Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Shereef Elnahal
Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health
US Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington D.C. 20420

Dear Under Secretary Elnahal:

Emerging therapies in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health conditions are already on the horizon and could be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as soon as this summer. As we look ahead to the potential FDA approval of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, we're writing to request a report on VA's plan to ensure this therapy, if approved by FDA, is available and a safe option for veterans whom it may benefit.

VA is the leader in mental health care for veterans, and its providers' specialized knowledge in treating issues such as combat trauma and military sexual trauma is unmatched by any other healthcare system in this country. We're concerned that if VA is not prepared to implement emerging psychedelic-assisted therapies when they become available, veterans will be left to navigate providers outside VA who may not have the specialized expertise in addressing their unique needs and the relevant military context of their trauma. The potential lack of in-house capacity at the VA could threaten the mental health of our nations' veterans and carries significant cost implications for VA.

In September 2023, stakeholders from across VA came together to plan for expanded research into and possible implementation of psychedelic-assisted therapy. This convening, called the "State of the Art (SOTA) Conference: Psychedelic Treatments for Mental Health Conditions," produced a set of recommendations for potential VA system-wide clinical implementation for psychedelic compounds. VA leaders from the Office of Research & Development and Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention presented some of the outcomes of the SOTA Conference to the House Veterans Affairs Committee in recent months.

We are encouraged by VA's commitment to further research, but remain concerned about the implications of FDA approval of MDMA-assisted therapies without a plan in place at VA to ensure these treatments are available to veterans through VA and that there are adequate training initiatives to ensure proper staffing levels once these therapies are approved. **We respectfully request that you produce VA's implementation plan** that would be deployable as soon as this novel treatment option is approved for clinical use. **Specific aspects addressed should include:**

- Care model details and implementation timeline;
- Geographic locations where the psychedelic-assisted therapy treatment model will be available to veterans;
- Additional workforce and infrastructure needs for VHA to provide treatment;
- Staff training implementation plan and timeline; and
- Evaluation plan to track outcomes and cost.

We request that you provide this information **no later than July 1, 2024**. We thank you for your prompt response and guidance.

Sincerely,

Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress

Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Greg Landsman
Member of Congress

Mariannette Miller-Meeks
Member of Congress