



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health



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## Focus on the VISN

*Increasing Access to Smoking Cessation Treatment for  
Veterans with Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders: A  
Workshop on Systems-level Approaches*



**Dr. Jean Beckham** (MIRECC Co-Associate Director, Research) serves on the Planning Committee and as faculty for this workshop, which is sponsored by VHA Tobacco & Health: Policy and Programs, Clinical Public Health, Office of Public Health.

Mental health populations smoke at a much higher rate than the general population and they are likely to die 25 years earlier as a result. Interventions are needed to increase their access to smoking cessation care and to increase mental health providers' skill in providing effective smoking cessation treatment. This workshop will provide hands on behavioral skills training in evidence-based smoking cessation interventions targeted to the needs of Veterans with mental health (MH) disorders and in systems-level interventions needed to implement and sustain these interventions.

Teams of mental health and substance use providers interested in and committed to learning and incorporating smoking cessation interventions into their VA clinic practice applied to participate. The Virtual Training Event, *Evidence-Based Tobacco Use Treatment: An Introduction*, was held in February 26, 2014. The in-person workshop is scheduled for March 11 - 12, 2014. This will be followed by monthly conference calls. Site teams will develop plans to implement clinical practices improve access to smoking cessation care for Veterans in clinical settings where they receive mental health or substance use disorder care and develop and implement strategies to sustain smoking cessation interventions in these settings.

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## Transitions & New Personnel

**Allison Robbins** has accepted a full-time position with Coaching Into Care. Replacing her as lab manager for the Registry is **Unber Ahmad**. **John Mason** is the new PI at our Hampton VA site. **Keith Shaw** has moved from the VA in Boston to join our MIRECC's Clinical Core

## Education Core Update

The re-design of our MIRECC's website using the new VA website templates has been completed. Check out our new look at!

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

## Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

**Durham VA**  
Study Coordinator  
mireccstudies@va.gov  
919-416-5915

**Hampton VA**  
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## Focus on the VISN

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### In the News!

The work of the VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy project, which is funded by Central Office and housed within our MIRECC, was recently featured.

<http://www.research.va.gov/currents/winter2013-14/winter2013-14-6.cfm>

WINTER 2013 - 2014

# VA

## RESEARCH CURRENTS

Research News from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

### Impacts on Care: VA/DoD lead the way in integrating chaplains into mental health care



Chaplain Bill Cantrell

Dr. Jason Nieuwsma

### Clinical Core Update

An accredited recording of **Dr. Kudler's CBOC Mental Health Rounds** presentation on issues facing National Guard and Reserve Members is now available in TMS!

TMS catalog # 17674

#### **Recognizing the Reserve Component: Needs, Access and Treatment Issues Facing National Guard and Reserve Members**

At the conclusion of this educational program, learners will be able to :

- ★ Identify three distinctions between the Reserve and Active Duty Components of the military;
- ★ Articulate two unique concerns of Reserve Component Members when they present for VA care;
- ★ Describe three specific steps that VA providers can take to ensure that there is "No Wrong Door" in their communities to recognize and respond to deployment-related health needs among Reserve Component Members and their families.

## Journal Articles

**Allen JP, Nieuwsma JA, Meador KG.** *The Role of Military and Veterans Affairs Chaplains in the Treatment of Alcohol Problems.* Pastoral Psychology. 2014, 63: 1-11.

**Brown VM, Strauss JL, Labar KS, Gold AL, McCarthy G, Morey RA.** *Acute effects of trauma-focused research procedures on participant safety and distress.* Psychiatry Research. 2014 Jan 30;215(1):154-8.

**McClernon FJ, Calhoun PS, Hertzberg JS, Dedert EA, VA Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center Registry Workgroup, Beckham JC.** *Associations Between Smoking and Psychiatric Comorbidity in U.S. Iraq- and Afghanistan-Era Veterans.* Psychology of Addictive Behaviors. 2013, 27(4):1182-8.

**Sullivan CP, Elbogen EB.** *PTSD Symptoms and Family Versus Stranger Violence in Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.* Law and Human Behavior. 2014, 38(1):1-9.

**Taber KH, Hurley RA.** *Volume Transmission in the Brain: Synapse and Beyond.* Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience 2014 Winter; 26(1): iv, 1-4.

### Invited Lectures

## Mental Health Research Magnetoencephalography & Neuroimaging in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder & mild Traumatic Brain Injury

**TORONTO**  
14 February 2014

Two MIRECC faculty were invited participants at this symposium. **Dr. Robin Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented *Windows to the Brain: the Neuropsychiatry of Post Deployment Mental Health*. **Dr. Jared Rowland** (MIRECC Research Psychologist) presented *Alterations in Brain Function and Connectivity due to Deployment Related PTSD and mild TBI Identified using MEG.*

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## CBOC Mental Health Rounds

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

**March 12 from 9-10 am ET**  
**March 13 from 12-1 pm ET**

**How to Harness Technology to Improve Care for your PTSD Patients**

**You must register in TMS for these sessions in advance to receive credit.**

Credits/Hours: 1

Accreditations: ACCME, ANCC, APA, ASWB, CA BBS, NBCC

VANTS: 1-800-767-1750 Access code-26461#

**April 9 & 10 Behavioral Activation**

**May 13 & 14 Early Stage Dementia and Cognitive Loss Group**

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

## Meeting Presentations



Ahmed M, Sakpal R, Wilson D-M, Cifu D, Scholten J, Bomberger CA, Hurley RA, Elnitsky C, Taber KH. *Creating a Virtual Mild TBI Patient: Conceptual Design and Initial Database*

Hurley RA, Taber KH. *Teaching Materials to Translate Neuroanatomical Knowledge from Textbook to the War-Related Blast Injury Patient- Part III.*

Rowland JA, Stapleton-Kotloski J, Alberto GE, Rawley JA, Kotloski RJ, Taber KH, Godwin DW. *Graph Theoretical Analysis Reveals Reduced Integration of the Left Amygdala into the Whole Brain Resting State Network in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Magnetoencephalography (MEG) Study.*

Shura RD, Hurley RA, Taber KH. *The Insular Cortex: Structure, Function, and Neuropsychiatric Implications.*

### 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 - Wake Up Call (Sleep Disturbances after TBI)

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

## Invited Lectures

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Dr. Hurley also presented *Windows to the Brain: the Neuropsychiatry of TBI for Otolaryngology.* at the Vestibular Related Traumatic Brain Injury symposium held during the 37th Annual Midwinter Meeting of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology, February 22-26 2014, San Diego, CA.

Dr. Rajendra Morey (MIRECC Neuroimaging Lab Director) *Neural Injury from Subconcussive Exposure: Advanced Imaging and Analytic Methods* at the Duke University Neuroscience Grand Rounds on January 8 2014 in Durham NC.

### Resources for Building Resiliency

**MOVING FORWARD**  
OVERCOMING LIFE'S CHALLENGES

The VA and DoD partnered to develop *Moving Forward*, a free, on-line education and life coaching program that teaches problem solving skills to Veterans, Service Members and their families. This evidence-based program uses interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges such as relationship problems, financial hardship, and re-adjustment issues. Introduce your patients to this anonymous, always available, web-based resource and empower them to keep Moving Forward!

[www.StartMovingForward.org](http://www.StartMovingForward.org)

Visit our web site for more resources  
<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6.asp>

### ★ 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 - *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (english & spanish editions)*
- 2 - *A Primary Care Approach*
- 3 - *Issues of Women Returning from Combat*
- 4 - *Recognizing the Signs of mTBI during Routine Eye Examinations*
- 5 - *Understanding Military Family Issues*

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.