

# Avery Veterans' Corner

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## Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for PTSD

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it will offer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) as a treatment option for a small number of Veterans with persistent post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms which are resistant to standard options.

Providers from the Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System and the VA Northern California Health Care System will partner with HBOT providers at the Tulsa Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center at Oklahoma State Medical Center in Tulsa, Okla., and the David Grant Medical Center on Travis Air Force Base, Calif., respectively, to provide this care.

“There is nothing more important to us than caring for our nation’s Veterans, and that care must include finding different approaches that work best for them,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “We have to explore every avenue, particularly for our most medically vulnerable Veterans, and be open to new ideas and strategies for their optimal health and well-being.”

HBOT is a procedure that increases oxygen in the body, under pressure, to encourage healing. Currently, HBOT is commonly used to treat carbon monoxide poisoning, divers’ sickness, enhanced healing of some wound problems, skin grafts, heat burns, crush injuries and other acute health care issues that involve too little blood flow to a part of the body. This use of HBOT for treatment of PTSD is considered an “off-label” use and will occur under the supervision of a trained physician.

Separately, VA and the Department of Defense are planning a multi-site research study to examine more fully the use of HBOT for patients diagnosed with PTSD. As health care leaders interested in innovative approaches to care, the VA Center for

Compassionate Innovation is facilitating use of HBOT for a subset of Veterans who have noticed no decrease of symptoms after receiving at least two evidenced-based treatments.

CCI uses innovative approaches to treat conditions where traditional methods have been unsuccessful. VA will monitor the HBOT clinical demonstration project and the HBOT research to help inform the potential for HBOT usage to treat a larger number of Veterans with PTSD.

For Internet assistance, go to your local county library.

For questions concerning veteran's benefits and to obtain needed forms call Georgia Henry, Avery County Veterans Service Office, at (828) 733-8211.

Comments and suggestions on the Veterans' Corner or Disabled American Veterans can be emailed to Jim Sramek at [averycountyveterans@gmail.com](mailto:averycountyveterans@gmail.com).