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## Mental Health Care for the Military Over the Web

By *CLAIRE CAIN MILLER*

When we [first wrote](#) about [American Well](#), a start-up that offers doctor visits over a webcam, a number of the Bits readers suggested that the service seemed well-suited to visits with therapists.

The military will soon use American Well to do just that. It will be the first time that online care has been used to deliver mental health services, according to American Well.

Beginning Aug. 1 in Hawaii, TriWest Healthcare Alliance, which provides health care for a third of military service members and their families, will use American Well to put soldiers and their family members face to face with psychologists and psychiatrists over the Web.

[The service](#) is part of a program mandated by the Department of Defense to address soldiers' mental health. Accessing mental health services quickly, conveniently and privately is important for service members, said David J. McIntyre Jr., chief executive of TriWest.

“There has been a stigma that’s associated when one seeks behavioral health care when they are strong and a warrior,” Mr. McIntyre said. “Many in the senior levels of the military believe that individuals need to be able to seek that assistance in a private environment that is conducive to them getting the services rather than the stigma being a barrier.”

Service members and their families will be able to log on as many times as they want for assessments, counseling sessions, psychotherapy and medication management. American Well enables doctors to access a patient’s medical records while they are talking, add notes to the records and file prescriptions.

TriWest will begin using American Well in Hawaii because the state already [makes doctors on American Well available](#) to all residents through Hawaii Medical Service Association, the state’s Blue Cross-Blue Shield licensee. TriWest will also provide lower-tech online care in the 20 other states in which it operates. Mr. McIntyre said he hopes TriWest can eventually offer American Well’s services more broadly.