

Exploring Alternative PTSD Treatments

The VFW's Concern:

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), more than 40 percent of veterans in the VA system have a service-connected disability rating for mental health. The VFW acknowledges the growing need for alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)/mental health conditions. Currently, veterans seeking mental health care are predominantly directed to two types of medications—selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)—as well as various evidence-based therapies to reduce PTSD symptoms. Veterans have expressed to the VFW their concern that VA may be overprescribing these medications for mental health conditions. While today's standard treatments are successful for some individuals, many report experiencing only temporary relief of symptoms, adverse side effects, and difficulties when going off medications. To ensure patient safety, the VFW urges VA to provide written informed consent to all veterans before starting long-term treatment with psychiatric medications, so they fully understand potential risks, benefits, and alternatives.

With nearly 2.5 million veterans using VA mental health services, it has the unique capacity to lead the nation in advancing innovative treatments. Just as VA pioneered telemedicine, cardiovascular care, and prosthetics, it can now do the same for PTSD care. Because not all treatments work for everyone, the VFW urges Congress and VA to research and provide alternative, non-conventional solutions for veterans. Some such treatments that have shown potential include stellate ganglion block, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, ketamine infusion, MDMA-assisted therapy, medical cannabis, and other plant-based alternative therapies.

The VFW Urges Congress to:

Pass H.R.4837, *Written Informed Consent Act*, to expand informed consent requirements to include five additional medication categories to ensure veterans are fully aware of the risks and benefits of these medications.

Pass H.R.2623, *Innovative Therapies Centers of Excellence Act of 2025*, to designate five VA medical centers as specialized hubs focusing on cutting-edge PTSD treatments for veterans.

Note: For H.R.4837 cosponsorship, please email Tyler Zidlicky at tyler.zidlicky@mail.house.gov.

For H.R.2623 cosponsorship, please email Alicia Seagraves at alicia.seagraves@mail.house.gov.