

Information Paper on California Army National Guard (CAARNG) Substance Abuse Program (SAP) office:

The purpose of the CAARNG SAP office is to help command teams have resilient, healthy, and mission-ready Soldiers. One part of this is being able to refer Soldiers to certified and/or licensed substance abuse counselors where the CAARNG Soldiers live, which could be anywhere throughout California. One challenge that Soldiers face is not being eligible or able to utilize Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) unless they are placed on federal orders. The majority of CAARNG Soldiers are not in an active duty status, and therefore not on federal orders. Additionally, many current National Guard Soldiers do not qualify for VA services for Counseling or Medical Treatment due to their lack of being placed in an active duty status or possessing a DD Form 214. A final obstacle that some Soldiers face is a lack of viable health insurance that covers substance abuse treatment or mental health counseling. Many of these Soldiers may qualify for Tricare Reserve Select, but cannot afford the premium or fees. The SAP team has worked to educate Soldiers on the benefits of the state health care system, Covered California (Medi-Cal), and have seen some initial success.

The SAP team has identified several possible solutions to bridge the service gap to ensure all Soldiers have the opportunity to receive Substance Use Disorder Assessments. Our priority resource is utilizing the CAARNG Behavioral Health Officers, but this may not be the best option for some Soldiers. An alternate community based resource that is also accessible around the State is the "Give An Hour" program. In this program, licensed and/or certified substance abuse counselors could provide a Substance Use Disorder assessment, possible clinical diagnosis, and recommendations for continued treatment to fulfill the National Guard SAP referral requirements, all on a pro-bono basis. These counselors would be in a position to determine if a Soldier needs continued Substance Abuse treatment, requires further Substance Abuse Prevention education, or does not require any further treatment.

The Give an Hour substance abuse counselor, after the drug assessment, will state in the diagnosis if the Soldier does have a mild, severe, and / or does not have a substance abuse problem. If the Soldier does not have a substance abuse problem, then **writing a statement in the diagnosis such as, "My professional opinion is that at this time (Soldier's name) does not meet criteria to enroll in formal substance abuse treatment; however, I recommend that Service Member attend 10 12-Step Meetings in order to be in compliance." Signed..... If the Soldier does not have a substance abuse problem, but would benefit by going to Alcoholic Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous or receiving behavioral counseling; Signed..... If the Soldier does have a substance abuse problem, then stating in the diagnosis if it's mild or severe issues with alcohol or drug addiction and what the recommended treatment such as outpatient, inpatient and for how long.**

The CAARNG SAP team already has working relationships with several Substance Abuse counselors throughout California and would take an active case management role with counselors participating in the "Give An Hour" program. A member of the SAP team would act as an initial liaison between Soldiers and the counselor, ensuring the counselor was available to take on a new client and assist the counselor with any questions they may have about paperwork or CAARNG referral case management requirements. The CAARNG SAP team's ultimate goal is to increase Soldier retention and resiliency, improve the SAP referral process, and assist Soldiers and CAARNG Command teams.

Here is the CAARNG Substance Abuse Program office team:

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