

Ukrainian delegation visits Canada's centre of excellence on mental health conditions for Veterans and Families

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families was honoured today by the visit of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, leading a delegation to explore international leadership in supporting former military personnel and their Families in restoring their mental health and well-being post-conflict.

As part of the visit, a signing ceremony took place to formalize a memorandum of international Veteran and Family Mental Health partnership between the Ukrainian State Institution "Veterans Mental Health and Rehabilitation Center 'Lisova Polyana' of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine" and the research and knowledge mobilization institution, "the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families" in Canada (hereafter — MOU). The MOU formalizes cooperation between the two organizations in Canada and Ukraine to explore possible collaborations for research, knowledge exchange and capacity-building in the sphere of mental health to best support people in Ukraine who have been impacted post-conflict.

"Together, we are looking to explore opportunities to collaborate that will allow Lisova Polyana to support Veteran and Family mental health in Ukraine, informed by the work Atlas is doing," said Fardous Hosseiny, President and CEO of Atlas. "We believe that sharing experiences and knowledge related to Veteran and Family mental health systems of care can support the restoration and development of services across Ukraine's health care system, and that this will position them for that long road to recovery."



Fardous Hosseiny, President and CEO of the Atlas Institute, with a signed memorandum of international partnership (MOU) between the Ukrainian state institution, the "Veterans Mental Health and Rehabilitation Center 'Lisova Polyana' of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine

MaryAnn Notarianni, Deputy CEO and Executive Vice President, Knowledge Mobilization at Atlas, echoed this, noting that supporting the awareness, adaptation and joint development of information and psychoeducational mental health and well-being resources for Veterans and their Families as well as for the professionals who support them is a key aspect of the collaboration. She added, "As an organization that has cultivated a robust network of partnerships nationally and internationally to reduce silos and foster knowledge exchange around best practices for Veteran and Family mental health, this MOU aligns well with the mandate of Atlas. One of our initial steps will be to establish regular dialogue and the means to effectively communicate applicable research findings and best practices between Ukrainian and Canadian mental health professionals and researchers. With our internal subject matter experts (SMEs) and access to a network of other SMEs across Canada, Atlas is well-positioned to inform and advise on efforts to support the use of best-practice standards and protocols for quality mental health care delivery in Ukraine."



Her Excellency Olena Zelenska, First Lady of Ukraine, The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor and The Honourable Ya'ara Saks watch a neurofeedback demonstration by Dr. Andrew Nicholson, Atlas and Andrew Lapointe, Postdoctoral Researcher at Atlas.

"Through their research and expertise, and supported with funding from the Government of Canada, the Atlas Institute strengthens the care and support of Veterans," said The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence. "Collaboration between the Atlas Institute and Ukraine's Ministry of Health will help ensure that Veterans and Families in Canada and Ukraine benefit from shared knowledge and research in mental health."

Hosseiny said that the realities of the current situation are a powerful reminder of the importance of focusing on the mental health of the population, while also ensuring tailored responses for groups like military members, Veterans and their Families who may be uniquely impacted. "As Atlas has championed awareness of Veteran and Family mental health needs in Canada, we are honoured to collaborate with our Ukrainian counterparts to support this effort in their country and model the way for engaging lived experience in that effort," he added.

With the MOU now signed and the draft framework established, work will begin immediately to rapidly bring the collaboration together.

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Quick facts:

- The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families was established to provide easier access to information, research, tools and expertise on posttraumatic stress disorder and related mental health conditions.
- Since its inception, Atlas has contributed to the publication of 39 peer-reviewed articles and created more than 45 knowledge products, including fact sheets, written resources, videos and infographics. Atlas has led or is currently leading 14 research projects and has partnered on another 26 research projects.
- Atlas actively engages Veterans and their Families as key partners, co-investigators and co-authors of its research, including a process for their participation in reviewing research outcomes from a lived expertise perspective.
- It also collaborates and partners with Veterans and Families to understand which issues matter most to them, using that knowledge to work with them and with service providers and researchers to co-create resources and knowledge products that fit the unique culture and needs of the Veteran and Family communities.

ABOUT THE ATLAS INSTITUTE FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES

The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families works with Veterans, Families, service providers and researchers to bridge the divide between research and practice so Veterans and their Families can get the best possible mental health care and supports. The Atlas Institute was originally established as the Centre of Excellence on PTSD and Related Mental Health Conditions, through the Minister of Veterans Affairs November 2015 mandate letter, with funding and budget announced in the March 2017 federal budget.

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