DOD and VA Programs That Address the Effects of Combat and Transition to Civilian Life

What GAO Found

GAO identified 99 programs provided by the Department of Defense (DOD) to help address the effects of combat on post-9/11 service members, their families, or both. These programs often offer multiple types of services. The services most common are mental health and substance abuse (50), information and referral (37), and case management or care coordination (15).

GAO identified 87 programs administered either by DOD or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to help post-9/11 service members and veterans transition to civilian life. Some of the 87 programs offer more than one type of service, such as the Transition Assistance Program, which offers employment, education, and information on veterans’ benefits, among other services (see figure).

The lists of programs that GAO developed using its definition are not comparable with those in DOD’s 2013 program inventory and have only limited comparability with VA’s 2013 program inventory. This limited comparability is primarily due to differing contexts in which the lists were compiled. While GAO’s lists address specific mandated questions, DOD’s and VA’s lists were developed following Office of Management and Budget guidance, which generally provides flexibility in how agencies define their programs. Both DOD and VA chose to identify programs at a broad level. For example, among the nine DOD programs identified, the Briefings with the Boss program convenes employers and National Guard and Reserve members to discuss issues linked to military service and civilian employment.

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