10th Annual IAVA Member Survey
Perceptions and views of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans on the challenges and successes of the next greatest generation of veterans
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) is the premier veterans advocacy and support organization on the planet. Every day, we fight for veterans. Hard. We are the tip-of-the-spear non-profit engine of impact that connects, unites and empowers hundreds of thousands of veterans and allies nationwide.

Founded by an Iraq veteran in 2004, IAVA is the non-partisan leader in advocacy, public awareness and 1-on-1 case-management support. We organize locally, and drive historic impacts nationally.
IAVA fought tirelessly for this generation of veterans over the last year, conducting over 300 Capitol Hill meetings, speaking directly with VA leadership, and executing robust media outreach to highlight the needs of post-9/11 veterans. It has been a humbling, eventful, educational year for me and I am excited about what is still to come. 2020 is an opportunity to build on the momentum of 2019.

IAVA routinely hears from our members on the issues that matter most to them. They come to Storm the Hill and hold VetTogethers not only to share their experiences at war but also their experiences at home: difficulties using the GI Bill, navigating VA healthcare, or dealing with symptoms of toxic exposure. Yet, it is our annual Member Survey that best details the experiences of this generation of veterans.

This year’s survey data show a generation of veterans who are thriving. Seventy five percent have used their post-9/11 GI Bill or transferred their benefits to a dependent, an increase of 13 percent since 2014. Our members are volunteering in their communities at high rates and unemployment is holding steady at six percent, a historic low.

But while post-9/11 veterans are succeeding in their education and careers, our survey reveals other troubling statistics. Many of our members are facing significant physical and mental health challenges. Forty four percent of our members report experiencing suicidal ideation since joining the military, up 13 percent since 2014. Additionally, 62 percent of our members personally know a veteran who has died by suicide, a shocking 22 percent increase since 2014. Meanwhile, a stunning 88 percent of our members report they are experiencing symptoms that are or might be related to burn pits or toxic exposure.

Our nation needs to step up and support this generation of veterans. Most pressingly, we need to pass The Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. This legislation will establish innovative new suicide prevention initiatives, improve access to mental health care, and hold the VA accountable to meeting the needs of our veterans.

Let’s ensure veterans get the healthcare and resources they rightly deserve. This past year was incredible but there is still much to be accomplished. Let’s get it done!

Onward,
Jeremy Butler
Navy Veteran
CEO, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
This “Big 6” contains the challenges and opportunities that IAVA members care about most—and see as areas where we can uniquely make an impact. IAVA members are poised to educate the public, design solutions for positive impact, and lead the way to the future.

Key Findings from the Big 6 Priorities

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
- 64% Report suicidal ideation since joining the military, a shocking 13% rise since 2014
- 62% Personally know a veteran who died by suicide, a 22% rise since 2014
- 61% of those who have contacted the Veteran Crisis Line (VCL) report having excellent or good experiences

VA Reform
- 86% Rate VA care as average or above average, an increase of 5% from 2019
- 41% Oppose the privatization of VA healthcare and 29% support
- 16% Have used the Community Care Program

Burn Pits and Toxic Exposures
- 86% Report exposure to burn pits or other toxins
- 88% Believe they may be or are already experiencing symptoms from burn pits or toxic exposure
- 53% of those who have been exposed are registered in the burn pit registry

Education Benefits
- 75% of IAVA members or their dependents have used or are currently using the post-9/11 GI Bill
- 66% of IAVA members or their dependents have graduated while in school on the GI Bill
- 87% Agree that the post-9/11 GI Bill is important for reintegration to civilian life

Utilization of Medical Cannabis
- 88% Support researching cannabis for medicinal purposes
- 81% Support the legalization of medical cannabis
- 22% Report using cannabis for medicinal use

Women Veterans
- 83% of IAVA members say that it is important that IAVA focus on the issues impacting women veterans
- 44% Believe that women’s advancement in the military has been limited by past restrictions on women in combat
- 16% of female IAVA members report feeling unsafe when seeking healthcare in VA facilities
DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

- Male: 86%
- Female: 13%
- Non-Binary: >1%
- Prefer not to answer: >1%

Race

- White: 81%
- Hispanic or Latino: 11%
- Black or African American: 6%
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 4%
- Asian: 3%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 1%
- Other: 4%

Religious Affiliation

- Christian: 68%
- Agnostic: 9%
- Atheist: 8%
- Jewish: 2%
- Buddhist: 1%
- Muslim: <1%
- Hindu: <1%
- Other: 13%
### Marital Status

- **Married**: 71%
- **Widowed**: 1%
- **Divorced**: 14%
- **Separated**: 2%
- **Single, never married**: 10%
- **Domestic Partnership**: 3%

### Age

- **51-65**: 31-35%
- **46-50**: 18-30: 1%
- **41-45**: 31-35: 13%
- **36-40**: 36-40: 23%
- **41-45**: 41-45: 15%
- **46-50**: 46-50: 14%
- **51-65**: 51-65: 31%
- **65+**: 65+: 4%

### Children

- **0**: 0: 25%
- **1**: 1: 17%
- **2**: 2: 28%
- **3**: 3: 17%
- **4+**: 4+: 13%

### Education

- Bachelor’s Degree: 30%
- Master’s Degree: 28%
- Some college credit, no degree: 15%
- Associate’s degree: 13%
- Trade/technical/vocational training: 5%
- Professional Degree (JD, DVM, MD, etc): 4%
- High school graduate or equivalent (GED): 3%
- Doctoral Degree (PhD): 1%
- Some high school, no degree: <1%

### Household Income

- Prefer Not to Answer: 13%
- More than $150,000: 16%
- $100,000 - $149,999: 21%
- $90,000 - $99,999: 7%
- $80,000 - $89,999: 5%
- $70,000 - $79,999: 8%
- $60,000 - $69,999: 7%
- $50,000 - $59,999: 6%
- $40,000 - $49,999: 6%
- $30,000 - $39,999: 4%
- $20,000 - $29,999: 3%
- $10,000 - $19,999: 2%
- Less than $10,000: 3%
AVA members have served around the world, from Iraq and Afghanistan to Bahrain, Syria, Kuwait and other locations globally. They have deployed in every major combat operation since 9/11 and continue to serve at home, through community and veteran service organizations.

### Profile of an IAVA Member

**Branch of Service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast Guard</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of Deployments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deployment Set</th>
<th>Afghanistan</th>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Other combat areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Officer or Enlisted**

- Enlisted: 76%
- Officer: 14%
- Prior enlisted Officer: 10%

**Service Component**

- Currently in Reserve or National Guard Component: 8%
- Previously in Reserve or National Guard Component: 53%
- Never in Reserve or National Guard Component: 39%

**Discharge Status**

- Honorable discharge: 99%
- General discharge: 1%
- Less than Honorable Discharge: <1%

- 77% would recommend military service to a family member or friend.
Year Separated from the Military

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have not separated</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 or Earlier</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How important is it for you to interact regularly with other veterans and military service members?

- Extremely important: 45%
- Moderately important: 45%
- Very important: 10%

How do you interact with other veterans and military service members?

- Social media: 61%
- In my daily life: 47%
- At work: 47%
- Meet-ups: 30%
- Calling on the phone: 28%
- Social clubs: 25%
- Service Projects: 18%

Would you recommend military service to a family member or friend?

- Yes: 45%
- No: 45%
- Unsure: 10%

AVA members are incredibly engaged in the policies and politics affecting the nation. From voting to speaking out on the issues that matter most, IAVA members are an important voice in American political life.

97% of IAVA members are registered to vote
95% of IAVA members are planning on voting in the 2020 elections
34% of IAVA members have considered running for office

Top 5 Issues Influencing Support for Political Candidate
1. Veterans’ issues
2. Gun control/2nd Amendment rights
3. Military/defense issues
4. Economy
5. Healthcare

Political Party Affiliation
Republican voters (36%) and Independents (35%) are most prevalent among IAVA Members, followed by those that identify as Democrat (22%). A smaller percentage identify as Libertarians (5%) or with the Green Party (<1%).

What impact do you think having more veterans in Congress would have on the ability of Congress to address national issues?
Positive: 87%
Neutral: 13%
Negative: <1%
Post-9/11 veterans have stood out in the veteran community for their desire to continue to serve and give back once they return home. Many IAVA members have discovered the psychological, emotional and social benefits from serving in their local communities. Of those who volunteer on a regular basis, 63 percent report feeling like a valued member of their community, compared to 47 percent of those who do not. Additionally, 58 percent of regular volunteers feel a sense of belonging to their community compared to 42 percent of those who do not.

What organizations do you volunteer with?

1. LOCAL CHURCH
2. VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
3. SCOUTING ORGANIZATION
4. THE MISSION CONTINUES
5. AMERICAN RED CROSS
6. TEAM RUBICON
7. DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
8. VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE
9. HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
10. WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT

Which issues do you focus your volunteer work on?

- Serving veterans, active duty servicemembers and their families: 52%
- Youth: 30%
- Helping older people: 22%
- Addressing poverty and homelessness: 20%
- Environmental conservation: 11%
- Disaster relief: 11%
- Other: 24%

50% of IAVA members report volunteering on a regular basis
28% of IAVA members report volunteering more than 5 hours per month
Do you support or oppose the impeachment of President Trump?

Support: 37%

Unsure: 13%

Oppose: 50%

As of July 2019, there were over 6,000 military personnel deployed to the Mexican border. What is your opinion on the deployment of U.S. servicemembers to the border?

Strongly Agree: 31%
Somewhat Agree: 19%
Neutral: 9%
Somewhat Disagree: 10%
Strongly Disagree: 31%

Earlier this year, $3.6 billion in military construction funds were diverted to pay for the U.S./Mexico border wall. What is your opinion of the use of military funds for this purpose?

Strongly Agree: 29%
Somewhat Agree: 15%
Neutral: 9%
Somewhat Disagree: 10%
Strongly Disagree: 45%

There is currently a discretionary program (Parole in Place) that temporarily protects non-citizen immediate family members of active duty troops from being deported in one-year increments. What is your opinion of this policy?

Strongly Agree: 25%
Somewhat Agree: 15%
Neutral: 7%
Somewhat Disagree: 8%
Strongly Disagree: 45%

A new immigration policy withholds automatic citizenship for children born overseas to non-citizen U.S. servicemembers. What is your opinion of this policy?

Strongly Agree: 24%
Somewhat Agree: 32%
Neutral: 34%
Somewhat Disagree: 5%
Strongly Disagree: 5%

*The survey was fielded between December 6th, 2019 and January 13th, 2020. The House Impeachment Inquiry began on September 24, 2019 and the formal impeachment vote in the House of Representatives took place on December 18, 2019.
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

We should end the Selective Service enrollment process (used in the event of a draft) for male U.S. citizens turning 18 years old.

- Strongly Agree: 17%
- Somewhat Agree: 12%
- Neutral: 20%
- Somewhat Disagree: 18%
- Strongly Disagree: 33%

We should maintain the Selective Service with the inclusion of women U.S. citizens turning 18 years old in the enrollment process.

- Strongly Agree: 50%
- Somewhat Agree: 23%
- Neutral: 12%
- Strongly Disagree: 10%

Under current immigration law, non-citizens may be deported after committing a crime, regardless of veteran status or military service. What is your opinion of this law?

- Strongly Agree: 26%
- Somewhat Agree: 22%
- Neutral: 11%
- Strongly Disagree: 19%

4% have been personally impacted by this immigration policy

13% know a post-9/11 veteran impacted by this policy

In all, do you think our engagement in Iraq was worth it, or not?

- Worth it: 21%
- Somewhat worth it: 28%
- Neutral: 13%
- Somewhat not worth it: 11%
- Not worth it: 27%

In all, do you think our engagement in Afghanistan is worth it, or not?

- Worth it: 28%
- Somewhat worth it: 34%
- Neutral: 12%
- Somewhat not worth it: 10%
- Not worth it: 16%

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

- President Trump acts in the interest of veterans
- Congress acts in the interest of veterans
- The American public supports veterans
- The American public understands veterans’ sacrifices
- Employers see value in hiring veterans
- Employers make efforts to retain veterans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President Trump acts in the interest of veterans</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress acts in the interest of veterans</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American public supports veterans</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American public understands veterans’ sacrifices</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers see value in hiring veterans</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers make efforts to retain veterans</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For over a decade, IAVA has been calling for immediate action to appropriately respond to increasing rates of veteran suicide. IAVA members are at the forefront of this crisis. Every year we see a rise in the percentage of IAVA members who report suicidal ideation or who know a post-9/11 veteran who died by suicide. Forty-four percent report suicidal ideation since joining the military, a shocking 13 percent rise since 2014. Sixty-two percent personally know a veteran who died by suicide, an increase of 22 percent since 2014. We must redouble our efforts as a nation and answer the call to action. IAVA will continue to maintain our leadership on that charge.

Do you personally know a post-9/11 veteran who has died by suicide?

Yes: 62%
No: 38%

Had you ever had thoughts of taking your own life prior to joining military service?

Yes: 10%
No: 90%

Since joining the military, have you had thoughts about taking your own life?

Yes: 44%
No: 56%

Are you aware of the Veterans Crisis Line, the 24/7 toll-free hotline connecting veterans in crisis with trained responders, which can be reached at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)?

Yes: 96%
No: 3%

Have you ever contacted the Veterans Crisis Line?

Yes: 26%
No: 74%

Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Veterans Crisis Line?

Excellent: 29%
Good: 32%
Average: 19%
Poor: 11%
Terrible: 10%
Often referred to as the Agent Orange of the post-9/11 generation, burn pits were a common way to get rid of waste at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are other hazards beyond burn pits that occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan that may pose a danger for respiratory illnesses, including high levels of fine dust, burning vehicles and other airborne hazards. Year after year, we have seen an upward trend in the number of members reporting symptoms associated with toxic exposure.

86% were exposed to burn pits and/or airborne toxic materials.

### BURN PITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>Maybe (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that you have symptoms associated with burn pits or toxic exposure, such as respiratory issues?</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you discuss your burn pit and/or toxic exposures and any symptoms you may be experiencing with your primary care provider?</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was your burn pit or toxic exposure documented by DoD in a Periodic Health Assessment or other report?</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you registered in the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you have any issues when registering with the VA's Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More and more IAVA members are saying that it is important that IAVA focus on the issues impacting women veterans. In 2017, IAVA launched our groundbreaking campaign, #SheWhoBorneTheBattle, focused on recognizing the service of women veterans and closing gaps in care provided to them by the VA. We fought hard for top-down culture change in the VA for all the women veterans who have served or will serve our country.

How important do you think it is for IAVA to address issues facing women veterans?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately important</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly important</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your opinion of the Department of Defense’s (DoD) decision that opened combat MOS positions to women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think women’s advancement in the military has been limited by past restrictions on women in combat?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Male Respondents</th>
<th>Female Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you believe that lifting restrictions on women in combat has improved the public recognition of their military contributions?

All respondents

- Yes: 36%
- Maybe: 33%
- No: 32%

Male respondents

- Yes: 41%
- Maybe: 29%
- No: 31%

Female respondents

- Yes: 34%
- Maybe: 34%
- No: 32%

Report suicidal ideation since joining the military:

- Male: 43%
- Female: 48%

Opinions on changing the VA’s motto: “To care for him who has borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.”

All respondents

- Strongly agree: 25%
- Somewhat agree: 18%
- Neutral: 25%
- 10%
- Somewhat disagree: 22%
- Strongly disagree: 22%

Female respondents

- Strongly agree: 41%
- Somewhat agree: 16%
- Neutral: 23%
- Somewhat disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 14%

Male respondents

- Strongly agree: 23%
- Somewhat agree: 18%
- Neutral: 25%
- Somewhat disagree: 10%
- Strongly disagree: 24%

Report a service-connected mental health injury:

- Male: 59%
- Female: 68%

Report difficulty covering expenses in a typical month:

- Male: 35%
- Female: 38%

Report not feeling safe in VA healthcare facilities

- Female: 14%

Report not feeling respected by VA employees

- Female: 15%
Military sexual trauma affects an estimated one in four women veterans and one in one-hundred male veterans, according to VA. While there has been much attention on the issue from Department of Defense and VA, sexual assault continues to plague the services. By better understanding the past experience of these survivors, IAVA is dedicated to understanding the experiences of survivors so that we can better advocate for policies that will stop sexual assault in the future.

9% are survivors of military sexual assault

43% of females and 3% of males are sexual assault survivors

31% of those assaulted reported the crime

If instead of your commander, a trained military prosecutor had the authority to make the decision to move forward with your case, which of the following impacts would it have had on your decision to report?

- I would have been more likely to report: 44%
- I would have been less likely to report: 7%
- It would not have made a difference in my decision: 49%

If the final decision to send someone to court martial for military sexual assault was a trained military prosecutor instead of the commanding officer, would you view the commander as:

- Less of an Authority Figure: 15%
- Would Not Impact View: 77%
- More of an Authority Figure: 8%

Top 5 reasons survivors did not report the crime:

1. Did not think anything would be done
2. Concerned that my peers would treat me differently
3. Concerned about impact on my career
4. Fear of retaliation by my peers or commander
5. Doubted that my commander would believe me

73% of those who reported the crime experienced retaliation.

If the final decision to send someone to court martial for military sexual assault was a trained military prosecutor instead of the commanding officer, would you view the commander as:

- Less of an Authority Figure: 15%
- Would Not Impact View: 77%
- More of an Authority Figure: 8%
Problems have plagued VA for quite some time and every year we hear from IAVA members that they want less paperwork, less bureaucracy and easier access to care. However, VA healthcare has come a long way since the waitlist and overprescription scandals of 2014 and 2015. VA has been making progress and IAVA members report that their healthcare experiences are improving.

What do you currently use for healthcare coverage?

- VA healthcare: 61%
- DOD healthcare/TRICARE: 31%
- Private insurance: 40%
- Medicaid/Medicare: 10%
- TRICARE Reserve: 4%
- Do not have health insurance: 2%

Of IAVA members are enrolled in VA healthcare

Rate your overall experience with VA healthcare:

- Strongly agree: 25%
- Somewhat agree: 18%
- Neutral: 25%
- Somewhat disagree: 10%
- Strongly disagree: 22%

Excellent: 21%  Good: 30%  Average: 26%  Poor: 11%  4%

Please check the most important reforms needed to address improvements to VA healthcare:

1. Reduce paperwork and bureaucracy to access care
2. Reform hiring and firing practices to improve accountability of bad actors and rewarding good actors.
3. Expansion of specialized care
4. More post-9/11 vets working at VA
5. Updates to technology

Top 5 reasons not enrolled in VA healthcare:

1. I have other health benefits and I don’t need VA care
2. I prefer my private sector provider
3. Other veterans need the benefits more
4. I am not sure if I am eligible
5. I do not trust the care that VA has to offer
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA clinicians understand my medical needs</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA clinicians provide timely, quality care to veterans</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe when going to VA facilities</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA employees treat me with respect</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which statement best describes your experience scheduling appointments with the following providers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Extremely easy</th>
<th>Somewhat easy</th>
<th>Neither easy nor difficult</th>
<th>Somewhat difficult</th>
<th>Extremely difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA mental health provider</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA primary care provider</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA specialty care</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate your level of satisfaction with the following providers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Extremely satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Extremely dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VA mental health provider</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA primary care provider</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA specialty care</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 3 reasons to use non-VA provider as primary source of care:
1. Non-VA provider more convenient
2. Higher quality of care with non-VA provider
3. More comfortable with non-VA provider

Top 3 reasons to use VA provider as primary source of care:
1. VA healthcare is free
2. VA provider understands my military service
3. The VA is my only source of healthcare

The VA MISSION Act, passed into law in 2018, seeks to consolidate, reform, and streamline the many VA community care programs and strengthen healthcare options for veterans, while sunsetting the Choice program. For years, IAVA has advocated for the consolidation of VA’s community care programs. With that goal now achieved, monitoring and assisting with its implementation is paramount. There is a long road ahead of us; it will take the will of Congress, the Administration, and the American public to continue on this path towards a truly integrated network of VA health care.
Only 36% of IAVA Members have heard of the VA MISSION Act and the changes it has made to the VA system and 16% have used the program.

Please rate your experience with the Community Care program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Care health providers understand my medical needs</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive timely, quality care from Community Care health providers</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate your experience scheduling appointments with the following providers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Extremely easy</th>
<th>Somewhat easy</th>
<th>Neither easy nor difficult</th>
<th>Somewhat difficult</th>
<th>Extremely difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Care Program mental health provider</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Care Program primary care provider</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Care Program specialty care provider</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How confident are you in VA's ability to successfully operate its Community Care program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Extremely confident</th>
<th>Somewhat confident</th>
<th>Neither confident or unconfident</th>
<th>Somewhat unconfident</th>
<th>Extremely unconfident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely confident</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat confident</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither confident or unconfident</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unconfident</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely unconfident</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0   10   20   30   40
Wile many think of health care when it comes to VA, many veterans and their families rely on VA for earned benefits such as pensions and disability compensation. The process to access these earned benefits can be daunting and leave many veterans waiting months or longer for a decision. While progress has been made to update the system, long wait times and a lagging technology system continue to plague veterans waiting on their earned benefits.

79% of IAVA members report having a service-connected disability rating from VA

---

//RATING VA BENEFITS

How long did it take for the VA to notify you of a decision on your claim?

- 125 days or less: 25%
- 126-180 days: 22%
- 181-365 days: 23%
- Over 365 days: 27%
- My claim is still pending: 3%

Were you satisfied with the outcome of your claim?

- Yes: 64%
- No: 36%

Have you ever appealed a VA disability compensation claim decision?

- Yes: 36%
- No: 64%
### How long did it take to receive a final decision on your appeal?

- **125 days or less:** 14%
- **126-180 days:** 29%
- **181-365 days:** 14%
- **Over 365 days:** 28%
- **My claim is still pending:** 21%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125 days or less</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126-180 days</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-365 days</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 365 days</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My claim is still pending</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### When you have questions about VA benefits, who do you ask?

- **Veteran Service Organizations:** 63%
- **VA employees:** 42%
- **Friends:** 31%
- **Family:** 5%
- **Elected Government Officials:** 4%
- **Other:** 21%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Service Organizations</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA employees</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Government Officials</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Please rate your satisfaction with the following VA benefits:

#### Disability compensation

- **Extremely satisfied:** 31%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 43%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 16%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 10%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pension

- **Extremely satisfied:** 27%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 45%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 19%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 11%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### GI Bill/Education Benefits*

- **Extremely satisfied:** 43%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 40%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 11%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 6%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Home loans

- **Extremely satisfied:** 58%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 33%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 5%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 3%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Insurance

- **Extremely satisfied:** 23%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 42%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 18%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 16%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Vocational rehabilitation/employment services

- **Extremely satisfied:** 24%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 34%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 21%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 21%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### VA Caregiver Benefits

- **Extremely satisfied:** 17%
- **Somewhat satisfied:** 35%
- **Somewhat dissatisfied:** 22%
- **Extremely dissatisfied:** 26%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremelly satisfied</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AVA was integral to the landmark passage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008. Since then, IAVA has fought for improvements to the GI Bill, recently advocating for the passage of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, or more commonly known as the "Forever GI Bill." Additionally, IAVA successfully advocated for a provision in the 2020 NDAA that would repeal the controversial limit on servicemembers with more than 16 years of service from transferring their post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to their dependents. IAVA knows how essential the GI Bill is to this generation of veterans and their families for success and reintegration into civilian life.

Have you or one of your dependents ever used the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

- Have used it: 53%
- Using it: 11%
- No, but I intend to use it: 11%
- Dependent is using/has used it: 11%
- No, and do not intend to use it: 7%
- No, but I intend to transfer it to my dependent: 7%

While in school on the Post-9/11 GI Bill, did you (or your dependent) graduate?

- Yes: 64%
- No: 18%
- Still in school: 16%

Overall, how would you rate your experience or your dependent's experience with the Post-9/11 GI Bill?

- Excellent: 48%
- Good: 35%
- Average: 13%
- Poor: 4%
- Terrible: 1%
What type of school are you attending/did you attend?

- State/public school: 58%
- Not-for-profit private school: 20%
- For-profit private school: 24%
- Foreign school: 1%
- Unsure: 4%

Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with your educational program(s):

- Extremely satisfied: 46%
- Somewhat satisfied: 38%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 7%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 6%
- Extremely dissatisfied: 2%

Top 5 reasons why you chose your institution:

1. Acceptance of GI Bill benefits
2. Location in relation to my home
3. Veteran-friendly institution
4. Offering of specific program/field of study
5. Availability of online classes

To what level is/are your school(s) veteran friendly?

- Far above average: 30%
- Somewhat above average: 35%
- Average: 28%
- Somewhat below average: 5%
- Far below average: 2%

VA educational benefits used for education:

- Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33): 80%
- Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30): 31%
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31): 24%
- Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP): 3%
- Other: 2%

How important is the Post-9/11 GI Bill for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Moderately Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Not at All Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military recruitment</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military retention</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful transition/reintegration of veterans into civilian life</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41% took out private or federal loans for school

How much debt have you accrued through student loans?

- Under $1,000: 4%
- $1,001 to $5,000: 6%
- $5,001 to $10,000: 16%
- $10,001 to $15,000: 11%
- $15,001 to $20,000: 10%
- $20,001 to $50,000: 26%
- $50,001 to $100,000: 18%
- Above $100,000: 9%

Top 5 ways in which IAVA members believe veteran education outcomes can be improved:

1. In-state tuition for out-of-state veterans at public colleges and universities
2. Veterans success centers at colleges and universities
3. Paid internships/fellowship programs
4. Job search preparation programs
5. VA work study program
Veterans consistently and passionately have communicated that cannabis offers effective help in tackling some of the most pressing injuries they face when returning from war. Our national laws are rapidly changing and 33 states now permit medical cannabis. Across party lines, medicinal cannabis is largely unopposed. Yet our national policies are outdated, research is lacking, and stigma persists.

**Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:**

**Cannabis should be legal for recreational purposes**
- Strongly agree: 36%
- Somewhat agree: 19%
- Neutral: 21%
- Somewhat disagree: 9%
- Strongly disagree: 16%

**Cannabis should be legal for medicinal purposes**
- Strongly agree: 62%
- Somewhat agree: 20%
- Neutral: 12%
- Somewhat disagree: 3%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

**Cannabis should be researched for medicinal uses**
- Strongly agree: 73%
- Somewhat agree: 15%
- Neutral: 8%
- Somewhat disagree: 1%
- Strongly disagree: 3%

**The VA should research cannabis as a treatment option**
- Strongly agree: 68%
- Somewhat agree: 16%
- Neutral: 10%
- Somewhat disagree: 3%
- Strongly disagree: 4%

**Would you be interested in using cannabis or cannabinoid products as a treatment option if it were available to you?**
- Very interested: 32%
- Interested: 13%
- Somewhat interested: 19%
- Not interested: 34%

**Do you live in a state where cannabis or other cannabinoid products are legal for medicinal use?**
- Yes: 60%
- No: 25%
- Unsure: 15%

**Do you live in a state where cannabis or other cannabinoid products are legal for recreational use?**
- Yes: 29%
- No: 61%
- Unsure: 10%
Substance abuse and long-term daily use can have a myriad of harmful health effects from physical to mental health impacts, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and cancer. IAVA applauds DoD and VA in their efforts to reduce alcohol and tobacco consumption by military personnel and veterans.

**TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL**

During the last 12 months, how often did you usually have any kind of drink containing alcohol?

- Every day: 8%
- 3 to 6 times a week: 17%
- Once or twice a week: 19%
- 2 to 3 times a month: 14%
- Once a month: 9%
- Less than 10 times in the past year: 11%
- 1 or 2 times in the past year: 7%
- I did not drink any alcohol in the past year, but I did drink in the past: 12%
- I never drank any alcohol in my life: 3%

During the last 12 months, how many alcoholic drinks did you have on a typical day when you drank alcohol?

- 16 or more: 1%
- 12 to 15 drinks: 2%
- 9 to 11 drinks: 3%
- 7 to 8 drinks: 4%
- 5 to 6 drinks: 10%
- 3 to 4 drinks: 22%
- 2 drinks: 34%
- 1 drink: 24%

During the last 12 months, how often did you have 5 or more (males) or 4 or more (females) drinks containing any kind of alcohol within a two-hour period?

- Every day: 2%
- 3 to 6 days a week: 5%
- 1 or 2 days a week: 7%
- 2 to 3 days a month: 8%
- One day a month: 8%
- Less than 10 days in the past year: 27%
- Never in the last 12 months: 43%
**Have you ever used tobacco products?**

- Yes: 60%
- No: 40%

**Do you currently use tobacco products?**

- Yes: 34%
- No: 66%

**What form of tobacco products have you used?**

- Cigarettes: 72%
- Cigars: 44%
- Dip or snuff: 31%
- Chewing tobacco: 27%
- Vapes: 13%
- Pipe tobacco: 9%
- E-cigarettes: 8%
- Other: 1%

**How often do you use tobacco products?**

- Daily: 78%
- 4-6 times a week: 3%
- 2-3 times a week: 3%
- Once a week: 3%
- Less than once a week: 13%

---

**GUN OWNERSHIP AND STORAGE**

It is a powerful and often politicized topic in today’s environment, but firearm ownership and storage is a particularly important topic in the veteran community. IAVA members overwhelmingly support universal background checks but do not support banning assault style weapons or high capacity magazines. Firearm safety and storage is a continuing topic of conversation in the veteran community, particularly how access to lethal means is related to suicide.

**67% of IAVA members own a personal firearm**

Please select your primary method of storage for your firearm:

- Locked, Unloaded, Ammunition Stored Separately: 20%
- Locked and Loaded: 20%
- Would Rather Not Say: 19%
- Unlocked, Unloaded, Ammunition Stored Separately: 14%
- Unlocked, Loaded: 13%
- Locked, Unloaded, No Ammunition in Home: 9%
- Unlocked, Unloaded, No Ammunition in Home: 1%
- Other: 2%
Mental health injuries impact the post-9/11 generation at an alarming rate. Among IAVA members, mental health injuries like PTSD, anxiety and depression are higher than even VA reported numbers for the post-9/11 generation. Ensuring access to effective treatment options for mental health injuries is paramount to the long term health of post-9/11 veterans.

61% have a service-connected mental health injury

75% are seeking care for their service-connected mental health injury
Where are you seeking care?

- VA Mental Health Professional: 72%
- Civilian (non-VA) mental health professional: 25%
- Vet Center counselor: 21%
- Peer support group: 14%
- Religious/spiritual leaders: 14%
- Civilian DOD counselor: 3%
- Uniformed DOD counselor: 3%
- Other: 9%

Has anyone close to you suggested you seek care for a mental health injury?

- Yes: 49%
- No: 51%

Have you sought help as a result of someone close to you suggesting you seek care for a mental health injury?

- Yes: 77%
- No: 23%

What are some of the reasons that you believe contribute to the military/veteran community not getting the mental healthcare they need?

1. The stigma of seeking help is too great
2. They have access to care but not quality care
3. They have access but are not seeking care

Select the top reasons why you are not seeking care for a mental health injury:

1. Have not found a mental health professional that understands my needs
2. Started treatment but decided to stop
3. Concerned it might affect my career
52,000 servicemembers have been wounded in action in Iraq and Afghanistan according to the Department of Defense. Continuing issues such as shrapnel wounds, second and third degree burns, limb loss, musculoskeletal damage, traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress are of great concern for the post-9/11 generation.

### General Health

Did you sustain any of the following injuries or illnesses as a result of your service?

- Musculoskeletal/joint injuries: 70%
- Tinnitus: 44%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): 45%
- Anxiety: 58%
- Depression: 56%
- Hearing loss: 56%
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): 26%
- Pulmonary issues: 19%
- Scarring or burns: 16%
- Tinnitus: 66%
- Depression: 56%
- Anxiety: 58%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): 65%
- Vision loss: 9%
- Paralysis: 2%
- Loss of limb: <1%
- Other: 25%

How often do your service-connected injuries affect your daily life?

- Always: 41%
- Most of the time: 30%
- About half the time: 11%
- Sometimes: 16%
- Never: 2%

90% report experiencing a service-connected injury.
Are you currently taking any of the following drugs for a service-related injury?

- Anti-anxiety: 20%
- Opioid: 6%
- Sleeping pills: 16%
- Antidepressant: 32%

In the past, have you been prescribed any of the following drugs for a service-related injury?

- Anti-anxiety: 35%
- Opioid: 32%
- Sleeping pills: 36%
- Antidepressant: 44%

Alternative Therapies Used in Care Regimen:

- Natural products (i.e., dietary supplements, vitamins, probiotics): 56%
- Chiropractic care: 39%
- Meditation: 37%
- Nature/outdoor adventure therapies: 27%
- Yoga: 25%
- Acupuncture: 23%
- Cannabis: 21%
- Special diets: 20%
- Music or art therapy: 10%
- Animal-assisted therapy: 9%
- Service animal: 9%
- Other: 15%

Only 6% of IAVA members are currently taking an opioid-based medication, a decrease from 28% in 2016.

44% have been diagnosed with a sleep condition.

How often do you have trouble sleeping at night?

- Always: 27%
- Most of the time: 28%
- About half the time: 15%
- Sometimes: 26%
- Never: 5%

On average, how many hours of sleep do you get per night?

- 0 to 4 hours: 22%
- 5 to 6 hours: 55%
- 7 to 8 hours: 23%
- 9 or more hours: <1%

How many times a week do you exercise?

- I do not exercise: 12%
- Less than weekly: 18%
- 1 time per week: 8%
- 2 to 3 times per week: 30%
- 4 to 5 times per week: 18%
- 6 or more times per week: 5%

71% of members are currently using one or more of these alternative therapies to treat an injury they received as a result of their service.

21% of IAVA members currently have someone assisting them with some aspect of their daily health needs.
The transition from military to civilian life is often a challenging time for IAVA members. We know a successful transition experience can set up many for a life of continued success. However, a difficult transition experience can have the opposite effect.

Did you experience challenges when transitioning out of the military?

- Many: 40%
- Some: 39%
- Few: 15%
- None: 5%

- Many: 40%
- Some: 39%
- Few: 15%
- None: 5%

Do you currently experience any challenges related to your military service?

- Many: 22%
- Some: 41%
- Few: 23%
- None: 15%

- Many: 22%
- Some: 41%
- Few: 23%
- None: 15%

Top 5 Transition challenges
1. Loss of identity/purpose
2. Relating to non-veteran civilians/Reintegrating with community
3. Readjusting to social life
4. Health concerns (Mental or Physical)
5. Difficulty navigating VA benefits

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

- I had a successful transition into civilian life
  - Strongly agree: 21%
  - Somewhat agree: 32%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 16%
  - Somewhat disagree: 17%
  - Strongly disagree: 19%

- I was successful in overcoming the challenges I faced in my transition
  - Strongly agree: 26%
  - Somewhat agree: 40%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 15%
  - Somewhat disagree: 11%
  - Strongly disagree: 8%

- I feel like a valued member of my community
  - Strongly agree: 23%
  - Somewhat agree: 31%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 22%
  - Somewhat disagree: 14%
  - Strongly disagree: 9%

- I feel a sense of belonging in my community
  - Strongly agree: 20%
  - Somewhat agree: 29%
  - Neither agree nor disagree: 23%
  - Somewhat disagree: 16%
  - Strongly disagree: 12%

Were you prepared to manage your finances immediately after your transition out of the military?

- Yes: 62%
- No: 38%

- Yes: 62%
- No: 38%

In a typical month is it difficult to cover your expenses and pay all your bills?

- Yes: 35%
- No: 65%

- Yes: 35%
- No: 65%
36% Believe they may have or did experience predatory loan practices, described as deceptive, unfair, or fraudulent practices

Predatory Loan Type

- Advance Pay-Day: 41%
- Car: 37%
- Home: 23%
- Other: 26%

Current Living Situation:

- Own home/have a mortgage: 71%
- Rent: 21%
- With friends/family/significant other: 9%
- Living with parents/as a dependent: 1%
- Couchsurfing: 1%
- Base housing/barracks: <1%
- Do not have place to live and cannot afford one: <1%
- Temporary or permanent supportive housing: <1%
- Campus housing: <1%
- Hospital/VA medical facility: <1%
- Other: 2%

81% Report couchsurfing, or staying with family or friends temporarily, when they transitioned out of the military

How long were you without a permanent place to live when you transitioned out of the military?

- A few days: 8%
- A few weeks: 16%
- A few months: 31%
- Six months to a year: 21%
- Longer than a year: 24%

63% Of IAVA members report not having a permanent place to live when they transitioned out of the military

How would you rate your experience in the Transition Assistance Program?

- Very good: 11%
- Good: 28%
- Fair: 36%
- Poor: 17%
- Very Poor: 11%

22% How would you rate your experience in the Transition Assistance Program?

- Yes: 37%
- No: 45%
- TAP was not available to me: 18%

Have you participated in or are you currently participating in the Transition Assistance Program (TAP)?
Unemployment rates among IAVA members have been consistently declining, since being 10% in 2014. In 2020, the unemployment rate is holding steady at 6%. But job satisfaction, underemployment, veteran-friendly employment practices and other factors continue to impact the overall employment outlook for the post-9/11 generation.
Are you personally satisfied with your current job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely satisfied</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely dissatisfied</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 3 job satisfaction factors:
1. The environment and/or people
2. Compensation
3. Job is mission driven/has an impact

Top 3 reasons unsatisfied with job:
1. The environment and/or people
2. Job does not best use my skills
3. Compensation

Top 3 challenges faced in finding work:
1. Competing with candidates who have been in the workforce longer
2. Mental health injuries
3. Explaining how military skills translate

Top 3 reasons not looking for work:
1. Mental health concerns/challenges
2. Physical health concerns/challenges
3. Concern about employer stereotypes

Are you currently a business owner or do you have plans to start your own business/non-profit enterprise?

- 9% I am already a business owner
- 18% I am planning on starting my own business
- 73% I have no plans to start my own business

What challenges do you currently experience or anticipate for starting your business/non-profit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start up capital</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating costs</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating federal and state regulations</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of industry experience</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t qualify for loans</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of available training</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57% are unaware of VA/Department of Labor small business support programs for veterans
The survey alpha test was distributed among IAVA staff members from October 21-25, 2019 and later beta tested among a dozen IAVA leaders and staff members from November 18-29. The final survey was fielded among all IAVA veteran members via email from December 6, 2019 to January 13, 2020. The opportunity to enter a drawing for five Southwest Airlines vouchers to fly anywhere the airline flies domestically in 2020 was provided as an incentive to complete the survey. Social media was utilized to encourage post-9/11 veterans to join IAVA and take the survey. New members were also provided a link in the welcome email received during this time frame.

2,254 members began the survey and 1,705 IAVA members completed it, resulting in a 76% completion rate.

Ryan Britch serves as IAVA’s Associate of Government Affairs and specializes in veterans’ housing and health policy issues. Ryan’s efforts in translating IAVA members’ experiences and views based on the annual survey advises the work of IAVA on legislative and policy matters.

Ryan spent 8 years as an Infantryman in the Vermont Army National Guard and deployed to Paktia, Afghanistan from 2009-2010. After leaving the military, he joined the Peace Corps and spent over 2 years in The Kingdom of Swaziland working on agricultural, youth, and HIV-AIDS prevention programs.

In 2017, Ryan had the privilege of presenting his research on using traditional techniques to influence positive masculinity and sexual reproductive health at the International Aids Society Conference in Paris, France. Ryan has contributed to the Military Times and authored a white paper evaluating trends in the rates of veteran suicide and its potential causes.

Ryan is a graduate of the University of Vermont with a B.A in Sociology and is currently a Master of Public Administration candidate at American University.
Thank you to all of our IAVA Members who participated in this survey. Thank you to all the IAVA staff members who worked tirelessly to design, edit, and provide feedback on this survey. Thank you to Qualtrics for providing the platform to IAVA for survey fielding.

This project would not have been possible without the creative vision and talents of Eric Schoenborn and Chris Rosenthal. Thank you for all your work and sharing your talent to make this project a success.

//DONORS

Foundations & Community Partners
Craig Newmark Foundation
Cigna Foundation
The Kahlert Foundation, Inc.
Rosenthal Family Foundation
Ted and Meredith Segal Family Foundation
Annenberg Foundation
CA Mental Insight Foundation
Select Equity Group Foundation
Triad Foundation
Bob Woodruff Foundation
New York State Health Foundation
The Scoob Trust Foundation
National Council for Behavioral Health Research
Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc.
Golden Tate Foundation
inFaith Community Foundation
The National Christian Foundation
Brad Lemons Foundation
Travis Manion Foundation
Woodruff Memorial Charitable Trust
The Wasserman Foundation
Colbert Family Fund
Agua Fund, Inc.

Partnerships
Southwest Airlines
Juul
Salesforce Foundation
ICAP
Facebook
HBO, Inc.
craigslist Charitable Fund
PAX Labs
Compass
AbbVie
NFL Foundation
Reingold, Inc.
TriWest Healthcare Alliance
Cerner
PBC USA
Emergent BioSolutions
Morgan Stanley
Rogue Fitness
Blue Convention Events Fund, LLC
Turner Construction Company
PhRMA
David & Goliath
Marsh USA Inc.
Heritage Strategies

Individual Donors
Anonymous
Craig Newmark
Henry van Ameringen
Trevanion Pope
Ray Dalio
Anonymous
Roger Evans
JJ Abrams and Kathleen McGrath

City National Bank United Way Campaign
TriWest Health Care Alliance
PVH Foundation
Venables, Bell & Partners LLC
eBay
Blue Convention Events Fund, LLC
Oscar Mike LLC
Western Asset Management Company
VWG Wealth Management
Tonix Pharmaceuticals Holding Corp.
With Honor
Lones Lang Lasalle
Barbaricum

//SUPPORT IAVA

IAVA relies on the generosity of our corporate and foundation partnerships and the support of individual contributors to amass the resources necessary to fulfill our mission. This Member Survey is the most comprehensive non-governmental survey of post-9/11 veterans and is an important snapshot of the veteran community that no other organization has the ability to replicate. IAVA is the leading voice advocating on behalf of post-9/11 veterans because our community takes the time to share their point of view and they trust IAVA to execute on their behalf. Help us continue this vital work, by donating to support IAVA’s mission today!
FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES
Please contact IAVA’s Communications Department at (212) 982-9699 or press@iava.org