



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health



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VISN 6 Leadership

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Director's Update: Farewell to Perry Whitted



Perry Whitted recently retired after 32 years of service with the VA. For his last 10 years of service, we were fortunate to have Perry on our administrative team. He served for 7 years as our MIRECC Administrative Officer. He then moved on to serve for 3 years as the National Programs manager.



Perry had a rare and unique set of skills that will never be replaced – a deep understanding of local, regional, and national history, operations, and systems, combined with a can-do attitude that anything can be accomplished. He used those skills to creatively evaluate and problem-solve some of the most complex scenarios. He had a vast knowledge and understanding of regulations that helped us make decisions responsibly through a focus on optimizing our resources efficiently.

Perry was also incredibly proactive. Because of his knowledge of these systems, our MIRECC could identify both problems and opportunities well ahead of time, which helped us make better strategic decisions and expand the services of our MIRECC to offer more value to the VA. We owe much of our operational success to Perry and we will greatly miss him.

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

Focus on the VISN:

MIRECC Activities Support VHA Blueprint for Excellence

Strategy 8:

Support innovation in health services through academic affiliations, information exchange, intergovernmental, public-private, and community based initiatives.

Clinical Updates

North Carolina's Student Transition Resources Initiative for Veteran's Education (NC-STRIVE)

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Cognitive Processing Therapy Learning Collaborative for Community Providers

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North Carolina's Virtual Implementation Academy: Focus on Substance Use Disorders

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Education Update



**Mental Health
Innovations**

Updates from VA's Specialized Mental Health Centers

JULY 2015

IN THIS ISSUE: Treating Veterans with More Than One Disorder

The topic focus for the July issue is treating Veterans with multiple disorders.

www.mirecc.va.gov/newsletter/current.asp

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Focus on the VISN

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North Carolina's Student Transition Resources Initiative for Veteran's Education (NC-STRIVE)



Over the past year, **Dr. Eric Crawford** (MIRECC Assistant Director, Clinical) has collaborated with key partners in the Durham VAMC system (Susan Watkins and Michael Redic of the OEF-OIF-OND Program; Dr. Chad Kessler, DVAMC ACOS),

state government, private nonprofit entities and members of the university system to form NC-STRIVE. The primary goal of NC-STRIVE is to share best practices across organizations to better serve and support our state's Veterans, service members, and their families in seeking successful experiences with higher education. The group's efforts culminated in a conference held at the North Carolina National Guard Headquarters in Raleigh on June 16th that was attended by over 180 leaders, administrative staff, and clinicians from 55 different institutions of higher learning. Presentations included information on developing military-friendly campuses, offering academic and mental health supports, and provided strategies for engaging and retaining student Veterans. The unique experiences of student Veterans and educators were highlighted in panel discussions. Participants also engaged in small, collaborative breakout sessions throughout the afternoon to determine how key issues for Veterans and family members could be addressed at their specific institutions. Dr. Harold Kudler, VACO Chief Consultant for Mental Health (previously MIRECC Associate Director, Clinical), provided a keynote address on the importance of mental health services for Veterans in academic environments.



Dr. Crawford delivered the commencement address to close the event. Additional information about the inaugural NC-STRIVE conference, including videos of keynote presentations and supporting materials, is available online at:

ncveteransworkinggroup.org/nc-strive/



CBOC Mental Health Rounds

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

Wednesday September 9 from 9-10 am ET

Thursday September 10 from 12-1 pm ET

American Indian Veterans Mental Health

Wednesday October 14 from 9-10 am ET

Thursday October 15 from 12-1 pm ET

Mild TBI/ PTSD/ Depression

Remember to register in TMS in advance to attend and receive credit.

November 11 & 12 Ethics and Social Media

December 9 & 10 Parenting with PTSD

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

Focus on the VISN National Service

Dr. Robin Hurley (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) was an invited participant at the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) State-of-the-Art (SOTA) conference hosted by Secretary McDonald and the VA Office of Research and Development August 24 & 25. The TBI SOTA brought together key researchers, clinicians, and advocates from VA, Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, academia, and other stakeholders in order to have detailed, scholarly discussions of the knowledge, how it has evolved, and where we need to go in the future.

Leadership Activities

Dr. Jared Rowland (MIRECC researcher, Salisbury site) has agreed to serve as the Director for the new Post Deployment Mental Health (PDMH) Longitudinal Study (PDMH-LS). Over the next few months, Dr. Rowland will be working with our investigators to plan the next phase, translating our MIRECC mission and goals into clear PDMH-LS data collection, management planning, and goal setting. Dr. Rowland will continue working with Mary Pender and Angela Kirby to oversee monthly SCID peer consultation meetings.

Transitions

Drs. Robert Shura and Holly Miskey (MIRECC Fellows, Salisbury site) completed their two year fellowships in August. Both have started positions as staff neuropsychologists at the Salisbury VA. **Dr. Amie Schry** (MIRECC Fellow, Durham site) completed the first year of fellowship in August and started as a staff psychologist at the Raleigh II Clinic.

Meeting Presentations



ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE 27th Annual Convention

Lam NC, Kelley ML, Miller MM, Harding HG, Hernandez, M. *The effect of drug use on intimate partner violence among veterans and their partners.*

Book Chapters

Yusko DA, Drapkin ML, Yeh R. *Enhancing motivation in individuals with PTSD and comorbid PTSD and substance use disorders.* In H Arkowitz, WR Miller & S Rollnick (Eds), *Motivational Interviewing in the treatment of psychological problems.* 2015; New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Journal Articles

Ashley-Koch AE, Garrett ME, Gibson J, Liu Y, Dennis MF, Kimbrel NA; Veterans Affairs Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center Workgroup, Beckham JC, Hauser MA. *Genome-wide association study of posttraumatic stress disorder in a cohort of Iraq-Afghanistan era veterans.* *Journal of Affective Disorders.* 2015; 184: 225-34.

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New Researchers

Dr. Kathleen Decker is the new PI for our Hampton site.



Dr. Decker graduated with a BS with Honors in Biochemical Genetics from the University of Michigan. She completed the Medical Scientist Training Program and received her MD/PhD from Stanford University School of Medicine. After completing psychiatry residency and a fellowship in Neuropsychopharmacology, she relocated to Seattle, Washington.

Dr. Decker was academic faculty at the University of Washington from 1992-1996, then clinical faculty from 1996-2005. Dr. Decker worked with the US Air Force from 2007-2009, and since then has practiced at Hampton VA. She is on the faculty of Eastern Virginia Medical School and in 2013 was a graduate of the VA's Leadership Development Institute. Dr. Decker has won numerous awards for research, teaching and clinical expertise and is a Distinguished Fellow of the APA. Her research interests are in the areas of PTSD, addiction psychiatry, and simulations in healthcare. Dr. Decker has authored a textbook on Fitness for Duty in Law Enforcement Professionals, has published over 40 publications and served as a consultant to numerous public safety organizations.

Focus on the VISN

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Cognitive Processing Therapy Learning Collaborative for Community Providers

Dr. Eric Crawford (MIRECC Assistant Director, Clinical) serves on the expert panel for the project, providing consultation and direction on the planning and implementation of this important dissemination effort. The purpose of the Learning Collaborative is to increase access to evidence-based treatments for Veteran, Guard, and Reserve families by training community-based mental health providers in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). The Learning Collaborative is facilitated by the Duke University Evidence-Based Practice Implementation Center (EPIC), in consultation with the treatment developer and expert mental health providers in the state of North Carolina. The project is funded by Welcome Back Veterans and the North Carolina GlaxoSmithKline. Primary training activities started this summer and are planned to end in late 2017. The initial outreach is to community-based agencies in North Carolina, with possible expansion to surrounding states. By the end of this project, up to 60 mental health clinicians will have been trained to proficiency in the delivery of CPT.

In the News!

Dr. Fairbank was one of the researchers interviewed about the recent findings from the National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study PTSD IS BAD FOR YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH by Jerome Greer Chandler

<http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/publication/?i=264550>



They [psychological issues] affect "the veteran's ability to function--often in everyday life--with family, with loved ones, on the job and in the community."

— DR. JOHN FAIRBANK
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, DURHAM (N.C.)
VA MEDICAL CENTER

Transitions

Dr. Kelcey Stratton (MIRECC Faculty, Richmond site) has accepted a position with the Peace Corps. Dr. Stratton will be serving as a regional medical officer in Pretoria, South Africa. She also expects to be traveling all over the world to meet with Peace Corps volunteers in the field.



Online Military Culture Training for Community Providers

It's important that all who care for Veterans have a basic understanding of military culture. With the new Choice Program, the signature initiative of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, eligible Veterans have increased access to health care from community-based medical care providers. Recently, RAND released a comprehensive report that found that few providers met criteria for military cultural competency or used evidence-based approaches to treat problems commonly seen among our nation's 20+ million Veterans. In the interest of the highest quality, most compassionate health care for our Nation's Veterans, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense recently launched an online course available at no cost to all Veteran care providers.

Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals

<http://deploymentpsych.org/military-culture>

This course stems from research, surveys and hundreds of hours of interviews with Service members and Veterans. It is designed as a comprehensive training in military culture for seasoned practitioners as well as for those less familiar with military populations. The interactive course includes a self-assessment to help providers better understand the biases they may unknowingly have that may be impacting the care they are providing to Veterans and their families. It also includes a variety of vignettes and candid video testimonials to highlight the meaning of military cultural competence.

Visit our web site for more resources

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

Focus on the VISN

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North Carolina's Virtual Implementation Academy: Focus on Substance Use Disorders

Dr. Eric Crawford (MIRECC Assistant Director, Clinical) is partnering with other key stakeholders (Governor's Institute on Substance Abuse, State Departments of Veterans Affairs and Health & Human Services, Durham VA, NC National Guard, University of North Carolina, NC Local Management Entities, Outside the Wire) as North Carolina's delegation to a Virtual Implementation Academy (VIA) sponsored and supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).



Their goal is to determine strategies for improving prevention, treatment, and recovery from substance-related disorders (SUD) among service members, Veterans, and their families. Thus far, the North Carolina delegation has convened in a series of online preparatory meetings and a two-day in-person academy to deepen understanding of SUDs and recovery-oriented care, consolidate knowledge on evidence-based practices, share information about successful implementation strategies with other states, and work towards expanding existing strategic plans that focus on the issue. The North Carolina delegation has prioritized increasing help-seeking behavior and continuity of recovery-oriented care across systems in the state. The MIRECC Education and Clinical Cores are currently collaborating on the development of informational tools that might be distributed to consumers and providers in key contexts to help address these targets.

Resources for Providers

Treatment of Substance Use Disorders in Veterans with PTSD

www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/Providers.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.

Journal Articles

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Carpenter VL, Hertzberg JS, Kirby AC, Calhoun PS, Moore SD, Dennis MF, Dennis PA, Dedert EA, Hair LP, Beckham JC. *Multicomponent smoking cessation treatment including mobile contingency management in homeless veterans.* Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 2015; 76(7): 959-64.

Dor RB, Marx CE, Shampine LJ, Rubinow DR, Schmidt PJ. *DHEA metabolism to the neurosteroid androsterone: a possible mechanism of DHEA's antidepressant action.* Psychopharmacology. 2015; 232(18): 3375-83.

Farris SG, Zvolensky MJ, Beckham JC, Vujanovic AA, Schmidt NB. *Trauma exposure and cigarette smoking: The impact of negative affect and affect-regulatory smoking motives.* Journal of Addictive Diseases. 2014;33(4):354-65.

Jadidian A, Hurley RA, Taber KH. *Neurobiology of Adult ADHD: Emerging Evidence for Network Dysfunctions.* Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience. 2015; 27(3): 173-8.

Kimbrel NA, Garrett ME, Dennis MF, Liu Y, Patanam I, VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Work Group, Ashley-Koch AE, Hauser MA, Beckham JC. *Effect of Genetic Variation in the Nicotinic Receptor Genes on Risk for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.* Psychiatry Research. 2015; 229(1-2): 326-31.

Logue MW, Amstadter AB, Baker DG, Duncan L, Koenen KC, Liberzon I, Miller MW, Morey RA, Nievergelt CM, Ressler KJ, Smith AK, Smoller JW, Stein MB, Sumner JA, Uddin M. *The Psychiatric Genomics Consortium Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Workgroup: Posttraumatic stress disorder enters the age of large-scale genomic collaboration.* Neuropsychopharmacology. 2015; 40(10): 2287-97.

Morey RA, Lancaster S, Haswell CC. *Trauma Re-Experiencing Symptoms Modulate Topology of Intrinsic Functional Networks.* Biological Psychiatry. 2015; 78(3): 156-8.

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Resources for Veterans/Families NC4VETS RESOURCE GUIDE

The purpose of this comprehensive resource guide is to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal Veteran benefits. Topic areas include services, employment, healthcare, education, housing and personal services.

<http://www.nc4vets.com/blog/resource-guide>

This resource guide was produced by the North Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs in partnership with the Governor's Working Group on Veterans, Service Members, and Their Families.

<http://www.veteransfocus.org>

Journal Articles

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Parker W, Morey RA. *Progress on reconstituting the depleted biome to prevent immune disorders.* The Evolution and Medicine Review. July 3, 2015. <http://evmedreview.com/progress-on-reconstituting-the-depleted-biome-to-prevent-immune-disorders/>

Stock EM, Kimbrel NA, Meyer EC, Copeland LA, Monte R, Zeber JE, Gulliver SB, Morissette SB. *A Bayesian model averaging approach to examining changes in quality of life among returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.* International Journal of Psychiatric Methods. 2014; 23(3): 345-58.

Van Voorhees EE, Beckham JC. *Advancements in treating intimate partner violence in veterans.* Journal of Clinical Psychiatry. 2015; 76(6): e826-7. commentary on: *Targeting Relational Aggression in Veterans: The Strength at Home Friends and Family Intervention.*

Wolf GK, Kretzmer T, Crawford E, Thors C, Wagner HR, Strom TQ, Eftekhari A, Klenk M, Hayward L, Vanderploeg RD. *Prolonged Exposure Therapy With Veterans and Active Duty Personnel Diagnosed With PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury.* Journal of Traumatic Stress. 2015; 28(4): 339-47.

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

Moving Forward is 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 on-line 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.



Free Web Courses for Providers

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War

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>