

Breaking Barriers in Care: Veterans, Clinicians, and Advocates Unite in New York City

New York State Department of Veterans' Services and Mountainside Treatment Center Convene Leaders for Groundbreaking Dialogue on Veteran Mental Health



ALBANY, NY, NY, UNITED STATES, October 23, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Panel and film segments featuring Emmy Award Winning Actor Michael Imperioli and leaders in [mental health](#), [addiction](#), and [Veterans](#) services to highlight urgent challenges and innovative solutions for Veterans' recovery

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*NYSDVS Commissioner
Viviana DeCohen*

The New York State Department of Veterans' Services and Mountainside Treatment Center will co-host a critical panel discussion on the future of Veteran mental health and recovery on Wednesday, November 12, at the Whitby Hotel in Midtown Manhattan.

Titled Shaping the Future: Closing the Gaps in Veteran Mental Health & Recovery, the impactful evening will feature select scenes from the upcoming feature film *Between Wars*, starring Emmy Award-winning actor, writer, and director Michael Imperioli (*The Sopranos*) as “Sarge,” a

combat Veteran turned therapist. Using the film as a springboard, the panel will examine the evolving challenges Veterans face in reintegrating into civilian life, confronting trauma, and navigating complex mental health systems.

Opening remarks will be delivered by Jana Wu, Director of Clinical Integration at Mountainside, followed by Benjamin Pomerance, Esq., Deputy Counsel of the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, Michael Imperioli, and *Between Wars* Director Tommy Phillips. The film is slated for release nationwide on streaming platforms in January 2026.

The conversation will be moderated by Dave Manheim, host of the popular *Dopey* podcast on addiction and recovery. Panelists include:

- Viviana M. DeCohen, Commissioner, New York State Department of Veterans' Services

- Keith Appleton, U.S. Army Combat Veteran and Clinician at Mountainside Treatment Center
- Manassa Hany, Director, Division of Addiction Psychiatry, Northwell Health
- Dominic Chianese Jr., Actor and Recovery Advocate

Together, the panel will address urgent issues such as rising rates of Veteran mental health challenges, substance misuse, and the impact of federal funding cuts to Veterans' services.

Viviana M. DeCohen, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, USMC said, "Veteran suicide and addiction rates are more than double those of the general population. That stark reality demands fresh thinking, bold collaboration, and an emphasis on listening. This evening is not just about raising awareness – it is about fostering a genuine dialogue that creates solutions. By bringing together clinicians, advocates, artists, and Veterans themselves, we can help drive innovations that save lives and build a stronger, more supportive future for all who served."

"This is the first Veteran-focused event to directly confront the toughest mental health challenges Veterans face – and the stigma that still persists both within the military community and across society," Keith Appleton, U.S. Army Combat Veteran and Clinician at Mountainside Treatment Center, said: "Our goal is to move beyond discussion and spark concrete actions that health care providers, Veteran organizations, and the media can immediately implement. Mountainside is proud to be expanding its offerings to include a new open-to-all Veteran Support Group and specialized clinical services and programming specifically tailored to Veterans."

Event Details:

- What: Shaping the Future: Closing the Gaps in Veteran Mental Health & Recovery
- When: Wednesday, November 12, 6 PM
- Where: The Whitby Hotel, Midtown Manhattan
- Hosted by: New York State Department of Veterans' Services and Mountainside Treatment Center

This is a private, invitation-only event. Members of the media or those interested in attending or covering the event should contact Griffin Gonzales at griffin.gonzales@mountainside.com.

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