



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 5, 2016

VA's Polytrauma System of Care Marks One Million TBI Screenings

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [Polytrauma System of Care](#) (PSC) has hit the one million mark in screening Veterans for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), often regarded as one of the signature injuries of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBI symptoms such as severe headaches, memory loss, reduced executive functioning, and tinnitus can range from manageable to seriously disabling, potentially limiting a Veteran's ability to work and manage daily living. Screening Veterans for TBI and helping them to deal with the condition is one of the central programs of PSC.

Started in May 2005, PSC provides comprehensive and coordinated rehabilitative care to Veterans with life-changing injuries, including TBI, limb loss, blindness, hearing loss and tinnitus, among others. PSC also assists with community re-entry needs. It is fully coordinated with the Department of Defense to ensure uninterrupted, seamless health care transition for those that served on active duty.

Over these past 10 years, many Servicemembers have returned home with injuries that would not have been survivable in previous conflicts. Today, they not only survive, they thrive, in large part due to PSC, a thoroughly Veteran-centric VA program.

"The one million mark in TBI screenings reflects VA's success in building an integrated polytrauma care program for wounded and injured Servicemembers and Veterans," said Dr. David J. Shulkin, VA Under Secretary for Health. "VA's dedicated polytrauma care teams recognize the importance of taking care of the whole person and coordinating physical, mental and rehabilitative care for Veterans suffering the most dramatic injuries of the war."

VA employees created PSC to address the need for a comprehensive multi-disciplinary system of care to help Veterans suffering with two or more injuries considered disabling physical and psychological impairments, such as blast injuries and traumatic amputations. PSC patients have sustained injuries affecting multiple body parts that result in physical, cognitive, psychological, and functional disabilities. Frequently, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) occurs in Polytrauma patients, as does Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other mental health problems.

"The Polytrauma System of Care sets VA apart from other health care systems," said Dr. Joel Scholten, National Director, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for VA. "PSC demonstrates VA's unique understanding of the needs of Veterans and the best way to support them in achieving well-being and their personal life goals."

VA has 110 [Polytrauma rehabilitation sites across the country](#), including 5 Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation); 23 Polytrauma Network Sites (comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation); and 87 Polytrauma Support Clinic Teams (comprehensive outpatient rehabilitations). Services available through PCS include interdisciplinary evaluation and treatment, development of a comprehensive plan of care, case management, patient and family education and training, psychosocial support, and use of advanced rehabilitation treatments and prosthetic technologies.

For more information about the Polytrauma System of Care, visit www.polytrauma.va.gov/. A VA blog post featuring Polytrauma System of Care may be found [here](#).