



U.S. eases rules on PTSD claims

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WASHINGTON, July 8 (UPI) -- U.S. veterans will soon be able to seek benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder without having to document events that caused it, officials say.

The New York Times reported Wednesday the more relaxed regulations could be in effect next week. Under the new rules, veterans must be able to prove they served in war zones and in roles in which they could have suffered the stressors they say led to PTSD.

The stricter regulations were unfair to women -- who are barred from combat jobs but in Iraq and Afghanistan were often in danger -- and to veterans whose PTSD was caused by the anticipation of danger, advocates say. But the new rules are likely to be expensive, with congressional budget analysts putting the cost at \$5 billion in the next few years.

Dr. Sally Satel, a psychiatrist affiliated with the conservative American Enterprise Institute, worried about the effect of benefits on younger veterans.

"It is destructive to give someone total and permanent disability when they are in fact capable of working, even if it is not at full capacity. A job is the most therapeutic thing there is," she said.

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