The President’s New Freedom Commission and the National Strategic plan.

The President’s New Freedom Commission Vision Statement:

We envision a future when everyone with a mental illness will recover, a future when mental illnesses can be prevented or cured, a future when everyone with a mental illness at any stage of life has access to effective treatment and supports—essentials for living, working, learning, and participating fully in the community.

The Veteran’s Health Administration is the first federal department to have committed to implementing the New Freedom Commission recommendations. To that goal, VHA developed the Action Agenda, which identified a series of specific actions to begin this process. Two of these were related to the issue of transforming the entire VHA mental health care system to one that fully embraces recovery and are restated as:

- Adopt the Recovery Model in VA Mental Health Programs nationwide.
- Educate VA Staff on Recovery

These recommendations were approved by the Secretary and incorporated into the overall Mental Health Strategic Plan. VISN 3 Mental Health leadership have contributed to this national planning and are committed to what will surely be an improvement in care and well being for our veterans.

What is meant by the term Recovery?

Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation for a person with a mental health disability to be able to live a meaningful life in communities of his or her choice while striving to achieve full human potential or “personhood.”, as adopted from SAMSHA

Recovery is a multi-faceted concept based on these 10 fundamental elements and guiding principles:

- Self-direction
- Individualized and Person-Centered
- Empowerment
- Holistic
- Non-Linear
- Strengths-Based
- Peer Support
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Hope

What are the system components of Recovery?

- Psycho-education to veterans, staff and stakeholders
- Case management services that foster independent living
- Access to housing
- Supportive employment
- Family involvement
- Ability to locate and access appropriate services
- Development of independent living skills

What is the role of mental health providers?

“Recovery is what people with (illnesses and) disabilities do.

Treatment, case management, support and rehabilitation are the things that helpers do to facilitate recovery”

Anthony (2002)

*NJHCS ACOS Miklos Losonczy accepts commendation from local “Peer to Peer” President, John Moran.
VISN 3 recovery oriented programs

- Peer support
- MHICM Teams
- Veterans Advisory Councils
- Education on Recovery
- PTSD mentorship
- Supportive employment
- Transitional residence
- Time Limited Case Management
- *No Man is an Island*
- Life skills training
- Wellness/medication self-management training
- Homeless outreach

**VISN 3 Veterans Advisory Council (VAC) leaders**

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<tr>
<th>VISN 3 Facility</th>
<th>VAC Professional Co-chair</th>
<th>VAC Veteran Co-chair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx VAMC</td>
<td>Felicity Laboy PhD</td>
<td>Susan McMillan</td>
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<td>Hudson Valley HCS</td>
<td>Thomas Gudewicz RN</td>
<td>Arthur Cozewith</td>
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<td>New Jersey HCS</td>
<td>Leon Green PhD</td>
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<td>Judith Slane LCSW</td>
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<td>Northport VAMC</td>
<td>Margaret Rayne PsyD</td>
<td>Robert Sliva</td>
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<td>VISN VAC Leaders</td>
<td>Leon Green PhD</td>
<td>Steve Konyha/Susan McMillan</td>
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<tr>
<td>VISN VAC Secretary</td>
<td>Michelle Smith</td>
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*NJ Health Care System computer training lab

**Transforming Mental Health Service in VISN 3**

RECOVERY IN ACTION
September 28th and 29th, 2006
Sheraton, Parsippany New Jersey

*Bronx VAC planning meeting