Obama Signs New Suicide Prevention Act in Honor of U.S. War Vet

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President Obama has signed a new measure into law that will make it easier for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to find mental health resources, The New York Times reports.

The measure is called the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. The law is named after a 28-year-old Marine from Texas who took his own life after struggling with PTSD after his return home from the war in Afghanistan. Hunt's family and friends lobbied Washington for four years to get better suicide prevention services for veterans.

The Clay Hunt Act offers incentives to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to recruit many more mental health professionals. The law will also start holding the VA's mental health programs accountable to outside evaluations. What's more, the law provides vets with an extra year to get health care through the department without having to prove service-related disability.

"This is not just a job for government," said President Obama at a White House signing ceremony for the bill. "Every community, every American can reach out and do more with and for our veterans. This has to be a national mission. As a nation, we should not be satisfied until every man and woman in uniform, every veteran, gets the help that they need to stay strong and healthy."

Suicide affects older and younger veterans, and occurs most often among soldiers who do not receive mental health care.

When Iraq war veteran Shoshana Johnson—the nation's first black female prisoner of war—returned home, she suffered from symptoms of PTSD. Click here to read her story.

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