



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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## Director's Update: MIRECC Transition - Dr. Kudler



Congratulations to the Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC's Harold Kudler, MD, who was selected to lead the VA's national mental health policy office in Washington DC. On July 27, 2014, Dr. Kudler began his appointment as the Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services for VA Central Office.

Since the founding of the VISN 6 MIRECC in 2004, Dr. Kudler served as Associate Director and leader of our MIRECC's Clinical Core. Through his deep understanding of the essential role that community programs play in meeting the mental health needs of the Veterans we are honored to serve, he developed and disseminated innovative approaches to establishing and sustaining robust VA clinical and training partnerships and coalitions with Veteran-serving State agencies and community programs in North Carolina, Virginia and beyond. On behalf of his many colleagues in VA's collaborative network of MIRECCs and other mental health Centers of Excellence, I want to thank Dr. Kudler for his outstanding contributions, and wish him all the best in this important national leadership role.

*John A. Fairbank, Ph.D.* Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC

## Focus on the VISN National Service

Dr. Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) was an invited participant in the *Recommendations for TBI and Post-Deployment Screening and Transitions to Specialty Care Consensus Conference* held at VA Central Office August 27-28, 2014. The conference was sponsored by the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Program Office in collaboration with Mental Health Services, Post Deployment Health and the Polytrauma and Blast-Related Injuries QUERI. Dr. Hurley also served on the Office of Academic Affairs Interprofessional Specialty Care Enhancement Centers of Excellence Grant Review Panel, held by conference call October 28-29, 2014.

## Home-Based Mental Health Evaluation (HOME) Program - Rural Extension

This new project is a collaboration between the VISN 19 MIRECC, VISN 6 MIRECC (Mira Brancu, PI) and the Durham VA Suicide Prevention team with support from the Durham VA psychiatry inpatient team. It was funded by the Office of Rural Health to extend the current HOME clinical demonstration project (described in the August issue) to the eastern rural areas of North Carolina. The primary goal is to increase engagement with aftercare and decrease the risk of suicide for rural Veterans who might experience difficulty with access to care near their home.

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## Recently Approved Grants

Jennifer Gierish (PI) *Adjunctive Mood Management for Telephone-based Smoking Cessation in Primary Care.* VA HSR&D Merit Review Award

Approved  
Research Sites  
& Contacts:

**Durham VA**  
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## Focus on the VISN

### HOME Program - Rural Extension

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A home visit and weekly phone contacts involving suicide assessment and safety planning is provided by the project clinician until the Veteran becomes connected to and engaged in outpatient care. In addition, data will be gathered to help evaluate factors related to feasibility of implementation for rural Veterans.

### New Clinical Certifications

**Drs. Cindy Swinkels and Christi Ulmer (MIRECC Durham site)** recently received certification in Behavioral Sleep Medicine from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine!

## Honors & Awards

**Dr. Mike Ellwood** (MIRECC Richmond site) received the Association of VA Psychologist Outstanding Training Director Award. The award was announced on August 8th at the 122nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (APA).

**Dr. Robin Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) received the 2014 Eugene A. Hargrove, MD, Mental Health Research Award from the Psychiatric Foundation of North Carolina for her contributions to the field of Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder research. The award was announced on September 27th at the North Carolina Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting and Scientific Session.

## Journal Articles

**Brown ES, Park J, Marx CE, Hynan LS, Gardner C, Davila D, Nakamura A, Sunderajan P, Lo A, Holmes T.** *A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Trial of Pregnenolone for Bipolar Depression.* *Neuropsychopharmacology.* 2014; 39(12): 2867-73.

**Crum-Cianflone NF, Fairbank JA, Marmar CR, Schlenger W.** *The Millennium Cohort Family Study: a prospective evaluation of the health and well-being of military service members and their families.* *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research.* 2014; 23(3):320-30.

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## Promotions

**Dr. Larry Tupler** (MIRECC Assistant Director, Neurocognition) has been promoted to Associate Professor (Track IV) in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University.

## South Central MIRECC CBOC Mental Health Rounds

Each CBOC MH Rounds presentation is now offered twice a month.

**Wednesday November 12 from 9-10 am ET**  
**Thursday November 13 from 12-1 pm ET**  
***Ethical Challenges of Dual Relationships***  
**Laurie Guillory, LCSW & Beth Jeffries, PhD**

Remember to register in TMS for a session to receive credit. Log into your TMS account to join the presentation.

**December 10 & 11      *Spirituality***

**January 14 & 15      *ADHD***

**February 11 & 12      *CBT and Chronic Pain***

Contact Ashley McDaniel with any questions:  
 ashley.mcdaniel@va.gov or 501-257-1223

## Invited Lectures

**Dr. Jason A. Nieuwsma** (MIRECC researcher) presented "*Whose lane is it anyway?*" to the Psi Chi chapter at Meredith College, Raleigh, NC, September 2014. **Dr. Nieuwsma** also presented a full day workshop "*Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to Improve Integrated Psychological and Spiritual Care*" at the Portsmouth Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA, September 17, 2014. **Drs. Nieuwsma, Nobles, Stevens and Yeaw** presented the symposium "*The Role of Chaplains in Service Member Care*" at the Psychological Health and Resilience Summit, Washington, DC, September, 2014. **Drs. Nieuwsma and Ramchand** presented the webinar "*Suicide in Military and Veteran Populations: Implications for Chaplains, Health Care Providers and Leaders*" for the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, September 25, 2014.

## Online Training Resources for Veterans:

<http://www.veterantraining.va.gov/>

There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges such as relationship and parenting problems, financial hardship, and re-adjustment issues.

**Moving Forward - Overcoming Life's Challenges** An educational and life coaching program that teaches Problem Solving skills to help you better handle life's challenges

**Parenting for Service Members & Veterans** This course provides parents with tools that strengthen parenting skills and helps them reconnect with their children.

**PTSD Coach Online** PTSD Coach Online is for anyone who needs help with upsetting feelings. Trauma survivors, their families, or anyone coping with stress can benefit.

## Meeting Presentations

### VIRGINIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

#### Fall Convention & Educational Conference

October 15 - 17 2014, Richmond VA

**Rooney M, Murphy C.** *Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD) in Soldiers and Veterans.*

**Buncher R, Bradshaw M.** *Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery at Veterans Medical Center.*

**Campbell TA, Pickett TC** *Lessons Learned from Working with Veterans with TBI.*

**Stratton KJ.** *Treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and Pain.*

**Futrell O, Rooney M.** *Peer Support and Veteran's Mental Health Care.*

## Journal Articles

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**Ebert L, Malte CA, Hamlett-Berry K, Beckham J, McFall M, Saxon AJ.** *Use of a Learning Collaborative to support implementation of integrated care for smoking cessation for veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder.* American Journal of Public Health. 2014; 104: 1935 – 42.

**Elbogen EB, Cueva M, Wagner HR, Sreenivasan S, Brancu M, Beckham JC, Van Male L.** *Screening for Violence Risk in Military Veterans: Predictive Validity of a Brief Clinical Tool.* American Journal of Psychiatry. 2014; 171(7):749-57.

**Gentes EL, Dennis PA, Kimbrel NA, Rissling MB, Beckham JC, VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Workgroup, Calhoun PS.** *DSM-5 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Factor Structure and Rates of Diagnosis.* Journal of Psychiatric Research. 2014; 59: 60-67.

**Guffanti G, Ashley-Koch AE, Roberts AL, Garrett ME, Solovieff N, Ratanatharathorn A, De Vivo I, Dennis M, Ranu H, Smoller JW, Liu Y, Purcell SM, Veterans Affairs Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Workgroup, Beckham J, Hauser MA, Koenen KC.** *No Association between RORA polymorphisms and PTSD in two independent samples.* Molecular Psychiatry. 2014;19(10):1056-7.

**Kimbrel NA, Calhoun PS, Elbogen EB, Brancu M, VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Registry Workgroup, Beckham JC.** *The factor structure of psychiatric comorbidity among Iraq/Afghanistan-era veterans and its relationship to violence, incarceration, suicide attempts and suicidality.* Psychiatry Research. 2014; 220 (1-2): 397 - 403.

**Kimbrel NA, Johnson ME, Clancy C, Hertzberg M, Collie C, Van Voorhees EE, Dennis MF, Calhoun PS, Beckham JC.** *Deliberate self-harm and suicidal ideation among male Iraq/Afghanistan veterans seeking treatment for PTSD.* Journal of Traumatic Stress. 2014;27(4):474-7.

**Li Q, Madison R, Moore SD.** *Presynaptic BK Channels Modulate Ethanol-Induced Enhancement of GABAergic Transmission in the Rat Central Amygdala Nucleus.* Journal of Neuroscience. 2014; 34(41):13714-24.

**Mitchell JT, Dennis MF, English JS, Dennis PA, Brightwood A, Beckham JC, Kollins SH.** *Ecological momentary assessment of antecedents and consequences of smoking in adults with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.* Substance & Use Misuse. 2014; 49(11): 1446-56.

**Van Voorhees EE, Dennis PA, Elbogen EB, Clancy CP, Hertzberg MA, Beckham JC, Calhoun PS.** *Personality Assessment Inventory internalizing and externalizing structure in veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Associations with aggression.* Aggressive Behavior. 2014; 40(6):582-92.

### Educational Resources from the TBI Model Systems Carolinas Site

**Heads Up - An Ounce of Prevention**

**Heads Up - Fatigue**

**Heads Up - Irritability**

**Heads Up - Plans for the Future**

**Heads Up - Sleep Disturbances after TBI**

<http://www.carolinashealthcare.org/carolinas-rehab-heads-up-educational-resources>

### Resources for Providers

#### Treatment of Substance Use Disorders in Veterans with PTSD

[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/community.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/community.asp)

This PowerPoint presentation by **Dr. John Allen (MIRECC Senior Scientist, Clinical Care)** addresses treatment of substance use disorder in Veterans who are also diagnosed as having PTSD. It reviews research on how deployment and war zone stressors contribute to development of each of the two conditions separately and their co-occurrence; evidence-based treatments for substance use disorder and PTSD; epidemiological findings on the dual diagnosis, dynamic interactions of the two conditions. It also provides recommendations for treatment. To assist community health care providers, the presentation also comments on issues of military culture; VA resources for OEF-OIF Veterans; and criteria for eligibility of care.

**Visit our web site for more resources**

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6.asp>

## Program Update: Engaging Chaplains in MH Care

This project is funded by Central Office and housed within our MIRECC. **Dr. Keith Meador** directs the initiative, and **Dr. Jason Nieuwsma** serves as associate director.

### Workshop: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to Improve Integrated Psychological and Spiritual Care

Portsmouth Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth VA  
September 17, 2014  
**Dr. Jason Nieuwsma**

More than 130 chaplains, substance abuse counselors, social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and VA employees attended this invited full day workshop.

### Symposium: The Role of Chaplains in Service Member Care

Psychological Health and Resilience Summit  
September 17-19, 2014  
**Drs. Nieuwsma, Nobles, Stevens & Yeaw.**

### Webinar: Suicide in Military and Veteran Populations: Implications for Chaplains, Health Care Providers and Leaders

Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Webinar  
September 25, 2014

**Drs. Jason Nieuwsma & Rajeev Ramchand**

This presentation begins with a description of the epidemiology of suicide in the United States, with a specific focus on suicide among service members and veterans. An epidemiologic foundation of suicide provides context to understanding how current research relates to a variety of prevention strategies. The discussion includes the role and approach of chaplains to suicide prevention in the military. Using data from a survey of chaplains in the Army, this overview reviews suicide prevention efforts and factors that may enhance or constrain effective support. The presentation concludes with recommendations from policy and research perspectives on how the military and civilian communities can bolster suicide prevention efforts.

[http://www.dcoe.mil/Training/Monthly\\_Webinars/Archive.aspx](http://www.dcoe.mil/Training/Monthly_Webinars/Archive.aspx)

## ★ Free ★ Web Courses for Providers

### *Treating the Invisible Wounds of War* [www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier](http://www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier)

Click on **New Users** to register. You will then see the available web courses listed:

- 1 - *Treating the Invisible Wounds of War (TTIWW) english & spanish editions*
- 2 - *TTIWW - A Primary Care Approach*
- 3 - *TTIWW - Employee Assistance in the Civilian Workforce*
- 4 - *TTIWW - Issues of Women Returning from Combat*
- 5 - *TTIWW - Recognizing the Signs of mTBI during Routine Eye Examinations*
- 6 - *TTIWW - Understanding Military Family Issues*
- 7 - *TTIWW - Taking a Military History: Four Critical Questions*

These courses were developed by MIRECC faculty in collaboration with Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) and North Carolina Area Health Education Center (NC AHEC). They are designed to help primary care physicians, case workers, mental health providers - who may see a veteran or family member on an unrelated issue - develop a better understanding of the culture in which veterans and their families live and work, and provide best practices for identifying, assessing and treating mental health problems that result from the trauma of war.

Visit our web site for more resources

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6.asp>