

San Antonio, TX - Today, Congressmen **Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23)**, member of the House Appropriations Committee and the Veterans Affairs Committee, and Congressman **Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20)** applauded a \$33 million U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) grant award to a research consortium to investigate post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which has become prevalent among Iraq and Afghanistan military veterans. The five year-long project will be led by the University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio (UTSHC-SA) and aims to develop and evaluate methods to effectively administer mental health care for combat related illnesses.

"As a Member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have fought to get full funding levels for our veterans so we can keep our promise as a nation to provide quality health care and access to veterans' services," said Congressman Rodriguez. "Our soldiers are returning home with skyrocketing numbers of undiagnosed PTSD and so I'm pleased that such a prestigious institution located in San Antonio could lead the fight in continuing to help our veterans."

"When studies show that one in six veterans returning from Iraq show symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder and up to 300,000 additional veterans are estimated to be at risk of developing PTSD, it's obvious that we need to be investing in research that will help treat our veterans," said Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20). "Not only does this award accomplish this goal, it most importantly displays a strong commitment to our veterans who have valiantly served our country. We must provide them with the best available healthcare and this research facility will make sure we can do so."

The objective of the consortium will be to develop and evaluate the most effective early-interventions possible for the detection, prevention, and treatment of combat-related PTSD in active-duty and recently discharged Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans.

According to the consortium, the research strategy will be to "incorporate randomized clinical trials (RCTs), research cores, pre-clinical studies, and developmental/exploratory studies. The RCTs will evaluate early interventions with prolonged exposure and cognitive processing therapy (two treatments with sufficient empirical evidence for their efficacy according to the 2007 Institute of Medicine Report) in various clinical populations, settings, and comorbid conditions."

"There is a great deal that we still need to accomplish in helping our troops when they finish serving our country," continued Rodriguez. "It is my hope that this research takes another great step in helping our veterans.

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