

## ISSUE BRIEF: VA-DOD CARE COORDINATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT

### The Situation

- The Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DOD) need to better integrate care coordination and case management programs to provide a seamless transition between agencies. When injured and ill service members transfer from DOD to VA facilities, regardless of whether they are discharged from active duty to veteran status, coordination between the two systems is essential.

### The Challenge

- Three VA and joint VA/DOD programs are mandated to address the transition from DOD to VA health care facilities: (1) Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Care Management, (2) the VA Liaison Program, and (3) the Federal Recovery Coordinator Program
- Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 to improve the care, management, and transition of recovering service members. Conforming to the NDAA requirements, DOD established policy for a Recovery Coordination Program (RCP), which was implemented separately by each of the service branches.
- Subsequently, many recovering service members and veterans are enrolled in more than one care coordination or case management program, and they may have multiple care coordinators and case managers, potentially duplicating agencies' efforts and reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance these individuals need.
- There is also inadequate information exchange and poor coordination between these programs that creates confusion and frustration for recovering service members and veterans and their families, particularly when case managers and care coordinators duplicate or contradict one another's efforts.
- DOD and VA have been unsuccessful thus far in jointly developing options for improved collaboration and potential integration of the FRCP and RCP care coordination programs, although they have made a number of attempts to address these challenges. Despite the identification of various options, no final decisions to revamp, merge, or eliminate programs have been approved.

### The Solution

- DAV urges VA and DOD to complete the development of both a strategic and implementation plan that would integrate policies and procedures of care coordination and case management programs under both agencies, including the FRCP and RCP, each military service's wounded warrior program, and VA's OEF/OIF Care Management Program.
- DAV urges Congress to continue its oversight on both VA and DOD's progress in integrating programs to reduce duplication of efforts, eliminate confusion and frustration of recovering service members and veterans, and increase program effectiveness.