

# Congress Urges VA Readiness for MDMA Therapy as FDA Evaluates Psychedelic Approval

Bipartisan congressional lawmakers are urging the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a comprehensive plan for providing MDMA-assisted therapy to veterans once the psychedelic receives approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

## Concerns and Demands

In a letter addressed to VA Under Secretary Shereef Elnahal, Reps. Morgan McGarvey (D-KY), Morgan Luttrell (R-TX), and seven other members expressed concerns about the potential delay in implementing emerging psychedelic-assisted therapies within the VA system. They emphasized the need for the VA to proactively prepare for the availability of MDMA-assisted therapy, especially considering the looming FDA approval, which could come as early as this summer.

## FDA Approval and VA Response

The FDA's decision to review MDMA-assisted therapy as a treatment option for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has heightened the urgency for VA's preparedness. Additionally, VA's recent request for research proposals on the use of psychedelics further underscores the department's interest in exploring alternative treatments for mental health conditions.

## Legislative Action and VA Readiness

While a GOP-led bill requiring VA to notify Congress of any additions to its drug formulary was approved, VA has expressed opposition, deeming the legislation unnecessary. Nonetheless, VA's receptiveness to psychedelic research initiatives suggests a broader willingness to explore innovative treatment options.

## Implementation Plan and Timeline

The bipartisan lawmakers are calling on VA to produce an implementation plan by July 1, detailing the care model, implementation timeline, administration locations, staff training, and other pertinent aspects. This proactive approach aims to ensure that veterans have access to high-quality mental health care through VA facilities once MDMA-assisted therapy is approved.

## Commitment to Veteran Care

The signatories of the letter, including Reps. Jack Bergman (R-MI), Julia Brownley (D-CA), Chris Deluzio (D-PA), Mariannette Miller-Meeke (R-IA), emphasize the importance of supporting veterans' mental health needs. With MDMA-assisted therapy showing promise as an innovative treatment, lawmakers are determined to equip VA with the necessary resources and plans to deliver comprehensive care to veterans.

## **Moving Forward**

As the FDA evaluates MDMA-assisted therapy and VA navigates potential implementation challenges, bipartisan collaboration and congressional oversight will play crucial roles in ensuring timely access to effective treatments for veterans. By prioritizing mental health care and advancing research into novel therapies, policymakers aim to uphold the commitment to those who have served their country.

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