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Posttraumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem, in coordination with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, is proclaiming the month of June as “Posttraumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month,” a time to reflect on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of post-traumatic stress injuries.

“The brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who proudly serve and risk their lives to protect our freedom deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being,” the Governor’s proclamation states.

PTSI, which is commonly known as Posttraumatic Stress Injury, is a normal reaction to abnormal circumstances and affects millions of Americans each year. It is most commonly associated with veterans – and has been known by many other terms, including shell shock and combat fatigue. PTSI can affect anyone at any age.

“Our veterans face many life-changing and dangerous situations when they put their lives on the line in defense of our nation’s freedoms,” said Greg Whitlock, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “Raising awareness of PTSI is an important step in ensuring veterans have the support they need to make a successful transition back to civilian life. This will help with increased understanding of unseen emotional struggles resulting from PTSI and is critical to the health and well-being of our returning heroes.”

It is estimated that between 11 and 20 percent of service members and veterans experience symptoms of PTSI. However, less than half of those struggling with the injury seek treatment.

“Every veteran processes their military experiences differently, but for those that are experiencing nightmares, flashbacks, irritability or other symptoms of PTSI, help is available,” said Whitlock. “As with any other service-connected injury, treatment is key to recovery. The better veterans understand their PTSI and the impact it has on their mental and emotional well-being, the more effectively they can treat it and began to heal.”

Specialized treatment for PTSI is available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>.

