



Memorandum

To: GI Rights Hotline

From: Howard Waitzkin

Date: 6/6/09

Re: Referrals and Research Program for GIs Seeking Medical and Mental Health Services

The Civilian Medical Resources Network (CMRN), as you may know, is a network of medical and mental health professionals located throughout the country. More information appears on our website: <http://www.civilianmedicalresources.net/>

In partnership with the University of New Mexico, the CMRN is conducting a study to understand better the reasons active-duty military personnel seek medical and mental health services outside the military, and how to improve the quality of civilian services for them. The GI Rights Hotline is the primary source of referrals to the CMRN, and we want to be sure all Hotline counselors are aware of both the CMRN's services and this study.

When a GI needs medical and/or mental health services, such as evaluation, treatment, second opinions, letters of support, etc., a GI Rights Hotline counselor should contact the CMRN at **1-866-842-4547 (option 3)** and also by email at info@civilianmedicalresources.net. Please do both, to assure that we receive the information promptly and accurately. The CMRN will then locate a professional in the network who can work with the client, either in person or over the phone depending on the circumstances.

In the referral call and email, please give include the following information: 1) a brief description of the problem(s) to be addressed; 2) a statement about the urgency of response; and 3) information about insurance and/or other financial resources that the client may have, if any (this information will help us arrange a suitable referral). Please also be sure to give us a contact phone number and email address so we can get back to you or whoever is covering for you.

For the study, we will be inviting participation by GIs who are referred to the CMRN and are not in immediate or acute crisis. Participation will be completely voluntary. If a GI chooses not to participate in the study, he or she still will receive the full clinical services that the CMRN is able to provide.

We will give clients a brief description of the study and will ask them if they would be willing to participate. If they agree (provide oral consent), we will set up a time to

contact them and will administer several instruments, including a brief demographic questionnaire, a PTSD checklist, and a “Patient Health Questionnaire” to help assess their needs. We will also schedule follow up interviews with the subjects to evaluate the effectiveness of any services they receive.

All information will be completely confidential. Information that could identify clients will be removed from the database after each interview. All data will be encrypted so that cannot be obtained or used in any way that identifies the client.

This study will help us to understand the effects that military service and combat have on GIs’ physical and mental health, and the barriers they face in seeking treatment within and outside the military. The results of the study will help us to improve the services we provide to GIs and will give us information to make policy recommendations regarding health care and mental health services for military personnel.

Your assistance is greatly appreciated, and we welcome any questions or feedback. Please contact Howard Waitzkin (waitzkin@unm.edu), director of the study, or Darrin Kowitz (dkowitz@unm.edu), research assistant and Army veteran, with questions or comments.

Thanks for all you’re doing!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Howard Waitzkin".

Howard Waitzkin, MD, PhD
Director, CMRN
Distinguished Professor,
University of New Mexico