



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Providence* – Gateway Healthcare, in collaboration with the Rhode Island National Guard, launched the Veteran & Military Assist 24-hour Hotline at a press conference on Tuesday, July 27th at the Rhode Island National Guard Family Center in Providence. The hotline: 1-877-509-4321, connects military individuals and families with resources across the state from tutoring to food assistance to mental health services. This confidential hotline is free and open to all branches of the military, past and present.

It is estimated that there are nearly 77,000 veterans and 4,500 active duty soldiers currently living in Rhode Island. Currently, there exists no one entity or one door approach for families in need of resources. This hotline will provide access to a myriad of resources for all Rhode Island's military families' needs, big or small.

“We understand that military duties can often leave families overwhelmed and unsure where to turn to for resources,” said Richard Leclerc, President of Gateway Healthcare. “This important initiative allows Gateway to extend its core clinical competencies while collaborating with other community resources throughout Rhode Island.”

“This is an outstanding resource for our Soldiers and Airmen and their families. All military and veterans will greatly benefit from this resource,” stated Major General Robert T. Bray, Adjutant General and Commander of the Rhode Island National Guard.

“Despite the abundant resources available to Rhode Islanders, often times individuals and families are not sure where to begin. For military families, the stress of a deployment can often make reaching out for help that much more difficult, making this hotline imperative,” said Craig Stenning, Director, Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH).

The hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is completely confidential and free to military families and veterans. This initiative was made possible through an appropriation with the help of Congressman Patrick Kennedy, funded by a grant by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Gateway Healthcare manages Veteran & Military Assist in collaboration with the Rhode Island National Guard Family Center.

To inform Rhode Island military families of the new service, Gateway and the Rhode Island National Guard are launching a statewide and comprehensive communications campaign including advertising, radio public service announcements and community outreach.



[photo caption (l-r): Craig Stenning, Director, Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH); Lt. Col. Denis J. Riel, State Public Affairs Officer for the Rhode Island National Guard; and Richard Leclerc, President of Gateway Healthcare]

***ABOUT GATEWAY HEALTHCARE:** Gateway Healthcare, Inc., is the largest non-profit behavioral healthcare organization in Rhode Island, providing a broad spectrum of preventative and treatment programs for children, adolescents, families, and adults suffering from severe mental illness, substance abuse problems, and emotional and behavioral disorders. Gateway Healthcare is headquartered in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Gateway serves over 15,000 unduplicated children, adults and families each year. For more information, please visit [www.gatewayhealth.org](http://www.gatewayhealth.org).*

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