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Virginia sends money to Hampton Roads for veterans' mental health programs

By Hugh Lessig | 757-247-7821
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RICHMOND - A \$620,000 state grant announced Friday is aimed at helping veterans in Hampton Roads who suffer from combat stress disorders and traumatic brain injuries.

The money will be used to hire seven additional case managers and to establish a program for behavioral and rehabilitation services for veterans. It will also focus on outreach programs for veterans' families, particularly spouses.

The Denbigh House, Beacon House and the No Limits Day Program will offer services for brain-injured veterans.

The grant is part of \$1.7 million dispersed around the state through the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program. The awards were announced by Gov. Timothy M. Kaine.

"This funding is being directly infused into our communities to assist veterans and their families," said Catherine Wilson, executive director of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.

The program was created by the General Assembly in 2008 to ensure that services to veterans and their families are available throughout the state.

Del. Kirk Cox, R- Colonial Heights, is considered one of the leading advocates for veterans in the legislature.

"This help is particularly needed for veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said.

Of the troops returning from those two war zones, one in five report symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or depression, state figures show.

Roughly that same percentage have experienced traumatic brain injury.

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