

Dear XX,

Our nation's soldiers and veterans have dedicated their lives to protecting our country, and they deserve the highest quality of mental health care, during and post-service. But the mental health of our troops has been neglected for far too long. There is a slew of harmful policies in place. The frontline mental health policy for our armed forces is [more than 100-years old](#). It repeatedly puts soldiers back in combat after they've expressed mental health needs or issues. There are [203 policies that re-enforce stigma](#) around mental health issues. The military is also overloading mental health professionals charged with serving soldiers; one mental health professional can be responsible for up to 6,000 active duty, deployed soldiers. The result? A three-month or longer waitlist for those with a mental health crisis, including those considering suicide.

This neglect has resulted in unacceptable consequences:

- 22 veterans taking their lives every day.
- The number and cost of psychiatric casualties far exceeding the **combined total** of soldiers both wounded and killed in action since WWII.
- 25 soldiers dying by their own hands for every one soldier killed on the battlefield.

Enough is enough. Mental health needs to be a priority for those that have given so much to our country.

To truly make mental health a priority, each branch of the armed forces should establish a Behavioral Health Corps. Currently, there are Corps for Nursing, Medical, Chaplain, Legal and Supply. Without its own Corps, mental health professionals are severely siloed. Psychiatry is assigned to the Medical Corps; psychiatric nursing is assigned to the Nursing Corps; occupational therapy, psychology and social work report to Medical Services Corps. Furthermore, there are thousands of qualified mental health professionals at community health centers on base who are forbidden to administer care to our soldiers.

All of this results in no coordinated policy on training or standardization of treatment, as well as tremendous waste, redundancies and huge financial cost.

I'm writing to ask for your support and help by working with the Department of Defense and each branch of the Armed Forces to establish a Behavioral Health Corps. With your help, we can stop preventable military suicides and mental health crises. I urge you, make a difference by making Behavioral Health Corps a reality.

Thank you,

Join the conversation with #BHCnow and support the petition: [LINK](#)