



# VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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## VISN 6 Leadership

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## New MIRECC Fellowship sites W. G. Hefner (Salisbury) VAMC

This new program will combine resources sponsored by the MIRECC, the Salisbury VAMC (Mental Health, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, and Research & Education Service Lines), as well as the Wake Forest University School of Medicine (Departments of Psychiatry, Neurology, Radiology, and Neurosciences, Advanced Neuroscience Imaging Research Laboratory, Wake Forest Translational Sciences Institute and Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine). Fellows will also have an opportunity to complete a MPH at Wake Forest during the Fellowship.

The research training component of the Fellowship will provide the necessary skills to become outstanding clinical researchers. Fellows will develop an independent project in one of core areas that are linked to the MIRECC's central focus of post-deployment mental health. This site is particularly strong in the areas of PTSD and TBI. Clinical rotations can include the inpatient PTSD program, as well as many outpatient programs serving returning veterans with TBI and/or PTSD. The psychology program will be designed to meet

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## Update on MIRECC Research Fellows

We are extremely pleased to announce that **Dr. Victoria Payne** has received a Career Development Award (CDA-2) from the VA's Rehabilitation Research & Development Service. Dr. Payne was a



MIRECC Fellow in Advanced Psychiatry from 2006 - 2008. Her two-year tenure was quite productive, generating multiple book chapters, articles and meeting presentations. She is currently a Psychiatry Attending at the Durham VAMC and continues to collaborate on research with the Interventions Core.

Dr. Payne's innovative research focuses on neuroactive steroids in Veterans who served during OEF/OIF. Her research indicates that higher levels of neuroactive steroids in the blood are associated with

lower levels of psychiatric symptoms such as depression and PTSD. These findings are consistent with previous work suggesting that neuroactive steroids may have antidepressant and antianxiety actions. Her newly funded research will involve an 8-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study investigating adjunctive administration of the neurosteroid pregnenolone to OIF/OEF Veterans with PTSD and depression.

## Recently Approved Grants

**Payne VM Pregnenolone in PTSD and Depression in OEF/OIF Veterans VA RR&D**

### Approved Research Sites & Contacts:

**Durham VA**  
Study Coordinator  
mireccstudies@va.gov  
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**Resources for Providers**

National Center for PTSD  

**PTSD** *Research Quarterly*  
ADVANCING SCIENCE AND PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF TRAUMATIC STRESS

VOLUME 20/No. 1 WINTER 2009

Brett T. Litz and William E. Schlenger.  
 PTSD in Service Members and New Veterans  
 of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars:  
 A Bibliography and Critique  
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/ptsd>

**Invited Lectures**

**Psych on the net?  
 The future of e-mental health**

May 14-16, 2009

 Social Sciences and Humanities  
 Research Council of Canada

 **Workshop: The Internet as a research tool**

 **Dr. William Schlenger (Associate  
 Director, Research)** presented  
*"Practical Considerations in the Use  
 of the Internet in Disaster Research"*

 **NATO Advanced Research Workshop:**  
 How can the Internet help after a  
 traumatic event?

 **Dr. William Schlenger (Associate Director,  
 Research)** presented *"The Internet as a vehicle  
 for conducting surveillance and early intervention  
 following exposure to potentially traumatic events"*

**Publications**

Dedert EA, Green KT, Calhoun PS, Yoash-Gantz R, Taber KH, Mumford MM, Tupler LA, Morey RA, Marx CE, Weiner RD, Beckham JC. Association of trauma exposure with psychiatric morbidity in military veterans who have served since September 11, 2001. *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 2009, 43(9):830-6.

Marx CE, Keefe RS, Buchanan RW, Hamer RM, Kilts JD, Bradford DW, Strauss JL, Naylor JC, Payne VM, Lieberman JA, Savitz AJ, Leimone LA, Dunn L, Porcu P, Morrow AL, Shampine LJ. Proof-of-concept trial with the neurosteroid pregnenolone targeting cognitive and negative symptoms in schizophrenia. *Neuropsychopharmacology* 2009, 34(8):1885-903.

**Book Chapters**

Waelde LC, Silvern L, Carlson E, Fairbank JA, Kletter H. Dissociation in PTSD. In: *Dissociation and the Dissociative Disorders — DSM-V and beyond*. Dell PF, O'Neil JA, Eds. (2009) New York: Routledge.


Porcu P, O'Buckley TK, Alward SE, Marx CE, Shampine LJ, Girdler SS, Morrow AL. Simultaneous quantification of GABAergic 3alpha,5alpha/3alpha,5beta neuroactive steroids in human and rat serum. *Steroids*. 2009, 74(4-5):463-73.

**Presentations from our MIRECC:**



Bryan BC, Butler DL, Taber KH, Hurley RA. Cognitive Rehabilitation of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: Design and Outcomes of a Group-Based Model for Intervention. 2nd Annual Deployment Mental Health Symposium, Pensacola FL, May 7-8, 2009.

**National Service**



**Dr. Robin Hurley** (Associate Director, Education) has accepted an additional leadership position related to TBI. She is participating as a field representative for VA to the 3rd TBI Federal Interagency Conference Planning Committee.

Dr. Hurley has previously served as a member of the Management of Concussion/ mTBI Working Group, which recently released a new VA/DoD clinical practice guideline (see below).

**VA/DoD CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES** **Management of Concussion/ mild Traumatic Brain Injury**

**Dr. Robin Hurley** (Associate Director, Education) and **Dr. William Schlenger** (Associate Director, Research) both served on the Concussion/mTBI Guideline Working Group. Dr. Hurley also served on the CORE Editorial Panel.

This guideline describes the critical decision points in the management of Rehabilitation for Concussion-mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI) and provides clear and comprehensive evidence based recommendations incorporating current information and practices for practitioners throughout the DoD and VA Health Care systems. The guideline is intended to improve patient outcomes and local management of patients who have suffered a Concussion or mTBI.

The guideline is formatted as three algorithms, with annotations:

- Algorithm A**  
Initial presentation
- Algorithm B**  
Management of symptoms
- Algorithm C**  
Follow-up of persistent symptoms

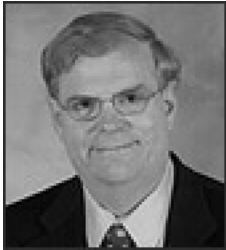
## Resources for Employers



stopping violence, in and through, the workplace



### Employers Support for Working Veterans Webinar Series



## From the Battlefield to the Workplace: Helping Veterans and Their Families Succeed

Webinar by Dr. Harold Kudler (Associate Director, Clinical)

<http://www.peaceatwork.org/veteransMH.htm>

The Department of Veterans Affairs is closely cooperating with DoD, the NC Governor's office, Veterans Service Organizations, and many other individuals and organizations to inform our newest veterans, i.e. those returning from duty in the Global War on Terror, of VA health care benefits and job opportunities. This presentation will describe the VA Mid-Atlantic Health Care Network's (VISN 6) experience in meeting the needs of our newest veterans.

We will review the challenges and successes in assisting these veterans in dealing with physical and mental health issues, including traumatic brain injury, loss of limbs, PTSD, substance abuse, family problems and related circumstances. We will also indicate how VA is reaching out to new veterans by establishing outpatient services in close proximity to where the majority of veterans reside.

### New MIRECC Fellowship sites

#### W. G. Hefner (Salisbury) VAMC

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criteria of the Houston Guidelines for postdoctoral training in neuropsychology, thus ensuring that Fellows are eligible to apply for ABPP board certification at the completion of the two-year fellowship. The program will also seek APA accreditation. Specialty programs at this site include:

**Functional Neuroanatomy / Medical Informatics** - Understanding the fundamental neurobiology of the brain is increasingly important for all mental health providers in order to provide exemplary care. This group's work has become the standard for the American Neuropsychiatric Association's annual workshops, has led to over 105 peer-reviewed articles, a textbook, multiple trainees mentored into successful academic careers, permanent medical journal section editorships, and multiple award winning scientific presentations.

**Advanced Psychopharmacology Consultation/Teaching Clinic** serves as the tertiary referral, providing expert advice on drug-drug interactions, neurotransmitter-based explanation for drug failure, a venue for clinical intervention trials, and a teaching rotation for doctorate level pharmacists and psychiatry residents in advanced psychopharmacology.

**Functional Adaption & Cognitive re-Training (FACT)** is an innovative program tailored to meet the unique needs of the OIF/OEF veterans who have experienced TBI and continue to have cognitive sequelae. Its multidisciplinary team provides outpatient treatment to remediate cognitive deficits, ameliorate functional impairments, and increase coping skills of participants.

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## Resources for Providers

[www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier](http://www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier)



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Click on **New Users** to register. Then you will see the available web courses listed:

*Treating the Invisible Wounds of War*

*ICARE: What Primary Care Providers Need to Know About Mental Health Issues Facing Returning Service Members and Their Families*

### **CME** Partnering in Support of War Zone Veterans and Their Families

Harold Kudler, MD and Kristy Straits-Tröster, PhD  
*Psychiatric Annals* 2009 39(2):64-70

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

Military personnel are deeply affected by their war experiences. Adjustment difficulties are common. These are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. Our materials cover some of the issues that are common following deployment.

[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/community.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/community.asp)

[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/readjustment-issues-provider.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/readjustment-issues-provider.asp)

[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/readjustment-issues-clergy.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/readjustment-issues-clergy.asp)

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an area of particular emphasis for us.

[www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/TBI\\_education.asp](http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/TBI_education.asp)



## Resources for Families

[www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc](http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc)

## Military Families Cope with Change

[www.pbs.org/parents/cominghome/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/cominghome/)

**Coming Home**  Military Families Cope with Change

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

Military personnel are deeply affected by their war experiences. Adjustment difficulties are common. These are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. Our materials cover some of the issues that are common following deployment.

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn6/readustment-issues-veteran.asp>

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

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

### New MIRECC Fellowship sites W. G. Hefner (Salisbury) VAMC

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**Combat Stress Programs** - The Structured Inpatient Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Unit (SIPU) is a 20 bed unit which specializes in treating veterans of all eras (Vietnam, Persian Gulf, OEF/OIF) suffering from PTSD. The SIPU has consistently been rated as one of the top VA treatment programs for PTSD nationwide. Areas of special focus in outpatient treatment include PTSD and military sexual trauma (MST). These programs serve as a key venue for MIRECC study referrals and as primary sites for PTSD and TBI assessment and treatment trials.

**OEF/OIF Outreach and Treatment Program** serves over 7500 OEF/OIF veterans, providing comprehensive clinical services including second level evaluation of TBI, case management, mental health assessment/treatment, primary care, education, and community outreach. Program staff have worked extensively with MIRECC in research and in the development of many educational and case management interventions. The program has been labeled a "best-practice" in the VA and has several evaluation studies underway.

**PM&R Rehabilitation Outpatient Teaching Clinic** works closely with mental health for the comprehensive evaluation and treatment of OEF/OIF Veterans who have suffered polytrauma and/or TBI. In addition to neuropsychological issues, many of these Veterans have chronic musculoskeletal and neuropathic pain as well as systemic symptoms of decreased strength and endurance and increased fatigue. This team has focused research efforts on disabling conditions associated with low serum vitamin D levels and neuritis/ganglionitis due to probable atypical reactivation of herpetic viruses.

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### New MIRECC Fellowship sites W. G. Hefner (Salisbury) VAMC

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**Behavioral Immunology Clinic** provides specialty care to HIV positive individuals with or without Hepatitis C co-morbidity. This unique program provide a comprehensive understanding of the biopsychosocial aspects of HIV/Hep C spectrum disease in the outpatient medical setting.

**Vision Rehabilitation Research Laboratory (VRRL)** provides an eye movement lab, lighting/mobility lab and a fully equipped eye examination lane. The availability of strong Eye Clinic programs, clinical programs in Advanced Low Vision, and on-going clinical, research and education programs associated with TBI, make the VRRL an ideal adjuvant training program for Fellows.

### Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

#### July 10

No lecture

#### August 14

No lecture

#### September 11

To be announced

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) so she can make the necessary arrangements.