

Aetna Foundation Awards Grant to Help Military Members and Their Families Receive Free Counseling

-- Aetna Practitioners Volunteer Mental Health Services --



HARTFORD, Conn., Jul 25, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- As tens of thousands of American servicemen and women prepare to come home over the next year from their deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nonprofit organization Give an Hour(TM) will be better poised to meet their mental health needs, thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Aetna Foundation. The donation will enable Give an Hour to expand its free, confidential counseling services to members of the military, veterans and their families, particularly in rural or underserved areas far away from military bases and Veteran Administration facilities.

"As many as 35 percent of military service members who served in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from severe depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome or other significant mental health difficulties. Yet only about half have sought treatment," said Anne C. Beal, M.D., M.P.H., president of the Aetna Foundation. "Through its network of therapists who volunteer their time, Give an Hour is helping to fill an enormous gap in the accessibility of mental health services for our nation's veterans. We are proud to support its effort."

In conjunction with the Aetna Foundation award, Aetna Behavioral Health is actively recruiting volunteers from its network of 104,000 behavioral health providers across the United States to help Give an Hour increase the number of practitioners providing counseling to the military community. Aetna employees, who are clinicians for Aetna Behavioral Health and the company's Employee Assistance Program, also have pledged to volunteer their time.

"The support from the Aetna Foundation and Aetna employees and affiliates will make a huge difference in our ability to serve military service members, veterans and their loved ones," said Barbara Van Dahlen, Ph.D., founder and president of Give an Hour. "Studies show that timely attention and counseling can greatly enhance recovery from post-traumatic stress and other psychological effects of war. Our volunteers are able to respond quickly to those who either do not have access to government mental health services or who seek confidential care outside of the military environment."

Since 2007, Give an Hour's volunteer mental health providers have donated nearly 40,000 hours of free counseling to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and their families. Currently, the organization has a network of more than 5,500 providers who are located in every state and U.S. territory.


About the Aetna Foundation

The Aetna Foundation, Inc. is the independent charitable and philanthropic arm of Aetna Inc. Since 1980, Aetna and the Aetna Foundation have contributed \$394 million in grants and sponsorships, including \$15.6 million in 2010. As a national health foundation, we promote wellness, health, and access to high-quality health care for everyone. This work is enhanced by the time and commitment of Aetna employees, who have volunteered more than 2.3 million hours since 2003. Our current giving is focused on addressing the rising rate of adult and childhood obesity in the U.S.; promoting racial and ethnic equity in health and health care; and advancing integrated health care. For more information, visit www.AetnaFoundation.org.

About Give an Hour

Give an Hour(TM) (www.giveanhour.org) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3), founded in September

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to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society. Currently, GAH is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of the troops and families affected by the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

SOURCE: Aetna

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