



## **CHAI Study Information Brochure**

### **What is the CHAI Study and what is it about?**

The Comparative Health Assessment Interview (CHAI) Study is a Congressionally-mandated study being conducted for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) by an independent research firm, Abt Associates, Inc. This study of people who considered but decided not to join the military after 9/11 will help us understand how the decision not to enter military service affects the health and well-being of those who considered joining.

### **Why is the CHAI Study being done?**

This research will help the VA understand why people decide not to join the military and how their health and well-being compare to Veterans who completed military entrance processing around the same time. This groundbreaking research will cover life domains including:

- Physical and mental health
- Vocation and occupation
- Financial stability
- Social relationships

### **What will happen if I participate in the CHAI Study?**

If you participate, you will complete a web survey which takes about 50 minutes. Only you can access your survey using your unique access code. In addition to asking about your physical and mental health and well-being, the survey will ask about your experiences before and after you completed military entrance processing.

If you need help completing the web survey, feel free to ask a family member or caregiver for help. You may skip any question you do not want to answer. When you finish the survey, we will mail you a **\$50** check to compensate you for your time.

### **What if I choose not to participate?**

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or leave the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate, please return the self-addressed, postage-paid opt-out card enclosed with your invitation letter.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?**

Some of the questions are sensitive and may make you feel uncomfortable. However, we've tried to make the process as easy as possible.

If you feel any distress, please call the toll-free National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 to speak with qualified responders, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also contact the Lifeline by Internet at <http://chat.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>, or by text (send to 838255). The Lifeline can help you find out what additional help is available in your area, or you can just talk about any concern on your mind. The Lifeline has no connection with this study.

**Are there any benefits?**

The results of this study will be used to help improve the health and well-being of post-9/11 Veterans, and ensure that post-9/11 Veterans are receiving the support services they need now and in the future. While you may not benefit directly from being in this study, your participation may benefit others by contributing to the VA's understanding of how military service affects the health and well-being of those who serve.

**Who will see my information?**

Your information will be kept confidential. Abt Associates stores and processes all study participant data in a separate secure area that is only accessible to a small number of approved staff with security clearance from the VA. All researchers and staff working on this study have been trained in privacy, confidentiality, and data and computer security.

To help protect the privacy of respondents we have obtained a **Certificate of Confidentiality** from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). With this Certificate, we cannot be forced (for example by court order or subpoena) to disclose information that may identify you in any federal, state, local, civil, criminal, legislative, administrative, or other proceedings. The researchers will use the Certificate to resist any demands for information that would identify you, except to prevent serious harm to you or others, and as explained below.

The Certificate cannot be used to resist a demand for information from personnel of the United States federal or state government agency sponsoring the project and that will be used for auditing or program evaluation of agency funded projects or for information that must be disclosed in order to meet the requirements of the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

You should understand that a Certificate of Confidentiality does not prevent you, or a member of your family, from voluntarily releasing information about yourself, your family, or your involvement in this study. If an insurer or employer learns about your participation, and obtains your consent to receive research information, then we may not use the Certificate of Confidentiality to withhold this information. This means that you and your family must also actively protect your own privacy.

You should understand that we will in all cases, take the necessary action, including reporting to authorities, to prevent serious harm to yourself, children, or others. A Certificate of Confidentiality does not represent an endorsement of the research study by the Department of Health and Human Services or the National Institutes of Health.

**Will I receive any payment if I participate in this study?**

You will receive a **\$50** check for the web survey about 3 to 4 weeks after you complete the online questionnaire. If you do not receive the check within 5 weeks, please call [CHAI STUDY PHONE NUMBER] toll-free.

**Who can I talk to about the study?**

For more information, please contact the CHAI Study Support Center [CHAI STUDY EMAIL] or call [CHAI STUDY PHONE NUMBER] toll-free. You can also call the Principal Investigator, Aaron Schneiderman, at 202-266-4695 or 1-800-211-5272.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or you want to make sure this is a valid VA study, contact the VA Central Institutional Review Board toll-free at 1-877-254-3130.

**How long will my information be kept?**

Congress has mandated that the VA conduct the CHAI Study. Understanding the health and other needs of Veterans who have separated from the military, as well as the health and well-being of their children is a long-term research effort. Your information will be used for research purposes only, and may be able to answer important research questions about the differences between civilians and Veterans beyond what the VA needs to know today. So, the information you provide in the CHAI Study will be kept for future studies by the VA Post-Deployment Health Service in accordance with VA Record Control Schedule 10-1 (RCS 10-1).

**Will I be asked to participate in other research studies?**

At the end of the survey you may be invited to participate in the CHAI Child Study. Your participation in the CHAI Child Study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in the study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you agree to participate in the CHAI Child Study, it will be conducted in person, at your convenience, with a trained interviewer. Each youth who participates in the Child Study will receive a **\$100** check from the interviewer when he or she completes the interview.

If you are interested, you may also be contacted again to participate in future research studies. Your participation in any future study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in future studies without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. All future studies will be reviewed and approved by committees that oversee research, including the Institutional Review Board that oversees the safety and ethics of VA studies.

**How do I agree to participate in the CHAI Study?**

Simply use your unique access code [YOURID] when you log into the CHAI Web Survey at [CHAI SURVEY URL] and hit the "I AGREE" button after you have read, and agree to the consent for the Web survey.