

ADVANCE LETTER
[PRINTED ON DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LETTERHEAD]
[Flesch Kincaid Reading level 6.6]

<DATE>

Dear <PERSONAL TITLE> <LAST NAME>:

In the next few weeks, an interviewer from RAND will call you on the phone to ask you some questions about your experiences using VA mental health care or other mental health care. By mental health care we mean help with problems with relationships or emotions, counseling, treatment for drug or alcohol use, or help with emotional problems or mental illness. **PLEASE ACCEPT THE PHONE CALL.**

WHY ARE WE CALLING?

- The VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION has asked RAND to learn how the VA is doing in providing mental health care.
- RAND will interview about 8,000 veterans by phone to hear about their experiences.
- This is your chance to share your experiences with mental health services, whether or not you use VA care.

WHO IS RAND?

- RAND is not part of the VA; it is an independent research organization.

HOW LONG WILL THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW TAKE AND WHAT WILL YOU ASK ME?

- The interview will take about 25 to 30 minutes.
- RAND will send you a check for \$10.00 to thank you for your time.
- We will ask you some questions about your experiences using VA mental health services or other mental health care, and about your satisfaction with the care you have received. We will also ask you about your health and how you have been feeling.

DO I HAVE TO DO THIS?

- We believe it is important for you to tell RAND about your experiences with mental health care. But, you do not have to take part if you do not want to. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer.
- Whether or not you decide to take part in this interview will not affect any services you receive now and will not affect your eligibility for services in the future.
- **This is your chance to share your experiences with mental health services whether you use the VA system or not.**

IS THIS CONFIDENTIAL?

- **YES!** That means we will not tell anyone outside of the project your answers. The information that you give RAND in this interview will be used for evaluation purposes only.
- RAND will not connect your name to the information that you give.
- Your answers will be combined with answers from other veterans and will be shown only as totals and averages.

WHAT WILL RAND DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

- Your confidential answers will help the VHA understand veterans' experiences.
- The information will be used to evaluate the VA's mental health care services.
- The VA will use this information to improve the quality of care you and other veterans are getting.
- The VA strongly encourages you to participate in this very important evaluation.

IT IS EASY: There are no right or wrong answers.

IT IS FAST: It will take about 25 to 30 minutes on the phone.

IT IS IMPORTANT: This is your chance to help improve mental health services for veterans.

IT IS CONFIDENTIAL: We will not connect names to the information veterans share with us.

WE'LL SEND YOU \$10 FOR COMPLETING THE PHONE INTERVIEW!

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

If you want to do the interview now, or if you have any questions about this evaluation, please call Kirsten Becker, RAND Survey Director, toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX or email at Kirsten_Becker@rand.org.

If you wish to call the VA, please call [CONTACT NAME] at 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you very much for helping with this important evaluation. The information you provide will help to improve mental health services for veterans.

Sincerely,

WHO
Title