



**Department of
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News Release

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VA's Telephone Service Helps Family Members Encourage Veterans to Seek Medical Care

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a telephone service, Coaching into Care, to provide assistance to family members and friends trying to encourage their Veteran to seek health care for possible readjustment and mental health issues.

“Those closest to Veterans are often the first to recognize when Veterans are having difficulties,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “Family members and friends may not know what to say to encourage their Veterans to seek much needed readjustment and health care. The Coaching into Care line will help them find the right words.”

To help Veterans address problems and support Veterans in making decisions about getting care, the Coaching into Care program offers unlimited, free coaching with family members or friends over a series of telephone calls. The priority is connecting Veterans with VA care in their community through the family member's help and encouragement. Callers receive professional coaching on solving specific logistical obstacles and encouraging sometimes reluctant Veterans to seek care while still respecting the Veteran's right to make personal decisions.

Coaching into Care, launched in March 2011, has had more than 650 calls with family members or friends of greater than 175 Veterans to encourage them to seek care. This phone line is connected to VA's Veterans Crisis Line, Caregiver Support Line, and the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans. This way, if the caller or Veteran is in an immediate crisis, or has concerns regarding caregiving for a disabled Veteran, or seeking assistance regarding homelessness, there is no wrong number for families to call.

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Telephone Service 2/2/2/2

Callers can reach VA's Coaching into Care program at the toll-free number 1-888-823-7458, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, and online at <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/coaching/>. As always, Veterans can reach immediate help at the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, press 1 for Veterans.

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