

Invisible Wounds Foundation Launches Brain Health Collaborative to Combat Traumatic Brain Injury and Prevent Suicides

A post-9/11 study of veterans found that suicide rates were 56% higher in veterans with TBI, and Special Operations Forces are twice as likely to sustain a TBI

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, in advance of the 24th anniversary of 9-11, the Invisible Wounds Foundation, a Chicago-based nonprofit foundation dedicated to advancing the science to diagnose, treat, and eventually preventing traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Special Operations Forces, announced the launch of its Brain Health Collaborative.



The Collaborative is a collective of researchers, academic institutions, philanthropic supporters, government agencies, and private stakeholders committed to advancing combat and blast-induced TBI research to ensure the rapid development of a diagnostic and treatments. While the focus is on Special Operations Forces, the research will benefit all service members and veterans suffering from TBI.

"The invisible wounds of TBI are impacting and taking the lives of our nation's elite warriors at alarming rates. The Brain Health Collaborative will unite all stakeholders to accelerate progress toward understanding the root cause of TBIs and developing the first diagnostic and effective treatments as quickly as possible. Our service members deserve nothing less, and the only way we can achieve this is through collaboration," said Shannon Connell, Chief Executive Officer of the Invisible Wounds Foundation.

Recognized as the signature wound of the Global War on Terror, TBIs are frequently caused by repeated exposure to blasts from weapons during combat and training, which can cause ongoing physical and behavioral symptoms such as headaches, blurred vision, sleeplessness, irritability, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

Between 2000 and 2020, over 460,000 U.S. service members were diagnosed with TBI (DOD TBI Worldwide Numbers, 2021, (U.S. Department of Defense). In 2023 alone, the Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence reported 20,000 new TBI cases among active service members and veterans.

“Addressing TBI is a no-fail mission. Just as our warriors show absolute commitment in serving this nation, we must show the same commitment to advancing the science that will deliver reliable diagnostics and effective treatments,” said Connell.

To advise the Collaborative, the Foundation established a Medical and Science Advisory Council (MSAC), composed of preeminent doctors and scientists in the fields of brain health and military-related TBI research. Led by the Foundation’s Chief Medical Scientist, Dr. James Kelly, the former Founder and Director of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the MSAC will identify the most promising TBI research projects to recommend to the Collaborative for funding.

“After working in the brain health field for more than 30 years, I’m honored to help lead the Brain Health Collaborative. It is a powerful way to bring together the finest minds and resources to identify and fund the most promising research ideas. I’m confident it will produce the first true diagnostic and most effective treatments for blast-induced TBI,” said Dr. James Kelly, the Foundation’s Chief Medical Scientist.

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About the Invisible Wounds Foundation

Invisible Wounds Foundation exists to safeguard the brain health of America’s warriors. Through collaboration with leading medical researchers and scientists, government agencies, and its partner community, the Foundation is advancing science to diagnose, treat, and eventually prevent blast and combat-induced brain injuries among Special Operations Forces and other warfighters. Learn more at invisiblewoundsfoundation.org

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