VA Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC
Clinical Core Grant Program FY 2020:
Furthering Clinical Core Mission and Goals

**Purpose**
The VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC was awarded in 2004 to serve as a translational medicine center that develops and disseminates scientifically rigorous assessments and novel, effective interventions for post-deployment mental illnesses and related challenges impacting Veteran functional outcomes and quality of life. The center has a special emphasis on Iraq/Afghanistan-era Veterans. Key areas of research focus include PTSD, TBI, substance use disorders, pain management, suicide prevention, and violence prevention. Special subpopulations of interest include women, families, and Gulf War Veterans. This program announcement provides information, application procedures, and guidelines for expansion of MIRECC Clinical Core efforts for improving post-deployment mental health of Veterans.

Priority areas for funding for this announcement include the following:

1. Community-focused projects to improve Veteran access to high-quality mental health care.
2. Projects conducted with operational partners or stakeholders. Operational partners and stakeholders can be local, but preference is VISN and national program office level to ensure work is informed by and coordinated well with other complementary work.
3. Translation of mental health research on Iraq/Afghanistan-era Veterans, service members, or family needs into practice or training.

**Eligibility**
Any of the following individuals/groups may apply:

1. Any individual in VISN 6 who is willing to work with the VISN 6 MIRECC. This includes postdoctoral fellows.
2. Clinicians, researchers, or educators at any of our academic affiliate institutions (Duke University, Wake Forest, Old Dominion, Virginia Commonwealth University). Affiliates must apply via a MIRECC employee sponsor who will partner with them on the project.

Incomplete submission will not be reviewed.

**Funding**

1. Funding priority will be given to projects that focus on MIRECC priority areas and emerging areas of interest, as described above.
2. Total funding to be distributed amongst all funded projects is estimated to be approximately $50,000. We anticipate funding up to 10 proposals, with budgets in the range of $5,000 to $10,000, dispersed one time in FY 2020.
3. Approval of awards depends on availability of funds at the time of the decision. Projects must be completed within one year of funding. Allowable budget items include commercial materials to be used in the project, materials reproduction, and non-IT equipment. Temporary personnel can be hired part-time not to exceed the limits of the funding period. Normal VA human resources policies apply to all hires. Budget items not allowed include food items, IT equipment, and any services that can normally be provided by your VAMC facility.

**Outcomes**
All projects must contain some element of enduring clinical programming (e.g. creation of webcasts, videos, hard copy materials) that can be used by more than one set of consumers/providers on an ongoing basis after the initial funding period has lapsed. All grants must also contain a plan for measurement of success/failure of the project. Use of standardized methods and instruments is strongly encouraged. Measures must be objective and quantitative. Outcome measures sufficient to demonstrate the success or failure of the intervention/project must be specifically detailed in the proposal and completed by the end of the funding period.
Dissemination and Distribution
Funded applicants must share/disseminate the knowledge gained from the project. All products developed with this support must include proper credit to the VISN 6 MIRECC (e.g., logo, acknowledgements) and are the property of the VISN 6 MIRECC and VHA. As such, the products are not for profit and may be distributed to other VA facilities by the VISN 6 MIRECC, with proper author/developer credit. Products may be posted on the MIRECC website and shared with other Networks and academic institutions.

Proposal Review and Approval
1. Standard VA grant review scoring criteria will be used to rate proposals on a scale from 1.0 (Excellent) to 5.0 (poor) based on significance, innovation, approach, feasibility, innovation, impact, financial soundness, sustainability, stability of leadership involved in project, as well as alignment with MIRECC mission and priority areas.
2. Proposals will undergo peer review. The MIRECC Director and Deputy Director may be consulted to assist in final funding decisions.
3. Final decisions rest with the MIRECC Director and Deputy Director based on reviewer recommendations, center priorities, and available resources.

Application Form Instructions
- Applications must be submitted by email to BOTH Drs. Kimbrel (Nathan.Kimbrel@va.gov) and Naylor (jennifer.naylor2@va.gov) on or before 11:59pm February 3, 2020.
- Applications must be combined into a single PDF document, in the order indicated below. The project proposal (narrative) should utilize 11-point Arial font, include 1-inch margins, and be 5 pages or less. The 5-page limit does not include title page, budget tables, references, and CV/resumes. Project narratives longer than 5 pages will not be reviewed.

How to Complete the Proposal:
Assemble in a single PDF in the following order:

1. Title Page (single page, not included in 5-page limit):
The title page should include the following sections:
   a. Title of Project
   b. Name and affiliation of primary developer(s)
   c. Name, role, and affiliation of MIRECC sponsor, collaborators and/or mentor (if indicated)
      a. List names, current job positions, project roles, and expertise of project key personnel and collaborators.
         i. If a non-MIRECC employee is applying as project lead, identify which MIRECC staff will serve as a sponsor and collaborator of the effort (or we can help make potential connections)
         ii. If a clinician is applying as project lead, please identify the MIRECC mentor who will be supporting and mentoring the effort and confirmation that you have received supervisor approval to pursue the project if funded.
         iii. If the project involves collaborations with other VHA facilities and/or public or private entities, briefly state the roles of each party.

2. Project Narrative (2-5 pages):
The project narrative should include the following sections:
   a. Specific Aims: The application should begin with a specific aims page including concise statements of the problem to be addressed, the proposed solution, rationale, specific aims/objectives, and anticipated outcomes.
   b. Significance: Briefly describe why the proposed project is significant.
   c. Innovation: Briefly describe why the proposed project is innovative.
   d. Background: Provide a brief background that describes the clinical issue or problem that will be addressed by this FY20 Clinical Core Grant, including how this project will address that need. Provide any supporting documentation demonstrating that need (e.g., needs assessment data, Veteran/provider focus groups, satisfaction surveys). Please also clarify what, if any, materials/programs currently exist to address
this need, and how the proposed work will build upon, or expand, prior work in this area. If the project involves application of research findings, provide information for how research findings will be applied to support clinical training/education endeavors. Relevant preliminary findings (e.g., data supporting the feasibility of the project or preliminary support for your expected outcomes) should also be included in this section of the application.

e. **MIRECC and or Clinical Team:** Briefly describe the team’s relevant experience and expertise with respect to both the clinical problem to be addressed as well as the proposed methods and evaluation approaches.

f. **Methods:** Provide a concise summary of the intervention or product, including:
   - Target audience (Veterans, families, VA Staff, etc.), including:
     - Numbers Veterans, providers, families, or others to be served
     - Sites where they will be served
   - How the project will be staffed (see budget section below for more detail). Please include:
     - Total current staff who might be leveraged for project and their roles on the project
     - Current staff whose time may be covered by project (supervisor approval will be required)
     - Any additional VA FTE and/or contract personnel required for which project roles - describe any contracts that must be executed
   - Facilities and resources available to support the project, including collaborative arrangements.

g. **Evaluation Plan:** Describe likelihood of success and effectiveness of the project (e.g., evidence from research or other successful similar programs). Include:
   - How will the project be evaluated? How will outcomes be measured? How will it be known if the project was a success?
   - How will the applicant make sure the project is carried out as planned? Describe anticipated challenges and barriers to implementation, potential delays, and how they can be mitigated.
   - Provide a step-by-step plan for project implementation, with a target timeline for when the project will be fully operational (this may be uploaded as a supplemental document if needed)

h. **Dissemination Plan:** Provide future plans - How might the MIRECC disseminate the results of your project to other facilities?

3. **References** (Supplement, not to be included in 5-page limit)

4. **Budget and Justification** (Supplement, not to be included in 5-page limit):
   1. Provide a line-item budget
   2. Provide a justification for all costs involved. Include:
      - All VISNs and Stations that may be involved,
      - Details of salary, equipment and other support needs that the budget would cover, and
      - Any contracting needs.
   3. Given the short time frame, it is unlikely for projects to obtain new VA hires. Instead if salary is to be covered by this funding, it would most likely cover short-term contractors with the project.
   4. The budget will be reviewed and modifications will be requested as needed to fit operational regulations.
   5. The budget may be added as a supplemental document if needed.

5. **Biosketch/CV/Resume** (Supplement, not included in the 5-page limit):
   Provide either an abbreviated CV, resume, or NIH-style biosketch for all members of the investigative team.
Submission and Funding Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59pm on February 3, 2020. The timeline is outlined below. If you have questions about the application or the appropriateness of your project, please contact Dr. Naylor (Jennifer.naylor2@va.gov) or Dr. Kimbrel (Nathan.kimbrel@va.gov).

- **February 3, 2020**
  Applications due by email (see Application Form instructions for details)

- **March 2, 2020**
  Decisions are made and awardees contacted.

- **May 1, 2020**
  If a contract needs to be prepared in support of the project in order to apply part or all of the funds, awardee will contact Brian Gordon* to prepare by May 1. Contracts can take up to 90 days to be approved.

- **March–August 2020**
  Projects must be completed within 12 months from approval date (approx March – August 2020)

- **August 2020**
  Awardees submit a brief report on the outcome/product produced with the funding that will be reported to VACO in the MIRECC annual report.

- **September 30, 2020**
  Funding must be fully expended (or obligated to a contract) by this date.

*Brian Gordon: brian.3gordon@va.gov