



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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Vol 9 (1) February 2013



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## Focus on the VISN

With the start of a new year, we are initiating a new area of reporting, designed to capture ways our MIRECC contributes to our VISN that may be less obvious than our success in developing research and training programs.

### Coaching into Care

A collaboration between our MIRECC and the VISN 4 MIRECC called *Families at Ease* was the basis for this VA national family-focused telephone outreach service. *Coaching into Care* offers unlimited, free coaching with family members or friends over a series of telephone calls.

The priority is connecting Veterans with VA care in their community through the family member's help and encouragement. Callers receive professional coaching on solving specific logistical obstacles and fostering Veterans' motivation to seek care while still respecting the Veteran's right to make personal decisions. In the first year (June 2011- August 2012), our Durham site handled 656 calls, assisting families of Veterans from many service eras with a wide range of challenges and supporting Veterans' engagement in care.



## New Service Roles

**Drs. Hurley and Taber** (MIRECC Education Component, Salisbury site) are now serving as members of the Large Working Group tasked by the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinical Standards of Care Directorate of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) with development of the Clinical Recommendation and support tools for Neuroimaging after mild TBI. In January, they participated in a 2 day working group meeting that completed the initial draft recommendations.

**Dr. Treven Pickett** (MIRECC Researcher, Richmond site) has begun a 90 day detail as Senior Consultant for Traumatic Brain Injury to the DCoE.

**Dr. Robin Hurley** also recently accepted the role of VISN 6 Academic Affiliations Officer. Her duties include managing and providing oversight to the VISN 6 Residency Training Program and representing the VISN with the VHA Office of Academic Affairs.

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## Recently Approved Grants

**Eric Dedert (PI)** *Combined Smoking Cessation and Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD*. VA Career Development-2 Award

**Christine Marx (PI)** *Neurosteroid Intervention in Gulf War Veterans Illnesses (GWVI)*. VA Merit Review Award

**Jason Nieuwsma (PI)** *Improving Patient-Centered Care via Integration of Chaplains with Mental Health Care*. VA/DoD Joint Incentive Fund

### Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

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

**Hampton VA**  
Monica Cook  
monica.cook@va.gov  
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**Salisbury VA**  
Mary Peoples  
mary.peoples1@va.gov  
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## Focus on the VISN

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At the request of the Salisbury VAMC administration, MIRECC personnel **Drs. Hurley, Taber, and Lamar**, in collaboration with the Salisbury VAMC Research department and Drs. Frank Labagnara, David Brady, and Stephanie Muff, developed and taught a short physical exam course for all Salisbury VAMC psychiatrists. The goal was to refresh physical examination skills for on-call providers. This course received excellent feedback from the participants.

### Invited Lectures

**Chaplain William Cantrell** (Education and Research, VA Mental Health and Chaplaincy) presented "*Human Flourishing Through Spiritual Health*" and facilitated group discussions at the Returning Warrior Weekend, January 2013, Raleigh, NC. This event, sponsored by Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Reserve Component Command, is provided to support Sailors returning from deployment and their spouses or significant others with helpful tools for adjustment back to civilian life.

**Dr. Robin A. Hurley** (MIRECC Associate Director, Education) presented "*Windows to the Brain: Neuropsychiatry of TBI*" on January 22, 2013. This presentation was part of the teleconference series "*The Brain: Empirical Research and Treatment Models for Social Workers*" sponsored by the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

**Dr. Cory Lamar** (MIRECC Fellow, Salisbury site) presented "*Seizure Disorders: An Introduction*" in February 2013 as part of the VISN 6 MIRECC monthly lecture series on post deployment mental health issues.

**Dr. Jason A. Nieuwsma** (MIRECC researcher) presented "*Integrated Mental Health Strategy (IMHS), Strategic Action #23: Chaplain roles in mental health teams*" to the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) Chaplains Working Group in February 2013.

### 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)

## South Central MIRECC CBOC Mental Health Rounds

March 13 from 9-10 am ET

**Heather Kobel, PhD & Kyle Liotta, MSW**  
*Ethical Dilemmas Unique to OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans*

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

**Credits/Hours: 1**

**Accreditations: ACCME, ANCC, APA, ASWB**

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

Use your computer workstation with telephone capability to participate. You will need to access Live Meeting and dial into the VANTS call for this presentation. The presentation is limited to 150 participants on a first come, first served basis.

### Objectives:

1. Identify the unique situations that lead to ethical dilemmas for VA providers;
2. Discuss issues related to information sharing between the Veterans Health Administration, the Department of Defense, and the private sector;
3. Describe ethical practices in providing care to OEF/OIF/OND Combat Veterans; and
4. Define Veteran Health Administration guidelines regarding completion of "Fit for Duty".

**April 10 from 9-10 am ET**  
**Co-Located Collaborative Care**

**May 8 from 9-10 am ET**  
**Dialectical Behavioral Therapy**

**June 12 from 9-10 am ET**  
**Competency & Decision Making in Health Care**

Contact Dr. Geri Adler with any questions:  
[geri.adler@va.gov](mailto:geri.adler@va.gov) or 713-794-8660

### Journal Articles

Brown VM, Morey RA. *Neural systems for cognitive and emotional processing in posttraumatic stress disorder*. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2012;3:449.

Elbogen EB, Johnson SC, Newton VM, Straits-Troster K, Vasterling JJ, Wagner HR, Beckham JC. *Criminal Justice Involvement, Trauma, and Negative Affect in Iraq and Afghanistan War Era Veterans*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 2012 Dec;80(6):1097-102.

Wong P, Chang CCR, Marx CE, Caron MG, Wetsel WC, Zhang X. *Pregnenolone rescues schizophrenia-like behavior in dopamine transporter knockout mice*. *PLoS ONE* 2012 7(12): e51455.

Youssef NA, Green KT, Beckham JC, Elbogen EB. *A 3-year longitudinal study examining the effect of resilience on suicidality in veterans*. *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry*. 2013 Feb;25(1):59-66.

### Promotions

**Dr. Rajendra Morey** (MIRECC Assistant Director, Neuroimaging) has been promoted to Associate Professor (Track II) in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University.

### Outreach to Providers: *Group Supervision for Clinicians Listening to Trauma Histories*

Therapists treating PTSD often find themselves in parallel turmoil, as they react to the patient's inner and outer worlds. Good clinical supervision is essential. In addition to receiving guidance and support from an experienced colleague, having the opportunity to share one's often turbulent emotions and learning how these can be used to better understand the case are also important.

**Facilitator:** Dr. Harold Kudler, Psychiatrist & MIRECC Associate Director - Clinical

**Purpose:** Assist presenter in processing a case that is particularly disturbing and hard to let go of.

**Audience:** Trauma clinicians and staff who routinely hear disturbing trauma histories

**Objectives:** As a result of participating, the attendee will be able to:

Develop new personal and professional strategies and new clinical understanding;

Recognize the potential effects of trauma narratives on therapists and staff;

Identify the importance of on-going clinical supervision in work with trauma

**Outcome:** By building on the experience of peers and senior clinicians, the attendee will increase his/her effectiveness in serving Veterans, strengthen his/her clinical skills and improve self-care.

**Upcoming sessions:** **March 13** **April 10** **May 22** **June 19** **July 7** **August 14** **September 11**  
**October 9** **November 11** **December 18**

Participation available in person (Durham VA) or by audio-teleconferencing. Register to participate or present a case at an upcoming session by contacting Harold Kudler (harold.kudler@va.gov; 919-286-0411 ext 7021).

#### 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>

**Visit our web site for more resources**

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

#### Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

**March 8 Robin Hurley, MD**

VISN 6 MIRECC & Salisbury VAMC

**Neuropsychiatry of TBI - A Review**

**April 12 TBA**

**May 12 Simone Hunter, PhD**

VISN 6 MIRECC & Salisbury VAMC

**Mirror Neuron Systems: What Are They and How Do They Apply in Mental Health**

This series is presented by V-tel and audio conferences. We are having increasing participation from sites outside VISN 6, so our assigned numbers may change. The number that each VISN 6 site will use to dial in will be included in an email notification prior to each presentation.

If you wish to attend from a site outside of VISN 6, please contact Mary Peoples (mary.peoples1@va.gov; 704-638-9000 ext 2956).

### ★ 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.