



MENTAL HEALTH COLORADO

February 12, 2018

SB18-112- Veterans Outdoor Terrain Restoration Grant Program

Concerning an outdoor activity grant program for mental health therapy for veterans.

Sponsors

- Senator Cheri Jahn
- Senator Larry Crowder
- Representative Polly Lawrence

Position: Strongly Support

- About 10% of Colorado's population are veterans. ¹
- The survival rate for military service members from an initial injury obtained during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): **9/10**
 - This means more veterans face **physical disabilities**, as well as **mental health problems**. ²
- High prevalence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Chronic Pain, and Persistent Post-concussive symptoms among OEF and OIF era veterans.
 - These disorders present most often alongside one another. ³
 - Therefore, successful treatment will focus on **both** physical and psychological symptoms, as well as the interaction between the two.

"I am a strong person,
much stronger than I
gave myself credit for. My
life is not over yet."

- A Participant from Outward Bound's
Veteran's Program

- A review of 11 studies showed that physical exercise can "shape their [veterans'] personal growth and development in the aftermath of combat-acquired disability and/or psychological trauma." ⁴
- Another review of the studies done on Nature Assisted Therapy with veterans found three main benefits through all the studies:
 - Community with others
 - The ability to plan and perform a task
 - A way back to work

¹ <http://veteransdata.info/states/2080000/COLORADO.pdf>

² Wall, P. L. (2012). Posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury in current military populations: A critical analysis. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 18(5), 278-298. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1078390312460578>

³ Lew, Henry L, M.D., PhD., Otis, J. D., PhD., Tun, C., M.D., Kerns, R. D., PhD., Clark, M. E., PhD., & Cifu, D. X., M.D. (2009). Prevalence of chronic pain, posttraumatic stress disorder, and persistent postconcussive symptoms in OIF/OEF veterans: Polytrauma clinical triad. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, 46(6), 697-702. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/215285402?accountid=14608>

⁴ Caddick, & Smith. (2014). The impact of sport and physical activity on the well-being of combat veterans: A systematic review. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 15(1), 9-18.