



PRESS RELEASE: The New York City Department of Veterans Services applauds First Lady Chirlane McCray's *NYC Well* mental health line for its critical assistance to all New Yorkers, including the New York City veterans' community

The New York City Department of Veterans Services applauds First Lady Chirlane McCray's *NYC Well* mental health line, announced on October 24, 2016, as a component of the *ThriveNYC* Mental Health Roadmap. This one-click, one-call connection to counseling, crisis intervention, peer support and referrals to ongoing mental health treatment services provides critical assistance to all New Yorkers in need of mental health care, including those in New York City's veteran community.

NYC Well is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year through phone, text and chat by calling 1-888-NYC-WELL, texting **WELL** to **65173**, or online chat by going to nyc.gov/nycwell. Mental health professionals are available to help New Yorkers who are struggling with suicidal thoughts, mental health problems like depression and anxiety, and substance misuse. *NYC Well* is accessible in more than 200 languages and is free and confidential regardless of immigration and insurance status.

Relevance to veterans

New York City is home to 210,000 veterans, and approximately 500,000 veterans and military family members, 11% of who served Post-9/11. Nearly 3 million service members have deployed for at least twelve months to Iraq or Afghanistan since September 11, 2001 during our nation's longest war; 40% of these individuals have deployed for multiple tours of duty.

Loree Sutton, MD, Commissioner, heralds the *NYC Well* mental health line as, "A tremendous step forward for mental health care of New Yorkers, including New York City's veterans and their families. Nearly 25% of veterans in New York City have a probable diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and/or major depression. More than 40% report being unaware of what help is available or uncertain about how to navigate the systems that provide assistance. *NYCWell* is a tremendous move forward in ensuring that our veterans and their families have direct access to mental health treatment services and support."

Darlene Brown-Williams, PhD, Assistant Commissioner of Integrative Health & Community Resilience, remarked that, "Ensuring that everyone has prompt access to mental health services is vitally important. When individuals have confidential resources available to help them handle anxiety, depression, and excessive stress, they will be better equipped to thrive. Peace of mind should not be limited to where you live or your finances. The FLONYC's launch of *NYC Well* is a critical step in closing the gap in knowledge, access and treatment of mental illness in NYC. This expansion of our crisis line will not only educate individuals about mental illness, it will encourage reduce the stigma by creating a

support system that is accessible in underserved communities. The flexibility of making services accessible via phone, text or chat will engage our youth as well as others. *ThriveNYC* and *NYC Well* are breaking down barriers related to mental illness and positioning New York City as a leader related to mental health. DVS is very excited to be a part of this groundbreaking initiative and fully support First Lady Chirlane McCray and the *ThriveNYC* team. Great work!”

For more information about *NYCWell*, visit their website at <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>.

For more information about NYC’s Department of Veterans Services, visit <http://nyc.gov/vets>, contact press@veterans.nyc.gov, or call 212-416-5250.

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