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News Release

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VA HEALTHCARE – VISN 4 WILL GREET AND ASSIST 4,100 SOLDIERS RETURNING TO FORT DIX, N.J.

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PITTSBURGH – August 24, 2009 – The Pennsylvania National Guard Stryker Brigade which consists of more than 4,100 Soldiers is returning home from their Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) deployment. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) wants to ensure that all service men and women are well informed of their eligibility to access 5 free years of VA healthcare benefits for any possible deployment-related injury or illness along with a host of other services.

Through a partnership between the Pennsylvania National Guard and VA Healthcare – Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 4, VISN 4 will send VA representatives to Fort Dix, NJ, to greet the Soldiers as they return from combat. The Pennsylvania National Guard's 56th Stryker Brigade will demobilize in the months of August and September. "In an effort to make enrolling for VA benefits as convenient as possible, we are sending VA employees to them," says Michael Moreland, VISN 4 Network Director.

The Pennsylvania National Guard is headquartered at Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA. Due to the existing relationship between the Lebanon VA Medical Center and the Pennsylvania National Guard, the VA Medical Center in Lebanon, PA, will manage the endeavor. "It is our responsibility to ensure each and every man and woman that has been deployed is made aware of their VA benefits," says Robert Callahan, Director of the Lebanon VA. "This is the largest deployment of the Pennsylvania National Guard since World War II and the partnership outreach provided by the Pennsylvania National Guard and the Department of Veterans Affairs will ensure that every Soldier who earned

these benefits will be aware of the free VA healthcare and more likely to use the benefits they've earned," Callahan said.

If you are an OEF/OIF Veteran and have not enrolled for your VA healthcare, please call your nearest VA and ask to speak with the OEF/OIF Program Manager.

For general enrollment questions, please contact your nearest VA Medical Center or visit www.va.gov.

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