

# Lawmakers Urge FDA to Approve MDMA Therapy for PTSD

## Lawmakers Push for MDMA Approval to Combat PTSD, Highlight Veteran Suicide Crisis

Bipartisan congressional lawmakers staged a poignant event at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, advocating for the approval of MDMA as a therapeutic option for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They joined activists who launched an art installation memorializing military veterans who have died by suicide.

### Event Highlights and Advocacy Efforts

The event took place about a month after a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel rejected an application to authorize MDMA-assisted therapy. Four members of Congress, along with veterans advocates, organized the event to raise awareness about the need for alternative treatment options, including psychedelics.

Reps. Lou Correa (D-CA), Jack Bergman (R-MI), Morgan Luttrell (R-TX), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) participated in the ceremony, which featured 150,000 military dog tags displayed to symbolize the number of veterans lost to suicide since 9/11. Each of the veteran participants hung 17 dog tags to mark the average 17+ veterans who die by suicide per day.

### MDMA and PTSD

The art installation was designed to draw attention to the PTSD and suicide crisis among veterans. Lawmakers and advocates emphasized the urgent need for the FDA and Congress to act boldly in exploring the therapeutic potential of psychedelics.

“What we’re asking for the FDA to recognize is the science,” said Luttrell, who last month criticized the FDA Psychopharmacologic Drugs Advisory Committee for recommending against MDMA-assisted therapy in an op-ed for Marijuana Moment. The FDA is expected to make a decision on the application next month.

### Personal Experiences and Legislative Calls to Action

Luttrell, who has used psychedelic medicines to treat mental health conditions following his service-related trauma, shared his personal experience. “I have gone through psychedelic treatments, and I did have to go overseas in order to do that,” he noted.

Bergman, a Vietnam War veteran, spoke on the close connection he has to the issue. “Our nation is facing an ongoing PTSD, mental health, and suicide epidemic,” he said. “Psychedelic-assisted therapies have the potential to be the first genuine advancement in the treatment of veterans’ mental health in decades.”

Correa, co-founder of the Congressional Psychedelic Advancing Therapy Caucus alongside Bergman, stressed the need for action: “FDA, do your job. We have a proven cure for PTSD. What’s the problem?”

Panetta echoed these sentiments, highlighting the need for change: “We all acknowledge that we have a major health problem in our society when it comes to suicides. Sadly, a quarter of all suicides in the United States are from veterans.”

### **Veteran Advocates and the Push for MDMA Therapy**

Juliana Mercer, a Marine Corps veteran and director of veteran advocacy for Healing Breakthrough, emphasized the dire need for innovation in PTSD treatment. “The lack of innovation in PTSD treatment over the past 20 years has contributed to rising veteran suicide rates,” she said. “Since 9/11, we’ve lost 21 times more veterans at home to suicide than to combat.”

Dakota Meyer, a Medal of Honor recipient, discussed the profound impact of PTSD on his life and the potential of MDMA-assisted therapy. “MDMA-assisted therapy has shown great promise in addressing the root cause of PTSD symptoms. It is rare to find something that has the potential to help everyone, and MDMA-assisted therapy is one of those things.”

Dr. Barbara Rothbaum, a PTSD expert, and Jesse Gould, founder of the Heroic Hearts Project, also spoke in support of MDMA-assisted therapy. Rothbaum noted the impressive results from clinical trials, while Gould emphasized the need for effective treatments for veterans.

### **Legislative Progress and Future Outlook**

Amid growing calls to speed research and access to [psychedelic](#)-assisted therapy, House lawmakers last month approved amendments to a large-scale spending bill. These amendments would authorize U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) doctors to issue medical marijuana recommendations to military veterans and support psychedelics research and access.

The psychedelics-focused provision encourages VA to support research into the benefits of psychedelics for treating conditions commonly affecting military veterans.

Correa highlighted the urgency: “We’ve seen our nation’s veterans continue to needlessly suffer suicides, mental health issues, and opioid overdoses. It’s crucial that the VA ensures safe, scientifically sound, and potentially life-saving therapies are available and approved in the United States.”

The House also accepted a separate amendment urging VA to report to Congress on the potential incorporation of MDMA-assisted therapy into the department’s formulary following federal approval of the drug.

This event and the ongoing legislative efforts underscore the critical need for innovative treatments to address the mental health crisis among veterans. Lawmakers and advocates continue to push for the approval of MDMA-assisted therapy, hoping to provide a new avenue of relief for those suffering from [PTSD](#).

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