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The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published March 3, 2011. Deadline for submission of items to the December newsletter is February 25, 2011. Urgent items may be submitted for publication in the *Communiqué Newsflash* at any time. Email items to the Editor, Ashley McDaniel, at Ashley.McDaniel@va.gov

South Central MIRECC Internet site:
www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16
National MIRECC Internet site:
www.mirecc.va.gov
VISN 16 Mental Health Providers
Community of Practice:
<http://vaww.visn16.portal.va.gov/SiteDirectory/mhp/default.aspx>

SC MIRECC NAMES PATRICIA DUBBERT, PH.D. NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR IMPROVING CLINICAL CARE

Interview by Ashley McDaniel with
Patricia Dubbert, Ph.D.
Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
Division of Health Services Research

Q-What was your previous position and how long have you been with the MIRECC?

Until October 2010, I was the Chief Psychologist and Associate Chief of Mental Health at the G.V. Sonny Montgomery VAMC in Jackson, Mississippi. Prior to relocating to Little Rock, I had been active in the MIRECC for about 10 years, coordinating the Grant Writing Scholars program and mentoring investigators in several research pilot studies. I was also the site leader at Jackson.

Q-How do you feel about your new position as SC MIRECC Associate Director for Improving Clinical Care?

I'm enthusiastic about all the current assignments and possibilities of my new position. I will be the MIRECC's liaison with the VISN 16 Mental Health Product Line Advisory Committee (PLAC). The PLAC includes some of the hardest working, most dedicated clinical managers in the VA system, and it is truly an honor to be available to work with them and the VISN 16 Mental Health Product Line administration. A good bit of my time in Little Rock so far has been



Pictured: Patricia Dubbert, Ph.D.

spent in learning about and assuming a coordinating role for the advanced postdoctoral research fellowship programs in Little Rock. Little Rock VA Health Services Research & Development has an advanced fellowship in health services research and the MIRECC has an advanced fellowship for clinicians.

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SC MIRECC Names New Associate Director for Improving Clinical Care continued...

These programs have a variety of excellent research mentors and currently there are five fellows, including four psychology advanced research fellows, but—until I came--no VA research psychologists for discipline-specific supervision and mentoring. In addition to working with postdoctoral fellows, I will be mentoring junior investigators across MIRECC sites. Finally, I am also an investigator for the Little Rock Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center (GRECC), and will serve as a liaison between the MIRECC and the GRECC.

Q-How did your previous position prepare you for your new role as the SC MIRECC associate director for improving clinical care?

My experience as an administrator, educator, researcher, and clinician at Jackson will all be valuable to help me in my new role with the MIRECC. In my previous administrative role, I learned a lot about national and VISN-level VA priorities and strategic plans to improve mental health care for Veterans. As the chief psychologist at Jackson, I was involved in implementing the new mental health initiatives and in the administration of the psychology internship and postdoctoral training programs. I enjoy working directly with patients and I was consulting with several groups and evaluating patients as candidates for specialized surgery before I relocated to Little Rock.

Q-What new directions or initiatives will you be considering for the SC MIRECC?

In my liaison role with the Mental Health PLAC, I will be paying special attention to the needs of rural VA community-based outpatient clinic providers, telemedicine, and our efforts to reach out to Veterans in underserved rural areas. My clinical experience and research interests in health promotion and disease prevention will influence my research and work with the fellows, while a closer relationship between the MIRECC and the GRECC should help to remind us of the needs of aging Veterans even as we attend to the younger Veterans returning from the current conflicts.

Q-What is your area of research?

Most of my research has been in the areas of health promotion and disease prevention with the primary focus on cardiovascular disease. My studies have included clinical trials of interventions to increase healthy lifestyle behaviors and analyzing data from large epidemiologic

studies to understand relationships between personal characteristics, behavior, environment, and various disease outcomes. In my health promotion research, I have always tried to design interventions that can work in rural settings and require minimal provider and clinic time, and this fits well with the MIRECC's focus on rural mental health care.

Q-How did you get started in this area of research?

My career in health care started in nursing, where I observed that, although some of the suffering that people endure as they age could be prevented by healthier lifestyles, most people find it really difficult to adopt and maintain those healthy behaviors. After I became involved in research as a psychologist, I wanted to contribute to research to identify practical kinds of behavior changes that people can make to improve their health status without requiring excessive time or costly resources, and how to help people make those kinds of changes.

Q-What active studies do you have going?

As I develop new research collaborations, I am also working with data from completed studies. For example, I have continued as a co-investigator of the Jackson Heart Study, the largest single study of cardiovascular disease in African Americans, trying to better understand how psychosocial factors contribute to the racial health disparities that have persisted in the southern U.S. I am also working on a paper using data from a recently completed clinical trial to study health risk behaviors reported by anxiety disorder patients. I am especially excited about helping junior investigators establish their research careers. I am a participating investigator, co-mentor, or consultant for several projects, including a career development award application by Dr. Gina Evans and her primary mentor, Dr. Melinda Stanley, from Houston.

Q-What are the implications or potential benefits of your research?

The long-term goals of this kind of research are to understand the kinds of lifestyle behavior changes that can make a difference in improving physical and mental health, and to identify practical, low cost ways for health care providers to help people adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.

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Q-What person or experience had the most influence on your research career?

Several individuals greatly influenced my career, including my Rutgers University graduate school professor, G. Terence Wilson; former Jackson VAMC psychologists and mentors Drs. John Martin and Terence Keane; and most recently, Dr. Greer Sullivan, who helped me appreciate that my research interests could be applied to mental health research.

Q-What advice would you give to junior investigators and to people who are new to research?

I believe junior investigators will be most successful if they are truly passionate about their chosen research topics so they will be able to persist in spite of all the challenges they are likely to encounter. Find and learn from the very best mentors who are available to work with you and take

advantage of opportunities to learn and grow as a person and as a scientist.

Q-How can people get in touch with you if they have questions about your work?

My VA Outlook email address is patricia.dubberrt@va.gov and my phone number is 501-257-1937. ■

Want to learn more about Dr. Dubbert? Visit the Ask the Expert section of the VISN 16 Mental Health Providers Community of Practice website from a VA computer at <http://vaww.visn16.portal.va.gov/SiteDirectory/mhp/AsktheExpert/default.aspx> to submit your questions to Dr. Dubbert or participate in the article discussion group.

KEEPING UP WITH SC MIRECC RESEARCH

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH BETWEEN CLINICIANS AND RESEARCHERS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Blevins D, Farmer MS, Edlund C, Sullivan G, Kirchner JE

Implementation Science
2010, 5(1),76

Bottom-up, clinician-conceived and directed clinical intervention research, coupled with collaboration from researcher experts, is conceptually endorsed by the participatory research movement. This report presents the findings of an evaluation of a program in the Veterans Health Administration meant to encourage clinician-driven research by providing resources believed to be critical. The evaluation focused on

the extent to which funded projects: maintained integrity to their original proposals; were methodologically rigorous; were characterized by collaboration between partners; and resulted in sustained clinical impact.

Researchers used quantitative (survey and archival) and qualitative (focus group) data to evaluate the implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of four clinical demonstration projects at four sites. Fourteen research center mentors and seventeen clinician researchers evaluated the level of collaboration using a six-dimensional model of participatory research.

Results yielded mixed findings. Qualitative and quantitative data suggested that although the process was collaborative, clinicians' prior research experience was critical to the quality of the projects. Several

challenges were common across sites, including subject recruitment, administrative support and logistics, and subsequent dissemination. Only one intervention achieved lasting clinical effect beyond the active project period. Qualitative analyses identified barriers and facilitators and suggested areas to improve sustainability.

Evaluation results suggest that this participatory research venture was successful in achieving clinician-directed collaboration, but did not produce sustainable interventions due to such implementation problems as lack of resources and administrative support.

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UNRECOGNIZED PHYSICAL ILLNESS PROMPTING PSYCHIATRIC ADMISSION

Reeves RR, Parker JD, Loveless
P, Burke RS, Hart RH

Annals of Clinical Psychiatry
2010; 22(3), 180-5

Factors that might contribute to clinicians erroneously attributing medically based changes in a patient's mental status to psychiatric illness were assessed for this study. Records of 1340 patients admitted to a VA hospital psychiatric unit and 613 to a public hospital psychiatric unit from 2001 to 2007 were reviewed. Cases admitted because of an unrecognized medical disorder underwent further analysis of the preadmission assessment and documented history of mental illness.

Of 1340 patients whose records were reviewed, 55 (2.8%) had a medical disorder that caused their symptoms. Compared with patients admitted to medical units, patients inappropriately admitted to psychiatric units had lower rates of completion of medical histories, physical examinations, cognitive assessments, indicated laboratory and/or radiologic studies, and treatment of abnormal vital signs ($P < .001$ in each case). Among patients admitted to psychiatric units, 85.5% had a history of mental illness vs. 30.9% of comparable admissions to medical units ($\text{Chi}^2(1) = 35.85; P < .001$).

Key assessment procedures are less likely to be performed in patients with mental status changes who are admitted to psychiatric units than in comparable patients admitted to medical units. Symptoms of patients with a history of mental illness are more likely to be attributed to psychiatric illness than are those of patients without such a history.

ENHANCING NATIONAL CAPACITY TO CONDUCT CHILD AND FAMILY DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Pfefferbaum B, Maida CA,
Steinberg AM, Beaton RD, Pynoos
RS, Fairbank JA, Brymer MJ,
Kurklinsky AK

Nursing Education Perspectives
2010; 31(4), 237-41

A substantial number of children and families experience emotional difficulties in the aftermath of disasters and terrorist events. Only recently has training in disaster preparedness and response been systematically incorporated into the curricula of mental health disciplines. The goal of the Child & Family Disaster Research Training & Education Program is to enhance the nation's capacity and infrastructure needed to conduct rigorous disaster mental health research on children and families. This article describes the creation and training of 10 specialized research teams, curriculum development, implementation of the program, and progress to date as well as lessons learned and challenges to sustainability. ■

FEBRUARY CONFERENCE CALLS

CALL-IN NUMBER: 1-800-767-1750

		ACCESS CODE
8	MIRECC Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT	19356#
10	National MIRECC & CoE Education Group, 1:00 PM CT	28791#
14	MIRECC Site Leaders, 11:00 AM CT	27761#
15	VISN 16 Mental Disaster Team, 11AM CT	76670#
16	MIRECC Program Assistants, 2PM Central	43593#
22	MIRECC Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT	19356#
24	MIRECC & CoE Implementation Science Discussion, 1:00 PM CT	28791#
28	MIRECC Education Core, 3:00 PM CT	16821#

SOUTH CENTRAL MIRECC - CLINICAL EDUCATION PRODUCTS

The South Central MIRECC supports the development of clinical education products and has recently updated its list of available products. These free products are available via download or request. For more information or to request a product below not available via download, contact Michael Kauth Ph.D., the SC MIRECC Co-Director and Associate Director for Education, at Michael.Kauth@va.gov. Visit <http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn16/> for product updates and to learn more information about the SC MIRECC. Additional educational materials are available from the national MIRECC web site at www.mirecc.va.gov

A Therapist's Guide to Brief Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. The manual is designed to show how CBT can be adapted to brief sessions in medical settings. The manual is not intended to produce competence in CBT but to support existing training and supervision in CBT. Developed by Jeffrey A. Cully, Ph.D., and Andra L. Teten, Ph.D.; Michael E. DeBaKey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

Anger Management Patient Handbook and Instructor's Guide. An 8-session cognitive-behavioral workbook for group treatment. Great for a new group. Developed by Eddy White, LCSW; Fayetteville VA Medical Center, AR.

Be A Quitter – Just This Once: A Patient's Guide to Stop Smoking. A patient-guided CD-ROM program that uses the Stages of Change model to identify patients' readiness to stop smoking. Developed by Dona Zanotti, Ph.D.; John Tasse, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

Coping with Chronic Pain. A short DVD describing group treatment approach for chronic pain management. Good introduction to pain management. Developed by Jeffrey West, Ph.D.; New Orleans VA Medical Center, LA.

Community Reinforcement and Family Training – Support and Prevention (CRAFT-SP) Manual. This family education manual is adapted from earlier work on the CRAFT model by Dr. Robert Meyers. The program is designed to aid family members in improving their relationship with the addict/user, while encouraging the individual to seek treatment. Developed by Steven M. Scruggs, Psy.D., Oklahoma City; Robert J. Meyers, Ph.D., University of New Mexico. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions; and Rebecca Kayo, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Courage Group. This workbook is the manualization of a 12-week outpatient psychotherapy group for Veterans

who have experienced sexual trauma (begun in 1995). The workbook focuses on effects of trauma, coping with emotions, self-esteem, trust, relationships and intimacy, confrontations and forgiveness, and celebration. Includes handouts. Developed by Dana D. Foley, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

Discontinuing Your Medication for Depression Patient Brochure. A brief take-home guide for patients who are discontinuing their antidepressants. Content covers withdrawal symptoms and warnings of signs of returning depression. Developed by JoAnn Kirchner, M.D.; Kathy Henderson, M.D.; Maga Jackson-Triche, M.D.; and the VISN 16 Mental Health Product Line.

Gambling Education Workbook. An 8-session gambling education workbook and resource guide that integrates cognitive-behavioral and 12-step approaches. Great for substance abuse treatment programs. Developed by Jefferson Parker, Ph.D.; Randy Burke, Ph.D.; Paul Matens, LCSW; and Frances Hill; G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson, MS.

Helping Dementia Caregivers. An interactive CD-ROM that illustrates effective behavioral management skills to caregivers through a series of video clips. Useful for self-study or group formats. Developed by Thomas Teasdale, Dr.P.H.; Michael E. DeBaKey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

Hepatitis C and Other Communicable Diseases Posing Threats to Homeless Veterans Brochure and DVD. This brief brochure and DVD provide basic description and prevention information on hepatitis A, B & C, trichomoniasis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, pelvic inflammatory disease, genital warts, HIV, genital herpes, pubic lice, West Nile virus, body lice, influenza, TB and others for homeless Veterans. The DVD can be used in a group setting and is accompanied by a review and quiz. Developed by Estella Morris, Ph.D., LCSW; H. Lynn Hemphill, LCSW; Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, Little Rock.

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Insomnia: Difficulty Falling Asleep or Staying Asleep, and Quality of Sleep Brochure. A brief overview of causes of insomnia and tips for sleeping better. Includes a sleep log. Developed by JoAnn Kirchner, M.D.; Kathy Henderson, M.D.; and the VISN 16 Mental Health Product Line.

Making the Invisible Visible: Clinical Guide for Recognizing Traumatic Brain Injury in Veterans. Graphically powerful staff brochure designed to increase clinician awareness about and screening for traumatic brain injury in returning Veterans. Screening questions and “next step” recommendations included. Developed by Kimberly A. Arlinghaus, M.D.; Helene K. Henson, M.D.; Stephanie Sneed, M.D.; and Janet Hickey, M.D.; Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

Managing Disruptive Behavior in Dementia Patients: A Training Tool for Clinical Nurse Assistants. An instructional CD-ROM that models ineffective, effective, and preventive behavioral management skills to long-term care nursing staff through a series of video clips with actors. Developed by Thomas Teasdale, Dr.P.H.; Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

MAPS: A Guide to Managing Adult Psychiatric Symptoms for Family Members and Friends. This caregiver support packet is designed to be provided to family members of Veterans who are diagnosed with a mental illness, especially family members who cannot attend support / psychoeducational groups at the VA. Content information describes various mental illnesses and addresses caregiver stress. The packet is provided as a PDF file so that selected pages, or the entire packet, can be printed as needed. Developed by Kristen H. Sorocco, Ph.D.; Thomas Teasdale, Dr.P.H.; and Michelle Sherman, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

OEF/OIF Post-Deployment Connection for Returning Veterans Webpage. Web pages designed to inform returning soldiers of VA benefits and services and how to access them. Content provided by VISN 16 OEF/OIF coordinators. Developed by Deleene S. Menefee, Ph.D., Janine Shaw, Ph.D., Sara (Su) Bailey, Ph.D., & Fern Taylor (Houston). These pages are now managed by the South Central Network (VISN 16) and can be found at <http://www.visn16.va.gov/services/freedom.asp>

Operation Enduring Families: A Support and Education Program for Returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans and Their Families Manual. A 5-session psychoeducational class for returning Iraq and Afghanistan war Veterans and their families. Topics include deployment and its impact on the family; parenting tips; communication skills; coping with depression, PTSD, and anger; and reconnecting as a family. The manual also includes promotional materials, leader’s guide, and participant handouts. Developed by Ursula B. Bowling, Psy.D.; Alan Doerman, Psy.D.; and Michelle Sherman, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

Playing It Safer Workbook. A 4-session behavioral skills-based group program to reduce HIV sexual risk. Good for substance abuse treatment programs. Developed by Dana Ross, Ph.D., MPH; and Randy S. Burke, Ph.D.; G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson., MS.

Preparing Veterans for Group Psychotherapy. A 25-minute DVD for Veterans that features Veterans discussing their experiences in-group psychotherapy and how this treatment has been helpful. This is a good orientation to group therapy. Developed by Pamela C. Fischer, Ph.D.; Richard Carothers, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

PTSD Sleep Therapy Group Manual. This 6-session treatment protocol includes education, behavioral, and cognitive strategies for sleep problems related to PTSD in an individual or group setting. Both a therapist manual and patient workbook. Developed by Karin E. Thompson, Ph.D; C. Laurel Franklin, Ph.D.; Karen Hubbard, Ph.D.; Memphis and New Orleans VA Medical Centers.

Quitting It All: Tobacco Cessation for Chemical Dependence and Dual Diagnosis Treatment Programs. A 90-minute, single-session program to address nicotine dependence. Includes workbook, facilitator’s guide, and relaxation tape. Developed Theodore V. Cooper, Ph.D.; Randy S. Burke, Ph.D.; G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson, MS.

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Recovery: A Journey of Healing and Transformation.

This 48-minute DVD was developed to introduce the recovery model to Veterans with mental illness, family members and significant others, and medical center staff. The program illustrates the dimensions of recovery through Veteran consumer testimonials and a simulated community meeting. Additional online resources are identified in the credits. This project was produced by mental health staff and Veteran consumers at four medical centers (Houston, Biloxi, Dallas, Little Rock). Developed by Quang (Charlie) X. Nguyen, Ph.D. and many others.

Relaxation Enhancement Therapist Manual / Stress-for-Less Patient Manual.

This is a step-by-step guide for teaching relaxation skills using breathing control, muscle relaxation, and guided imagery in a group format. Relaxation logs and instructions for audio recording personal relaxation tapes are included. Developed by C. Laurel Franklin, Ph.D.; Shelia Corrigan, Ph.D.; Stephanie Repasky, Psy.D.; Karin E. Thompson, Ph.D.; Madeline Uddo, Ph.D.; & Jessica Walton, M.S.; Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System, New Orleans.

Resilience to Trauma. This three-part DVD depicts World War II ex-Prisoners of War describing their internment experiences and life after captivity. This visually engaging program is intended to communicate to Veterans of all eras and to the general public that people can and do cope after horrific events. Developed by Wright Williams, Ph.D.; Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

SAFE Program Manual-Revised. An 18-session workshop and resource guide for educating families of Veterans with chronic mental illness. Very helpful if starting family services for first time. Developed by

Michelle Sherman, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center. Also available for download at www.ouhsc.edu/safeprogram. An [Appendix](#) on implementing the SAFE Program in a rural area or VA community-based outpatient clinic is now available.

Treating Chronic Pain in Substance Abusing Patients: An Interactive Primer.

A comprehensive, interactive CD primer on managing chronic pain in substance abusing patients, including medication pocket guides and assessment and intervention resources. Developed by Gabriel Tan, Ph.D.; Deacon Staggs, M.D.; Serena Chu, Ph.D.; Bilal F. Shanti, M.D.; Quang (Charlie) Nguyen, Ph.D.; Jaime Rhudy, Ph.D.; Rebecca Kayo, Ph.D.; Mobeen N. Choudhri, M.D.; John Ramirez; Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, TX.

Us and Them: The Experience of Mental Health Stigma.

This PowerPoint program on CD and manual provides a facilitator-guided presentation for a medical center staff to challenge their beliefs about mental illness and promote greater sensitivity. Developed by Michelle Sherman, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

Veterans Helping Veterans: Key Insights for PTSD

Recovery. A 23-minute audio CD to promote treatment involvement and adherence via testimonials by combat Veterans in PTSD treatment. Very moving. Developed by Kathleen O. Reyntjens, Ph.D.; Leslie Root, Ph.D.; Gulf Coast VA Healthcare System.

New! Veteran Parenting Toolkit. Five sets of age-specific parenting materials for young Veteran parents and their partners. Available at www.ouhsc.edu/vetparenting/. Developed by Michelle Sherman, Ph.D.; Ursula B. Bowling, Psy.D.; Jeffrey Anderson, Ph.D.; Karen Wyche, Ph.D.; Oklahoma City VA Medical Center. ■