

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) applauded efforts by the Administration that will make it easier for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to receive the care they deserve.

On July 12, the Veterans Administration announced a new series of rules that simplify the current process by which PTSD is diagnosed.

“Our veterans deserve access to the care they need without extra paperwork getting in the way. That’s why I’m so pleased to see this announcement from the VA that will expedite diagnosis and improve treatment for PTSD,” said Slaughter. “Our veterans deserve the very best care, especially the warriors that have recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, and I am committed to seeing that they get it.”

Until now unless the Veteran was in combat, VA adjudicators were required to confirm that the veteran actually experienced the claimed in-service stressor. With the changes announced today, the time-consuming requirement has been eliminated as long as the veterans time in battle is consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of their service. A psychiatrist or psychologist must also confirm that the claimed stressor is adequate to support a diagnosis of PTSD.

The Veterans Administration expects the rules announced will expedite access to care for veterans.

More details on the regulations announced today are included below.

Slaughter has a record of supporting our nation’s veterans. In 2007, Congress passed the largest funding increase to health care and benefits in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. In 2008, she supported the new G.I. Bill which makes an historic investment in our Iraq and Afghanistan veterans by providing an educational benefit that fully covers the cost of college. More recently she supported the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act, advancing appropriations one year ahead for the VA so that our soldier’s

health care wouldn't be held hostage by political wrangling. In April Slaughter was instrumental in passing the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, which among many things, will remove existing barriers to women veterans seeking health care, providing up to seven days of care of newborn children for the first time in history.

For more on Slaughter's work on behalf of Veterans, click [here](#).

If you're a veteran and want to know how the changes affect you, [email](#) or [call](#) our office.

New Regulations on PTSD Claims

- The new rule will simplify and streamline the processing of PTSD claims, reducing the time and frustration traditionally involved when Veterans apply for disability compensation for PTSD and access for mental health care.

- Veterans who do not otherwise meet eligibility requirements for enrollment in the VA health care system cannot receive mental health treatment at a VA facility without a disability rating from VA.

- This new rule is for Veterans of any era.
- This decision is consistent with recent Institute of Medicine studies of scientific data.
- The new rule will apply to claims:
 - received by VA on or after July 13, 2010;
 - received before July 13, 2010 but not yet decided by a VA regional office;
 - appealed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals on or after July 13, 2010;
 - appealed to the Board before July 13, 2010, but not yet decided by the Board; and
 - pending before VA on or after July 13, 2010, because the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims vacated a Board decision and remanded for re-adjudication.

- Not all combat wounds are visible. For decades, VA has led the health-care community in treating and researching the psychological wounds of war, especially PTSD.

- Since the start of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, VA has dramatically expanded the number of its mental health professionals to care for returning Veterans, including 1,000 just last year alone.

- VA will continue its world-class research program and its aggressive outreach to returning Veterans. The Department is committed to continuing to improve its processes to meet the needs of our newest generation of heroes.
- VA will continue to verify war deployments with the Department of Defense (DoD) to protect our Veterans from the backlash against any attempts at fraud.
- VA is the largest integrated health care system in the Nation and consistently ranks at the top, or near the top for quality and safety by various sources to include seven US News World Reports' "Top US hospitals," and HHS's & Medicare Hospital Comparison metrics.