



VISN 6 Mid-Atlantic MIRECC Post Deployment Mental Health

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Update from our Director

John A. Fairbank, PhD



Dr. William (Bill) Schlenger has stepped down as The VISN 6 MIRECC Associate Director for Research due to the demands of his other responsibilities. Bill has done an incredible job for us in this leadership role, particularly with the OEF/OIF Registry. Fortunately, he will continue to contribute to the MIRECC in a consultation capacity.

Drs. Jean Beckham (Genetics Core) and Chris Marx (Interventions Core) have graciously agreed to collaboratively share this position, becoming our Associate Co-Directors for Research. Their complementary strengths in leading exemplary, productive MIRECC research laboratories and their mutual dedication to mentoring faculty and staff make this an ideal situation about which I am very enthusiastic.

Welcome to a New MIRECC Researcher

Kim Green was recently awarded funding for a new study "*The Construct of Psychological Resilience and its Relationship to Hostility and PTSD*". With this grant she has transitioned from being our Study Coordinator to full time researcher. This study is an extension of Dr. Jean Beckham's ongoing study "*Hostility, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Physical Health Risk Factors*".



With Dr. Beckham's mentorship, Mrs. Green will investigate how resilience, a potentially protective factor, is related to hostility in younger individuals with PTSD. She also plans to evaluate whether the association between trauma exposure and PTSD is moderated by resilience, and to examine whether resilience is uniquely associated with biomarkers after accounting for hostility and PTSD.

Mrs. Green became interested in health oriented care after serving as mental health specialist in the U.S. Army Reserves while attending North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with Honors, she began a career as a commissioned officer in the Army, rising to

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Welcome to a New MIRECC Researcher

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the rank of first lieutenant (promotable to Captain) while working in the Military Intelligence Corps. While on active duty, she enrolled in Touro University International (TUI). TUI is a fully regional accredited academic institution that specializes in providing advanced education to military service members and DoD personnel. She graduated summa cum laude with a Masters' of Science in Health Science.

Since graduating, she has pursued interests in the areas of psychological trauma and patient oriented research. She worked as an international health educator in Rwanda prior to joining our MIRECC as the Multi-site Research Study Coordinator. Because of her professional interests, she has joined the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) and the American Public Health Association (APHA). For the past year she also has served as an invited member on the VA's National Task Force on Cultural Competency. She is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at TUI University, expecting to graduate in 2012. This award will provide Mrs. Green with a unique opportunity to have dedicated time to develop numerous advanced research skills.

Publications

Naylor JC, Kilts JD, Hulette CM, Steffens DC, Blazer DG, Ervin JF, Strauss JL, Allen TB, Massing MW, Payne VM, Youssef NA, Shampine LJ, Marx CE. *Allopregnanolone levels are reduced in temporal cortex in patients with Alzheimer's Disease compared to cognitively intact control subjects*. *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*. 2010 Aug;1801(8):951-9.

Taber KH, Hurley RA. *Herpes Encephalitis in the Immunocompetent Adult: Advances in Neuroimaging*. *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience* 2010 Spring; 22(2): iv-129.

Invited Lectures

Dr. Jennifer Strauss (MIRECC Researcher) presented "Guided Imagery for Trauma (GIFT) – Early RCT Findings and Future Directions." Health Services Research and Development. Durham VA and Duke Medical Centers, Durham, NC, April 2010.

Meeting Presentations



AcademyHealth

Annual Research Meeting
June 27-29, 2010 Boston

Advancing Research, Policy and Practice

Jackson GL, Cho A, Strauss JL, McDuffie, JR, Grambow, SC, Jeffreys, AS, Yancy WS. *Impact of perceived ability to cope with stress on desired and actual weight loss*. Academy Health Annual Research Meeting, Boston, MA, June 2010.



HSR&D
Health Services Research
& Development Service

Strauss JL, Marx CE, Jeffreys A, Almirall D, Chaudhry, N, Oddone, EZ. *A tele-mental health/self-management intervention to improve symptoms, access, and treatment engagement for women veterans with PTSD related to military sexual trauma: RCT results*. VA HSR&D National Meeting on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, Little Rock, AR, April 2010

National Invited Lectures

Dr. Robin A. Hurley

MIRECC Associate Director, Education



Employee Education System



American Psychiatric Association
163rd Annual Meeting
May 22-26 2010
New Orleans LA

Master Course:

Neuropsychiatry for Veterans

Brain Imaging of Neuropsychiatric Disorders in Veterans

Neuropsychiatry of TBI in Veterans

A Team Approach to Veterans with Co-Morbid Conditions Conference

June 22-24 2010
Lake Buena Vista FL

Concurrent Session (delivered twice):
Implementing the Mild TBI and PTSD Clinical Practice Guidelines Within the PSCT

Visit our web site for more resources

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

Web Courses for Providers



www.aheconnect.com/citizensoldier

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

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War:
A. *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*

Treating the Invisible Wounds of War:
B. *Traumatic Brain Injury*

These courses 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.

Noon V-tel Lecture Schedule:

June - July - August

Summer break

Lectures will resume in September

Resources for Families

Military Families Cope with Change



www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/emotion/tlc

Coming Home 

www.pbs.org/parents/cominghome/

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.