

# THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

## ARTS AND THE MILITARY

### IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF ACTIVE MILITARY AND VETERANS THROUGH THE ARTS

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#### ACTION NEEDED

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##### We urge Congress to:

- **Support H.R. 102, Expanding Care for Veterans Act, sponsored by Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA) to improve access to evidence-based complementary alternative treatments for veterans, including creative arts therapies.**

#### TALKING POINTS

- “Arts and the Military” includes the professional creative arts therapies disciplines of art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, psychodrama, and biblio/poetry therapy, all of which are nationally board certified therapies with licensure in selected states, as well as artist-directed applications of visual, literary and performing arts, and design. These creative arts therapists and community artists work together to provide quality, cost-effective healthcare and wellness services for active military, veterans, and their families.

#### **Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Health Interventions Help Veterans**

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- Creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs and services within Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals and on military bases will provide increased access to affordable, outcomes-based healthcare and successful treatment options for veterans and military personnel who do not respond to traditional interventions.
- Complementary and alternative/integrative medicine includes the creative arts therapies professions.
- Creative arts therapies interventions have been shown to be effective for relieving symptoms related to insomnia, anxiety, pain, and issues associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Artist-directed programs create opportunities for service members and their families to spend quality time with one another while being celebrated and supported by local arts organizations. These programs provide meaningful opportunities for families to access affordable cultural and educational experiences.

#### **Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed Bethesda in Maryland, and the NICoE Intrepid Spirit-1 at Fort Belvoir in Virginia.**

- This network provides art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy and therapeutic writing for service members with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health issues.
- Recognizing the success of this program, Congress appropriated a \$1.98 million budget increase for the National Endowment for the Arts in FY 2016, specifically allocated to expand this military

healing arts program. The House approved a similar \$2 million increase for FY 2017, currently under a continuing resolution.

- Additional Creative Forces clinical sites include:
  - **Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), AK**
  - **Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, CA**
  - **Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC**
  - **Fort Hood, TX**
  - **Madigan Army Medical Center, WA**

The **NEA** and **Department of Defense** collaboration also offers creative writing workshops, performing arts programs, the Blue Star Museums military appreciation program, and grant funding for projects that reach veterans.

## **BACKGROUND**

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Despite strong historical beginnings in veterans' hospitals during World War II, and inclusion in VA Hospital programs across the U.S., there remains a need to expand opportunities for creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs so that more military members and veterans can access these services in their communities.

Economic analyses, cost studies, and clinical research show a positive trend in the use of creative arts therapies and their impact on containing healthcare costs and facilitating functional outcomes achievement. Creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs have the potential to positively impact the healthcare spending concerns, quality of care issues, and healthcare needs of active military and veterans.

H.R. 102 Expanding Care for Veterans Act:

- Key aspects of H.R. 102 were previously a part of H.R. 2256, the Veterans Information Modernization Act, which had strong bipartisan support and passed the House in July 2015.
- H.R. 102 directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a plan to expand the scope of VA's research and education on, and delivery and integration of, complementary and alternative medicine services.
- H.R. 102 proposes a three-year program through the **VA's Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation** with the following goals:
  - (1) assess the feasibility and advisability of integrating the delivery of selected complementary and alternative medicine services with other VA health care services for veterans, and
  - (2) identify and resolve barriers to providing such services and integrating them with other VA health services.