

MFAN, WWP Examine Relationship Between Post-9/11 Veteran Family Wellness and Food Insecurity, Medical Care, Financial Readiness

A new report provides insight into social determinants of whole health for post-9/11 veteran and retiree families, offers opportunities to improve support services

WASHINGTON (January 19, 2023) – Today, the Military Family Advisory Network (MFAN) and Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) released a report that outlines the health and well-being needs of post-9/11 veterans, retirees, and their families.

With backing from WWP, the report, “[Support Needs of Post-9/11 Veterans, Retirees, and Families](#),” identifies two distinct populations: 1) veteran family respondents who left service before receiving retirement benefits and 2) retiree family respondents who served 20 years or more and receive military-retired pay or who have been medically retired.

Key findings on post-9/11 and retiree family well-being include:

- **Warrior family well-being was shown to be significantly related to contributing factors like food insecurity, medical care, and financial readiness.** A fifth (20.7%) of post-9/11 veteran families experience poor family health, and 30.4% experience excellent family health. Meanwhile, 12.1% of post-9/11 retiree families report poor family health, while nearly half (49.7%) experience excellent family health.
- **Post-9/11 veteran families experience food insecurity and hunger at higher rates than their post-9/11 retiree counterparts.** Ten percent (10.1%) of post-9/11 veteran family respondents experience food insecurity and 17.6% experience hunger, whereas 4.9% of post-9/11 retiree family respondents report food insecurity and 6.2% report hunger.
- **A majority of post-9/11 respondents share positive experiences with accessing consistent medical care for their families.** When looking specifically at post-9/11 veteran families, 50.5% of families report positive experiences with consistent care. Post-9/11 retiree families report positive experiences more frequently (63.7%).
- **Nearly three-quarters (72.85%) of respondents have used telehealth while navigating complex healthcare systems.** Many respondents who had used telehealth elaborated on their positive experiences and telehealth benefits to their whole health care.

Examining findings from MFAN’s 2021 [Military Family Support Programming Survey](#) and WWP’s 2021 [Annual Warrior Survey](#), the report paints a robust picture of quality-of-life priorities among these populations. Specifically, researchers used validated measures like the Family Health Scale to gain a holistic understanding of access to health care and develop whole health and wellness considerations.

The organizations will use the findings to help chart the course for enhancing support.

According to Shannon Razzadin, MFAN's president and executive director, "The Military Family Advisory Network and Wounded Warrior Project have a shared commitment to understanding the journeys of veterans and their families. It is with these insights that we can build meaningful, collaborative solutions that will impact the lives of those we serve."

"This research helps shine a light on the needs of veteran families and how we can empower them," said WWP CEO Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Mike Linnington. "The data demonstrates that wounded warriors and their families need our support in accessing the care and resources they deserve to enhance their quality of life. However, no one organization can do this alone, so we're grateful to our Military Family Advisory Network partners for leading this research and proposing solutions to veterans' unique challenges."

The findings from this report are critical to veteran caregivers like Jennifer Jenkins. Jennifer's brother, James, suffered a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) after being wounded in combat, and Jennifer had to leave her job to care for him full-time. She found the support of other caregivers and organizations to help her succeed in this vital role.

"The bomb that severely wounded my brother really blew up my life, too," said Jennifer. "My brother's care required a unique set of skills that my background did not include. I had to start from scratch to find these answers, and I knew I couldn't do it alone. Our well-being is tested daily as we navigate continuous care for one another, and we couldn't do it without the support and research of organizations like Wounded Warrior Project and Military Family Advisory Network."

MFAN and WWP leadership, as well as veteran caregiver Jennifer Jenkins, are available for interview.

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About MFAN: The Military Family Advisory Network envisions a world where all military-connected families are empowered to thrive. MFAN's mission is to understand and amplify the needs of military-connected families and inspire data-informed change. Visit [MFAN.org](https://mfan.org).

About Wounded Warrior Project: Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition. Visit woundedwarriorproject.org.