

ISEPP Congratulates Senator Murray and The Congress on Passage
of the Mental Health ACCESS Act Of 2012
January 8, 2013

The International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry (ISEPP) today congratulated Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Congress on passage of the Mental Health ACCESS Act. The Act was adopted as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 that was recently passed by the Congress and signed by President Obama. Senator Murray introduced the Act in the summer of 2012.

The Act is designed to improve mental health treatment of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan by:

Providing enhanced oversight for Department of Defense (DOD) suicide prevention and resilience efforts;

Expanding services for the families of soldiers;

Improving the training and education of providers;

Increasing peer-to-peer counseling opportunities; and

Improving timely access to effective mental health services.

Reviewing existing research to determine safe and effective treatment of veterans and military members.

ISEPP has mounted an initiative called Operation Speak Up to work with the DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on improving the treatment of soldiers suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by stopping the use of psychotropic drugs as the primary modality of treatment and using non-drug approaches that have been proven to be safe and effective.

"Passage of this Act is a big step in the direction of improving the treatment of soldiers who are experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)," said Chuck Ruby, Director of Operation Speak Up. "ISEPP is encouraged by recent moves by the DOD and VA to use non-drug approaches to helping soldiers suffering from PTSD. This is another move in that direction."

Ruby said ISEPP is prepared to help the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration in the implementation of the Act's provisions. "Our organization includes many mental health professionals who are experienced in the use of non-drug approaches to helping people recover from trauma," he said. "We would like to help the DOD and VA in their commitment to provide safe and effective treatment to our soldiers."