Beyond the physical casualties of combat, war takes an incredible toll on the emotional and mental health of veterans. In fact, once home, veterans plagued by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and other severe anxiety disorders find themselves fighting another kind of battle. Figures from the Department of Veterans Affairs show that nationally, 18 veterans commit suicide daily. A Rand study reports that 20% of returning veterans have PTSD and 10% have TBI. But a much higher number—38% of enlisted soldiers and 49% of National Guard troops—report “psychological symptoms.” In addition, women in the military face sexual assault from their own troops. According to statistics from the VA, 37% of women veterans report multiple sexual assaults and from 71-90% report being sexually harassed.

The problems veterans face ripple out to all those around them. Deployment and reintegration significantly impact families and children. Children of veterans with PTSD are at increased risk of emotional, behavioral, and academic problems.

Service providers face an uphill battle in reaching veterans. Many veterans are reluctant to seek care through the VA due to fears of stigmatization, loss of career advancement opportunities, discomfort with the VA facility environments, lack of eligibility, and distance from VA medical centers. Community-based services are vital, as veterans often prefer to seek care at smaller, locally-based organizations.

On Long Island:

- Long Island, with over **152,000** veterans, has the largest population of veterans in the country besides San Diego. This spike in veteran numbers is due in part to the housing boom generated by Levittown, resulting in many World War II veterans settling on Long Island. The children of veterans are more likely than others to serve in the military.

- **5,000** Iraq and Afghanistan veterans live on Long Island.

- **One in two** veterans on Long Island returning from Iraq and Afghanistan has a mental health need.

- There are **5,500** homeless veterans on Long Island.

**Mental Health Needs of Returning Veterans**

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Recent LICF Grants

CONCERN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, Medford - $25,000 to help formerly homeless veterans with mental health problems find safe and more permanent housing.

LONG ISLAND COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, Mineola - $25,000 to provide a supportive counseling workshop series and individual assistance for military families grappling with mental health and substance abuse issues.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NASSAU COUNTY, Hempstead - $25,000 to support the Veterans Health Alliance of Long Island in its advocacy and college campus outreach efforts.

TOURO COLLEGE JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER, Central Islip - $20,000 to provide legal assistance to military veterans with psychological disorders.

To learn more about how LICF addresses this issue, please visit our website at www.licf.org.