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COVER Commission Releases Final Report February 6, 2020

WASHINGTON, DC – The Creating Options for Veterans Expedited Recovery (COVER) Commission submitted its final report to the President, US Congress, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) on January 24, 2020. The report offers nine recommendations for improving the mental health care available to veterans.

Commission Chairman Jake Leinenkugel described the report as providing “bold recommendations that were developed by putting the needs of veterans at the heart of our efforts.”

After an eighteen-month examination of care provided to veterans’ commissioners agreed that a cross-cutting range of improvements are necessary. Included in the needed improvements is the need for VA to transform its delivery model to one which is person-centered, relationship-based and focuses on veterans’ whole health.

“There are many promising therapies out there, but there is limited understanding of exactly what the optimal mix of treatments might be for any condition,” said Commission Co-Chairman, Rear Admiral Thomas Beeman (Ret.). “The recommendations will guarantee our nation’s veterans receive the mental health care they need—when and where they need it.”

The commission’s recommendations were developed in a series of public meetings which included representatives from the Department of Veteran Affairs, Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, state & local agencies and veteran service organizations all of whom offered tremendous assistance to the commission’s efforts. In addition, commissioners and staff met with veterans in one-on-one meetings as well as through a series of focus groups held throughout the nation to ensure the voice of veterans was included throughout deliberations.

“We had many conversations with both veterans and active duty service members, and time and time again, we heard that there is a great deal of shame that comes with seeking care,” Leinenkugel observed. “So, in addition to our formal recommendations, it is absolutely vital that our entire society focuses on reducing the stigma that often accompanies engaging in mental health care.”

To download the full final report or for more information about the COVER Commission visit: <https://www.va.gov/cover/>

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