

<http://www2.alabamas13.com/news/2012/jun/12/va-announces-recruitment-effort-hire-mental-health-ar-3958593/>



Published: June 12, 2012

[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

VA Announces Recruitment Effort to Hire Mental Health Professionals

By Julie Meeks



Press release from the Tuscaloosa branch of the department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed an aggressive national mental health hiring initiative to improve recruitment and hiring, marketing, education and training programs, and

retention efforts for mental health professionals.

To speed the national hiring process, VA developed the Mental Health Hiring Initiative, a multi-faceted, sustained National marketing and outreach campaign that includes targeted recruitment of mental health providers willing to take positions throughout the country, including in rural and highly rural markets, to serve all VA medical Centers and community clinics.

VA has an existing workforce of 20,590 mental health staff that includes nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Currently, 228 mental health clinicians and support staff work locally supporting Tuscaloosa VA Veterans.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki noted that “as the tide of war recedes, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to anticipate the needs of returning Veterans.”

The team at Tuscaloosa VA is already actively treating Veterans through individualized care, readjustment counseling, and immediate crisis services. Tuscaloosa VA staff has contributed to mental health excellence by providing Acute Psychiatry, Substance Abuse Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs, PTSD Residential Rehabilitation Programs, Compensated Work Therapy/Transitional Residential Programs, Domiciliary Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs for homeless Veterans, general outpatient mental health services and specialty outpatient services for PTSD and Substance Abuse to West Alabama Veterans. Additionally, Tuscaloosa VA is dedicated to meeting the needs of the increasing number of female Veterans seeking mental health services by renovating an existing wing of the residential programs specifically tailored for female Veterans.

The initiative will help VA to meet existing and future demands of mental health care services in an integrated collaborative team environment and continue to position VA as an exemplary workplace for mental health care professionals.

“Mental health services must be closely aligned with Veterans’ needs and fully integrated with health care facility operations,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. “Improving access to mental health services will help support the current and future Veterans who depend on VA for these vital services.”

To locate the nearest VA facility or Vet Center for enrollment and to get scheduled for care, Veterans can visit VA’s website at www.va.gov. Immediate help is available at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (push 1) or texting 838255.

Alabama's 13 © Copyright 2012 Media General Communications Holdings, LLC. A Media General company.