



**VETERANS
HEALING
INITIATIVE**

For Immediate Release

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Veterans Healing Initiative Formed to Help Meet Burgeoning Addiction and Mental Health Issues of Returning U.S. Veterans

Will Help Heal “The War Within”

September 21, 2009—The Veterans Healing Initiative (VHI) has been formed in response to the dramatic increase of Substance Abuse (SA) and co-occurring mental health disorders among U.S. Veterans. Formed by Margaret Stone and James L. Abernathy, VHI’s core mission is to raise funds for veterans who need treatment for Addiction and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and help them begin to heal the war within.

“For veterans suffering from substance abuse and trauma, the war within is ferocious,” said Stone. “Today’s veterans, returning from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) have faced repeated tours of duty, higher exposures to combat trauma and reduced time between deployments. We know that many returning OEF and OIF veterans fall through the cracks and do not receive any help until they become part of the criminal justice system. And of the 11% or nearly 190,000 women who have served, many must contend with not only combat-related trauma, but also sexual trauma. Combined with addiction, the need for specialized treatment programs that address their unique issues becomes imperative.”

VHI is the first and only charitable organization dedicated entirely to providing funding for treatment programs that are specifically designed for veterans who suffer from these diseases. VHI will work collaboratively with veterans’ services, private and public charities, community-based organizations, federal, state and local agencies, and veteran drug courts to promote and develop veteran recovery programs.

On the Board of Governors is: James L. Abernathy, Margaret Stone, Dan Cronin, Doug Johnson, Dennis H. Leibowitz, David C. Lewis, M.D., Maureen J. Miskovic, Lisa M. Najavits, PhD, Andy Pucher, Neil Smith and Paul Yelavich. The Veterans Healing Initiative has received initial financial support from the Robert Ziff Foundation.

Veterans Healing Initiative today also unveiled a new Web site. That Web site can be found at www.VetsHealing.org.

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