

Ulrich, Veterans Community Declare June 10 PTSD Awareness Day

NEW YORK (June 10, 2015) – City Council Member Eric A. Ulrich (R-Queens), joined by Commissioner Loree Sutton, Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs, Council colleagues, mental health care service providers, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and veterans advocates, held a press conference today on the steps of City Hall to declare June 10 as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day in New York City.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that’s triggered by a terrifying event whether experienced or witnessed. Returning servicemen and women from military deployment often return home from war having been impacted from the traumatic experiences they’ve endured. These haunting experiences affect the everyday lives of veterans impacting facets of life including family, relationships and work.

“Our brave soldiers put their lives on the line for us and they return home bearing the wounds of war both visible and invisible” said Councilman Eric Ulrich. “PTSD is one of those unseen effects of war which affects thousands of New Yorkers. I am proud to stand up to help bring awareness to PTSD and to serve those veterans who have served us and to provide them with the necessary mental health services.”

Joining Ulrich was Commissioner Loree Sutton of the Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Pike of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Craig Vandergoot of the NYU Langone Military Families Clinic, Tom Mahany of Honor for All, veterans advocates and members of the Veterans community.

“I have seen countless brave women and men return from battle to face the immense struggle of PTSD—and on behalf of the Mayor’s Office, I’m proud to help mark PTSD Awareness Day in New York City.” said Commissioner Loree Sutton, MD – Brigadier General, Commissioner of Mayor’s Office of Veterans Affairs. “Recognizing the prevalence and impact of trauma, whether related to combat, motor vehicle accidents, sexual assault or other life-threatening experiences, this Administration is committed to ensuring timely and affordable access to effective mental health treatment services and other community resources. Far too many individuals and families continue to struggle with PTSD and the stigma related to this disorder—and days like today help bring us one step closer toward helping these brave New Yorkers access the help they need.”

“We applaud Councilman Ulrich, his colleagues and those from Mayor deBlasio’s administration who have lent their support to the designation of PTSD Awareness Day here in NYC,” said Charles R. Marmar, MD, the Lucius N. Littauer Professor and Chair of Psychiatry at NYU Langone Medical Center and Director of its Steven and Alexandra Cohen Veterans Center. “Our brave men

and women of the military risk their lives to protect us and our freedom. But they often return from combat not only with visible wounds, but what we call the 'invisible' wounds of war, like PTSD. This designation of PTSD Awareness Day reminds us of the work still ahead to develop more meaningful and clinically objective means to diagnose and treat PTSD and related ailments."

"Stepping forward to seek mental health care is a sign of strength and also one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of suicide. This is why it is critical for services to be swift in responding to veterans when they do come forward," said IAVA Field Director Anthony Pike. "As more of our warriors return home, IAVA applauds Councilmember Ulrich and the NYC veterans community for bringing renewed attention to the issue of PTSD."