



Director's Update

This past fiscal year, we have had great success in our new partnership with the Duke University Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Partnership Program, headed by Dr. Marvin Swartz.

Specifically, we used this platform to move research into practice and increase access to clinical training and education for community-based providers of mental health services, especially those in and around the Fayetteville, North Carolina area that includes Ft. Bragg and nine rural counties. In this past year, our MIRECC faculty and affiliates provided presentations focused on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I; Dr. Christi Ulmer); Family Needs and Interventions (Dr. John Curry); Chronic Pain (Dr. Jennifer Naylor) and Bipolar Disorder Assessment (Dr. Joshua Tiegreen). These were very well attended and received. As a result, we are excited to announce a second series for the July 2017-2018 webinar cycle!

Currently, we are developing presentations for following topics:

1. Mental health and chaplaincy/moral injury
2. Making Groups which Work for Patients: Three Common Pitfalls and Remedies
3. Behavioral Sleep Medicine
4. Traumatic Brain Injury: Assessment, Treatment, and Psychological Consequences

More information about how to sign up for these webinars will be disseminated soon.

John A. Fairbank, Ph.D.

Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC

In This Issue:

Director's Update	1
Focus on the VISN	
Dissemination	
Invited Lectures	2
New Resources	2
Outreach	3
Conferences	4
Publications	5
Evolutions	
Honors & Awards	2
New Grants	2
Education Update	2
Transitions	3
New Personnel	3
Education & Other Resources	
For Veterans	6
For Providers	7
Contact Information	
Leadership	8
Fellowships	8
Research	8

Education Project Update

Combat Female Veteran Life After War (CFV LAW) Program

A MIRECC Clinical Education grant for development and implementation of the Combat Female Veteran Life After War (CFV LAW) program was awarded to **Sandra Robinson RN, BSN (Salisbury VAMC & Kernerville HCC)** in January of 2017. Today, the proportion of female Veterans is at its highest in US history. As active duty and reserve military transition into Veteran status, Combat Female Veterans (CFVs) now make up the fastest growing cohort. Ms. Robinson, herself a CFV, developed the pilot CFV LAW support group during the winter and was ready to implement this spring. The CFV LAW support group primary goals are to create comradery among CFVs, discuss post-deployment issues and learn when and how to get help at the VA. At each support group CFVs are celebrated, given commemorative items and informed of resources unique to them. The attendees report that being around others of similar experiences is informative and encouraging.



The first session, held on June 15 at the Kernersville HCC, was attended by 23 CFVs. This was reported to be the largest attendance ever for a female only group at Kernersville HCC. It was surpassed by the 2nd support group session on July 20, which was attended by 36 CFVs. The final session of this highly successful pilot program (pictured above) was held on August 17 and attended by 35 CFVs.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8

New Resources for Providers <http://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/>

This resource includes APA's Clinical Practice Guideline for the Treatment of PTSD in Adults, along with training materials and case examples for clinicians and practical information for patients and their families. Features include:

- ★ Information for clinicians on recommended interventions
- ★ PTSD assessment instruments used in the studies that informed the clinical practice guideline
- ★ Case examples of treatment interventions
- ★ Resources for patients and families to help them understand PTSD, its causes, its effects and treatment options

Honors & Awards

Dr. John Fairbank (MIRECC Director) was recently honored with the 2017 Peter J. N. Linnerooth National Service Award by Division 18 (Psychologists in Public Service) of the American Psychological Association (APA).

Invited Lectures

Drs. Timothy Brearly (MIRECC Fellow, Salisbury site) and **Courtney Goodman** (MIRECC Faculty, Salisbury site) co-presented *Improving Post-Discharge Outcomes in Mental Health Treatment: Opportunities for Telehealth Intervention* as part of the Salisbury VAMC Mental Health Grand Rounds on July 20, 2017.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8

Dr. Eric Elbogen (MIRECC Faculty, Durham site) presented *Assessing and Reducing Violence in Military Veterans* on August 2 as part of the VA HSR&D CyberSeminar series.

Blueprint for Excellence Strategies 1, 2, 7, 8

New Grants

PI: **Dr. Jean Beckham** (MIRECC Co-Associate Director of Research, Durham site), **Genome-Wide Association Study of Suicidal Behavior in the Million Veteran Program**
Funded by: Department of Veterans Affairs, Million Veteran Program

Focus on the VISN

We would like to recognize the Coaching into Care team's dedication and commitment. They started a paid web campaign with VHA Communications two weeks ago and since then they have been inundated with calls. Two weeks ago they received 99 calls across the three sites (typical is 50-70 per week) and last week they received 142 which is a record. Thank you CiC team for your dedication and commitment to serving Veterans and their family members and friends.

Outreach



The Coaching into Care Team

MIRECC Faculty Transitions

Treven Pickett, PsyD, has accepted a new role as the Department Chief of Research with the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed. Dr. Pickett was the Co-Director of our Richmond site's MIRECC Fellowship Program, MIRECC Site PI for the Neurocognitive study, and Richmond VAMC Research & Education Supervisory Psychologist. Dr. Pickett provided a visionary leadership role in integrating research and clinical work at the Richmond VA and he will be greatly missed. However, we look forward to continued opportunities to collaborate with him in his new role.

Scott McDonald, PhD will transition from Co-Director to Director of the Richmond site's MIRECC Fellowship Program and will also become the MIRECC's Site PI for the Neurocognitive study. Thank you to Dr. McDonald for taking on these new leadership roles to ensure a smooth transition!

New MIRECC Faculty



Celena Thompson, PhD
Hampton VAMC MIRECC Faculty
& Site PI of PDMH Study



Nicole Dutta, PhD
Hampton VAMC MIRECC site Faculty
(pictured at a recent Research Week
Lunch & Learn presentation)

Transitions

David Curry left the MIRECC on July 28 to accept a position with VBA. He has worked in Dr. Taber's lab for the past 1.5 years as a research coordinator.

Chelsea Swanson left the MIRECC on July 31 to pursue a master's degree in Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill. She has worked in Dr. Morey's lab for the past 3 years as a research coordinator.

New Personnel

Emily Clarke joined the MIRECC on June 26 to become a Research Coordinator and Database Manager in Dr. Morey's lab. Her primary duties include screening and enrolling participants, overseeing MRI scanning procedures, assisting in regulatory compliance, and managing data for Dr. Morey's Psychiatric Genomics Consortium for PTSD. Emily recently received her master's in Developmental Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Loreanne Oh joined the MIRECC on July 5 to become a Research Coordinator in Dr. Morey's lab. Her primary duties include screening and enrolling participants, administering mental health assessments, overseeing MRI scanning procedures, assisting with regulatory compliance, and managing data collection and analysis for several studies. Loreanne recently graduated from Duke University in May of 2017 with a B.S. in Biology.

Conferences



American Psychological Association

125th ANNUAL CONVENTION

Washington, D.C.

August 3 - 6, 2017

Symposium

Curry JF (Chair) - *Innovative Family Research and Services for Military Veterans.*

In recent years, researchers and clinicians have gained greater appreciation of the family context of Veterans' clinical challenges and help-seeking. The VA has also broadened its focus to include family issues that affect Veterans' health. In this symposium, we presented new findings on the family context of Veterans' problems and access to services.

Kelley ML, Montano HG, Lam N, Hernandez M, Miller MM. *Intimate partner violence among recent-era veteran couples.*

Curry JF, Fernandez P. *Post-Deployment Parental Reintegration Experiences of Male Veterans*

Swinkels C, Hill M, Hess TH, Straits-Troster K, Glynn S, Sayers SL. *Development and Initial Evaluation of a Call Center for Concerned Family Members of Military Veterans.*

Sayers SL, Erbes CR, Kuhn E, Ruzek J, Mavandadi S, McKay J. *Expanding Telephone-Based Coaching of Family Members Encouraging Veterans to Seek Mental Health Care.*



Dr. Kelley

Dr. Swinkels

Dr. Curry



Dr. Sayers

Symposium

Kelley ML (Chair) - *Advancing our Understanding of Moral Injury: Conceptualization, Measurement and Research*

Nieuwsma JA, Brancu M, Zablonksi S. *The role of religiosity among veterans with moral injury.*



Dr. Nieuwsma

Dr. Kelley

Symposium

Fecteau TE (Chair) - *Chronic Illness Management: Improving the Impact of Integrated Care Teams*

Numerous barriers prevent implementation of integrated care models. This symposium reviewed development and implementation strategies for chronic non-cancer pain, palliative care, and chaplaincy services within large, tertiary Health Care Systems.

Fulton JJ. *Psychology in Palliative Care: Education, Integration, and Implementation.*

Naylor JC, Fecteau TE, Lindsay D, Zanga J, Noh M, Johnston C, Heaton S. *Interdisciplinary Pain Management: Improving Care through Education and Program Implementation.*

Nieuwsma JA, King HA, Jackson GL, Cantrell WC, Bates MJ, Meador KG. *Chaplain-mental health integration: A multisite systems redesign study.*



Dr. Fecteau

Dr. Fulton

Dr. Naylor

Dr. Nieuwsma

Publications

Journal Articles

File AA, Hurley RA, Taber KH. *Borderline Personality Disorder: Neurobiological Contributions to Remission and Recovery.* Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience. 2017 Summer; 29 (3): A6-194.

WINDOWS TO THE BRAIN: *This article addresses the Core Competency of **Medical Knowledge***

Shepherd-Banigan M, Kelley ML, Katon JG, Curry JF, Goldstein KM, Brancu M, Wagner HR, Fecteau TE; VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Women Veterans Workgroup; VA Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Workgroup, Van Houtven CH. *Paternal history of mental illness associated with posttraumatic stress disorder among veterans.* Psychiatry Research. 2017;256:461-468.

This study examined the association between parent and family reported history of non-PTSD mental illness (MI), PTSD specifically, and substance use problems, and participant clinical diagnosis of PTSD. Participants were drawn from the US Department of Veterans Affairs Mid-Atlantic Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) Post-Deployment Mental Health (PDMH) study (n = 3191), an ongoing multi-site cohort study of US Afghanistan and Iraq conflict era veterans. Participants who recalled a father history of PTSD had a 26-percentage point higher likelihood of meeting criteria for PTSD; while participants reporting any family history of PTSD had a 15-percentage point higher probability of endorsing symptoms consistent with PTSD. Mother history of substance use problems was associated with Veteran current PTSD, but results were sensitive to model specification. Current PTSD was not associated with family/parent history of non-PTSD mental illness, mother history of PTSD, or family/father history of substance use problems. Family history of PTSD may increase PTSD risk among veterans exposed to trauma, particularly when a father history is reported. Knowledge of family history could improve clinical decision-making for trauma-exposed individuals and allow for more effective targeting of programs and clinical services.

Sumner JA, Duncan LE, Wolf EJ, Amstadter AB, Baker DG, Beckham JC, Gelaye B, Hemmings S, Kimbrel NA, Logue MW, Michopoulos V, Mitchell KS, Nievergelt C, Rothbaum A, Seedat S, Shinozaki G, Vermetten E. Letter to the Editor: *Posttraumatic stress disorder has genetic overlap with cardiometabolic traits.* Psychological Medicine. 2017;47(11):2036-2039.

Wilson SM, Pacek LR, Dennis PA, Bastian LA, Beckham JC, Calhoun PS. *Veterans Living with HIV: A High-Risk Group for Cigarette Smoking.* AIDS and Behavior. 2017; 21(7):1950-1955.

The Veterans Health Administration is the largest U.S. medical provider for persons living with HIV (PLHIV). Although HIV and veteran status are known risk factors for smoking, there are no population estimates of smoking prevalence among veteran PLHIV. Using data from a national random sample (National Survey on Drug Use and Health; 2005-2014), smoking prevalence was estimated by self-reported veteran and HIV status (N = 376,620). Results indicated 42% of veteran PLHIV smoked daily, compared to 18% of veterans without HIV and 30% of non-veteran PLHIV. Findings suggest that veteran PLHIV have high risk for smoking and consequent poor health.

http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/self_help.asp

Resources to Empower Veterans Mental Health

Self-help materials can provide valuable education and support for Veterans who may be facing mental health challenges, their friends, and family members. There are a wide variety of self-help materials available and it can sometimes be difficult to select the most useful. VA has assembled a list of reviewer-recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the right option for you. For help in finding these materials, please click the "How to Use" tab.



Online Life Skills Training for Veterans

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

Anger Management

This online course is based on training that was developed specifically for Veterans and has been successfully used by Veterans and Service Members around the world. This course offers a wide range of practical skills and tools to manage your anger and develop self-control over your thoughts and actions

Moving Forward

This online course teaches skills to help you overcome stressful problems and meet your goals. Moving Forward is designed for Veterans and Service Members who are facing challenges including:

- Managing Stress
- Balancing school & family
- Relationship problems
- Coping with physical injuries
- Financial difficulties

Veteran Parenting

This course provides parents with tools that strengthen parenting skills and helps them reconnect with their children. The course:

- Helps parents deal with both everyday problems and family issues that are unique to the military lifestyle.
- Features stories from actual Veteran/military families, interactive activities, and practical parenting tips.

NC4VETS
844.NC4.VETS



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

The **NC4VETS Resource Guide** is produced and published by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist and educate veterans in learning about state and federal veteran benefits. The **2017 edition** is now available.

Provider Education



CBOC Mental Health Rounds

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

Diagnosing Dementia and Cognitive Testing

Wednesday Sept 13 from 9-10 am ET & Thursday Sept 14 from 12-1 pm ET

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

Oct 11 & 12 *Ethics*
Nov 8 & 9 *Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health (REACH VA)*
Dec 13 & 14 *Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health - Veterans Enhanced Treatment (REACH VET)*

If you require assistance contact:

EES Program Manager - Tim.Walsh2@va.gov or
Education Tech - Jessica.Denno@va.gov



PACERS is pleased to announce a **new** "Dementia and Delirium" education module in our curriculum on cognitive disorders. **Each module is accredited for 1 hour of CE and is available to VA providers in the VA Talent Management System.**

Dementia and Delirium

TMS ID 29817

Dementia is a major public health concern, affecting over 5 million Americans, of whom over 560,000 are Veterans. The incidence of dementia increases with age, with more than 90% of those affected aged over 60 years. It is one of the most costly chronic conditions that the VA treats and its financial impact is expected to grow with the increasing number of aging Veterans. This course will describe two of the most common neurocognitive disorders that occur among elderly

Dementia and Driving

TMS ID 28776

One of the most challenging issues clinicians must address when working with Veterans with dementia is declines in driving skills. Approximately 30-45% of persons with dementia continue to drive, placing them at risk for becoming lost, crashing, and other adverse events. Clinicians have recognized a gap in knowledge regarding how to address diminished driving skills and decision-making for drivers with dementia. This training module will provide practical information that clinicians and health care teams can use in their work with older drivers with dementia and their families.



BRIDGING MILITARY
AND COMMUNITY
SERVICE SYSTEMS

This workshop series was developed by MIRECC faculty in collaboration with Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP) and North Carolina Area Health Education Center (NC AHEC). The web-based versions of the courses are all free at: <http://www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier>

- 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*



CENTER FOR
DEPLOYMENT PSYCHOLOGY
Preparing Professionals to Support Warriors and Families



UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY
of the Health Sciences



Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals

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

Module 1: *Self-Assessment & Introduction to Military Ethos*

Module 3: *Stressors & Resources*

Module 2: *Military Organization & Roles*

Module 4: *Treatment, Resources & Tools*



www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6

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