

VA



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VA Exploring Alternative Treatments for TBI and PTSD

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it will use two innovative treatments to ease the everyday challenges associated with living with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

“We know that for a small group of Veterans, a traditional approach to health care may not be the most effective,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “This is particularly true with certain chronic medical and mental health conditions. For Veterans who don’t improve, we have to look for innovative, evidence-based approaches that may help them restore and maintain their health and well-being.”

Veterans with a history of mild to moderate TBI now have access to light emitting diode (LED) therapy contained in a lightweight frame that is placed on the head and a clip placed inside the nose. Results of some [studies](#) show that LED improves brain function including attention and memory, emotions and sleep. LED therapy has begun at the VA Boston Healthcare System, Jamaica Plain campus, this month. LED also is available for Veterans to use in their homes.

Providers at the Long Beach VA Medical Center have begun using stellate ganglion block (SGB) to treat Veterans with PTSD symptoms. SGB is safe and may ease PTSD symptoms, such as the feelings of anxiety and constantly being on alert. It involves an injection, or shot, of medication into the neck to decrease the symptoms of PTSD.

VA remains a world leader in the development and use of innovative therapies, such as telehealth, yoga and other approaches to improve health and well-being.

For more information about other emerging therapies aimed at enhancing Veterans’ physical and mental well-being, visit VA’s Center for Compassionate Innovation at: <https://www.va.gov/healthpartnerships>.

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