

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

Resolution No. 364: Department of Veterans Affairs to Develop Outreach and Peer to Peer Programs for Rehabilitation

Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, One of The American Legion's founding principles is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion considers itself to be a partner with the Department of Veterans Affairs in ensuring that our nation's military members and veterans have access to the best health care available; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the unemployment rate of returning servicemembers is 9.0% compared to approximately 7.0% for their civilian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, Citizen soldiers often return from combat duty and immediately resume civilian life without access to readjustment services of Veterans Affairs facilities; and

WHEREAS, The stated goal of the Veterans Affairs regarding mental health is to move away from the maintenance model of treatment and transition to the recovery model; and

WHEREAS, The Veterans Affairs recognizes that the most important aspect of the recovery-oriented model is peer to peer support; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to call on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a national program to provide peer to peer rehabilitation services based on the recovery model tailored to meet the specialized needs of current generation combat-affected veterans and their families; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop effective service partnerships with community mental health and addictions agencies to expand access to mental health services for National Guard members and reservists living in rural America; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion continue to exert maximum effort to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs utilizes returning servicemembers for positions as peer support specialists in the effort to provide treatment, support services and readjustment counseling for those veterans requiring these services.