

## **Navy Surgeon General Discusses Support Available To Wounded Warriors at Hiring and Support Conference**

By: Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

ALEXANDRIA, VA -- Navy Surgeon General, Vice Adm. Adam Robinson discussed support available to Wounded Warriors Feb. 2 at the first Wounded Warrior Hiring and Support Conference held in the National Capital Region. Hosted by the Navy Sea Systems Command at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, the conference focused on federal employment opportunities for disabled veterans.

Speaking to an audience of approximately 400 people, Robinson emphasized the Navy's commitment to providing world class medical care for military personnel and their families.

"The Navy has a long history of taking care of its own and our commitment to our injured Sailors, Marines and their families do not end with their arrival at a medical unit or hospital. It continues through their entire road to recovery," said Robinson. "When our people who are in the fight are hurt, we apply all on our training and resources to provide rapid care in partnership with our sister services."

The goal of the conference was to improve the Department of the Navy's overall approach and effectiveness in hiring wounded warriors. The conference presentations explored best practices and policies for helping injured veterans find employment, as well as, exploring barriers to hiring them while also discussing ways to overcome them.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, several federal authorities apply to 30 percent or more disabled, yet unemployment is double the national average for Wounded Warriors. Career employment is the final step in re-integration into society.

"We work hard to find post military service employment opportunities and help employers understand that they need to recognize that there may be physical, as well as, cognitive limitations if an employee has moderate to severe TBI," said Robinson. "Generally people who sustain a concussion will recover with time but that limited work hours and other accommodations may be necessary."

Robinson emphasized that while employers may have to make some accommodations, their return on investment would be high.

"As long as you invest in them, they will do their jobs," said Robinson. "All around the world, our men and women in the military guarantee their work with their lives. They won't quit because that is who they are."

Robinson provided an overview of significant health challenges associated with returning wounded warriors including standard and innovative treatments for Traumatic Brain Injury and

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and what the Navy is doing to assist them throughout their entire healing process and transition back into civilian life.

"We've been exploring all options to help treat PTSD," said Robinson. "One very successful program we've implemented at Naval Medical Center San Diego is a virtual reality simulator that adds a technological twist to a common PTSD treatment called prolonged-exposure therapy in which patients recall in graphic detail the traumatic events that set off their illness. For many sufferers, retelling and discussing the bad memories with a therapist can take away the sting."

The Navy's Surgeon General also shared his views on the long-term care that will be needed for many wounded veterans and emphasized the Navy's commitment to work with numerous partners to ensure they receive enduring care.

"Care doesn't stop when the war stops," said Robinson. "Care for our wounded warriors today will continue for the better part of this century, but we won't be able to do it alone. We have to blend a set of care across multiple federal and civilian agencies to provide the best care for those who have sacrificed so much for this great nation."

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