

Statement On August 31 Executive Order  
on Mental Health Services for Veterans  
September 17, 2012

The International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry (ISEPP) today commended President Obama for his August 31 Executive Order which calls for improved mental health services to veterans, service members and their families and called for increased use of non-drug approaches to treating soldiers experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

“We are especially pleased that the President is calling for the hiring of 800 peer counselors to help in the treatment of veterans,” said Al Galves, ISEPP Executive Director. “We believe that peer counselors and other non-medical approaches are crucial to helping soldiers readjust to civilian life.”

Galves applauded the creation of a National Research Action Plan and the Military and Veterans Mental Health Interagency Task Force and encouraged the Action Plan to include research which compares a cohort of soldiers who are treated without the use of psychotropic drugs to a cohort that is undergoing the standard treatment which uses drugs as a primary modality of treatment. “Psychotropic drugs do not treat the causes of PTSD and do nothing more than chemically lobotomize patients.” Galves said. “We need to be using safe and effective non-drug approaches that help soldiers recover from PTSD without the damaging side-effects and high relapse rates that are associated with the drugs. Included in such approaches are cognitive-behavioral methods and trauma-informed approaches such as Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy.”

Galves also called on the President to get behind Senator Patty Murray’s Mental Health ACCESS Act of 2012, which expands mental health services for veterans and service members and expands the use of peer counselors and services to the families of veterans and service members.