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APNewsBreak: Troops' kids seek mental help

By KIMBERLY HEFLING (AP) – Jul 7, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) — Children with parents in the military sought outpatient mental health care 2 million times last year, double the number at the start of the Iraq war. Pentagon documents obtained by The Associated Press also show an alarming spike in the number of military children hospitalized for mental health reasons.

Overall, the number of children and spouses of active duty personnel and Guard and Reserve troops seeking mental health care has been steadily increasing.

The increases come as the military struggles with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and a shortage of therapists.

The military acknowledges growing strains on service families and has been encouraging troops and their families to seek mental health help when needed. The military plans additional research on possible causes of the increases.

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