

NORTH CAROLINA FOCUS ON SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

A PROJECT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

Veterans Focus Meeting February 28, 2013 Minutes

Attendees: Will Barnes, Nick Black, Shawn Chase, Wendy Dyer, Li Fang, Ph.D., John Garland, Cynthia Gilman, John Harris, Michael Hewett, LTC Kenneth Jones, Ph.D., Harold Kudler, MD, Heather McAllister, Lynn Miller, Tim Moore, Sheryl Pacelli, Michael Rovaris, Katy Hussey-Sloniker, Catherine Smith, Jeff Smith, Belivia Spaulding, Clarenda Stanley, Flo Stein, and Jan White

- Dr. Kudler welcomed everyone.

- Ms. Gilman and Ms. Hussey-Sloniker, Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine, are working with LTC Jones, Ph.D., Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, on a Veterans Metric Initiative—*Learning What Works for Veterans and their Families* (see Focus website for a copy of the slides). Their research objectives are:
 1. Learn how to define and measure the effectiveness of a broad range of interventions offered by the DoD, VA, and local communities on the long-term health and wellness of veterans and their families.
 2. Determine the methodologies that most reliably measure long-term health and wellness impacts of interventions utilized by veterans and their families along the continuum of transition, separation from service, and community reintegration.
 3. Discover the core elements of the interventions that are causally associated with improved veteran and family health and wellness, and determine the common factors of the most effective interventions.

As a mixed methodologist, LTC Jones was interested in the question, What can we do for wounded warriors to facilitate successful reintegration of transitioning veterans? Currently, there is no robust theory related to reintegration. Because of challenges related to surveys (e.g., low response rate, responses specific to questions asked, individual interpretation of questions asked), he wanted to change the process by mining the socially available data that people generate all the time (e.g., FB posts, tweets, blogs, message boards, news feeds). Using www.many-eyes.com (based on the work of Ushahidi, an online community survey) and the story of the three little pigs as the example, he found that he could upload unstructured data, generate a word cloud based on frequency counts, develop a phrase net and word trees of specific words, and then generate questions from the resulting word trees by looking for themes and patterns. He noted that this type of network analysis is similar to an environmental scan. Ms. Gilman said that they are using this analysis method to look at service-specific transition assistance interventions in the Veteran Metrics Initiative.

- Dr. Kudler said it would be interesting to use this methodology to look at the websites of all the states that participated in Policy Academies. He would like to compare the similarities in our work with TN and VA. Ms. Stein suggested that we should see what the Policy Academies have meant to the participating states and break down chat rooms by state. Perhaps Kathryn Power or Eileen Zell at SAMHSA would be interested in whether participating states differ from those states that did not participate in a Policy Academy.
- In addition Dr. Kudler suggested using this methodology to look at clinical notes associated with calls to the crisis line. Perhaps a better call filtration system could be developed, resulting in improved FAQs that could be distributed to dispatchers. He also thought we could look at the evaluation data from the AHEC workshops and online courses.
- Dr. Kudler is currently writing a chapter on community services for military children. Using Major Thomas Salmon's solution to shell shock in WWI, Dr. Kudler said that there is a need to take a community-level demedicalized approach to issues that arise in post-deployment reintegration. Dr. Jones said that wounded warriors drove the discussion to figure out what strategy works and what doesn't and to see patterns and potential relationships.
- Ms. Stein said that the Division of MHDDSAS is enhancing the public's contacts at LMEs/MCOs so that they are veteran and military friendly. They have started a series of monthly trainings, with the first two conducted by Dr. Kudler and Ms. Stephanie Nissen of the NC National Guard. Mr. Harris will be presenting on the use of GIS (geographical information system) in identifying community-based reintegration resources. He said that they have nearly completed mapping the data of state-located services, VSOs, VA facilities, and number of veterans in each county. Recently, Ms. Stein responded to a request from the legislature to report on veterans' issues related to their access to Medicaid, training/counseling in LMEs/MCOs, and housing. Jeff Doyle, Dr. Fang, and Ms. McAllister helped her compile the data. The Division is currently putting together legislative language on TBI services in communities.
- Mr. Harris is working Fayetteville State University on a grant they received from HRSA. The disciplines of social work, psychology, and nursing are working together; their opening is on March 13. Dr. Sheila Cannon will be presenting on the project at Focus later this later.
- Mr. Harris said that they are in the process of training wounded warrior advocates and have already trained eight. They are getting certified as veteran peer support specialists, using curricula developed by UNC Behavioral Healthcare Resource Program and the VA. Mr. Harris is getting the active duty commander involved in this initiative.
- Ms. White reported that she just submitted paperwork to get their HRSA-funded TBI grant for an additional fifth year. The Division funds TBI Clubhouses throughout the State. They have social

support networks in the Triangle and are trying to involve servicemembers and veterans. Dr. Kudler asked whether the Division has a relationship with the DVBIC in Charlottesville. Ms. White said that VA has 6 clubhouses in VA, and their General Assembly has appropriated \$6M to run their programs.

- Ms. White announced that March is TBI awareness month, and that they do have the Governor's Proclamation. There will be a national TBI awareness fair and hill day at the Rayburn Building in DC on March 13.
- Dr. Kudler informed our guests about the report by the NCIOM Task Force (Dr. Fang sent them the link). What resulted was Senate Bill 597. Even through no money was allocated, there has been good discussion by the various agencies named in the law. To monitor progress, a report is submitted annually.
- In February, CARELINE received 396 calls related to the military or veterans. The majority of these calls, 234, related to Medicaid; 114 additional callers wanted a referral to their local social services agency. Counties with the most calls were Mecklenburg (39), Cumberland (30), Wake (29), and Guilford (26). Twenty callers were OEF/OIF.
- Recently, Dr. Kudler and Mr. Bob Goodale presented on *Painting a Moving Train* in AL. They also conducted a *Painting a Moving Train* workshop in Asheville. Ms. Pacelli said that most AHECs in NC are participating in the national AHEC initiative to offer culturally appropriate treatment to SMVFs . On May 8, COL Mark Graham and Mrs. Carol Graham will be presenting on suicide prevention at a conference, *Warriors in Distress: Suicide Among Our Soldiers at War and at Home*, sponsored by the Wake AHEC (www.wakeahec.org). Wilmington AHEC will be sponsoring a conference on children's issues.
- Currently, CSSP is in the process of updating all their online courses, which were developed in collaboration with the VA and AHEC. These courses target primary care physicians, MH providers, optometrists, and EAP staff and address issues such as military culture, PTSD, TBI, women, and military families.
- Mr. Smith reported that they finished their initial engineering plans for a 150-bed supported housing facility in Butner.
- Dr. Fang said she is participating in a three-session webinar on data sharing that is sponsored by the SAMHSA Technical Assistance Center for SMVFs.
- Mr. Rovaris recently presented a webinar on system of care and military families. He will be presenting at a future Focus meeting.

- Mr. Black founded a nonprofit, Stop Soldier Suicides (www.stopsoldiersuicide.org) and plans to establish a national office in Durham. They plan to serve all branches of the military and families.
- Mr. Hewett, a psychologist and social worker who works with veterans in Chapel Hill, said that he is working with Ben Saple to offer interactive theater on depression and suicide ideation.
- Heather said that Focus plans to offer a broadcast option during our meetings. We are field testing it for the first time at this meeting.
- Mr. Barnes is still working on a care initiative with National Guard. He recently completed an article on online faith.
- Ms. Miller reported on her project, Eagle Rock Camp, that is a partnership between NC and SC. Based on Project Sanctuary in CO, it is a healthy marriage project with three goals: for couples stay married, for kids stay in school, and for zero suicide. Located near Charlotte, she is working with Catherine Smith at ECU.
- In his work with the BIANC, Mr. Chase tries to bridge the gap in terms of outreach to SMVFs. He not only visits the DVBIC at Fort Bragg to keep engaged, but he also ensures that all folks in NC that need TBI services are provided with them. BIANC is in the process of sponsoring a series of fundraising walk and roll-a-thons in March/April (one is scheduled at Dix campus). Another fundraiser is Ride for the Rock in honor of man who sustained a TBI in a cycling accident (to be at the Whole Foods in Cary on March 9).
- Dr. Kudler also noted his work with Joining Forces and with the Association of American Medical Colleges. They are in the process of developing electronic health records and are considering adding a field related to the military at both the child and adult levels. A medical history card has already been developed and is on the web. They plan to build it into an algorithm and push it out to all medical schools.

The next Focus meeting will be on Thursday, March 28, 2013, at the North Carolina Institute of Medicine.

2013 meetings, NCIOM, from 2 to 4 pm:

- April 25
- May 23
- June 27
- July 25
- August 22
- September 26
- October 24
- December 5