Participation
* Innovative Methods of Incentivizing Behavior to Improve Mental Wellness

These topics and processes are detailed in the Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) and can be found at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov) (RFP No. VA118-14-R-0077) and at: <http://www.innovation.va.gov/>

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