



## *South Central MIRECC Communiqué*

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### *“Closing the efficacy-effectiveness gap”*

#### **Celebration of Renewal: The MIRECC 5-Year Review**

Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH, Director, South Central MIRECC

In June 2005, the South Central MIRECC successfully underwent a review of the first five years of its work. Although we knew that we had “passed” the review, we recently received copies of the reviewers’ comments and wanted to share these with everyone involved in the MIRECC. Reviewers included LTC Charles (Chuck) Engle, MD, MPH, US Army Director, DoD Deployment Health Clinical Center, Walter Reed Army Hospital and Assistant Chair (Research), Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, US Uniformed Services University; Joseph Francis, MD, MPH, Associate Director, Health Services Research & Development (HSR&D), VA Central Office; Theresa Gleason, PhD, Program Specialist, Medical Research, VA Central Office; Thomas Horvath, MD, FRACP, Science Advisor to the MIRECCs and Chief of Staff, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston; Laurent (Larry) Lehmann, MD, Coordinator, Mental Health Disaster Response/Post Deployment Activities, VA Central Office; and John Somer, Executive Director, American Legion.

First of all, the reviewers unanimously thought that the South Central MIRECC was an excellent center and, in many respects, an outstanding center. Several stated that, of all the MIRECCs, ours most successfully “captured the spirit” of what MIRECCs were intended to do – that is, to improve mental health care for veterans and develop new models of care. One reviewer even said, “...this MIRECC is all about veterans.” Reviewers unanimously acknowledged our Consumer Advisory Board as key to our goal to create programs that were relevant to veterans’ needs and concerns. All reviewers noted our efforts to extend the benefits of the MIRECC throughout the VISN and to involve non-affiliated facilities. Support from VISN leadership and close ties with the Mental Health Product Line and the Mental Health QUERI were mentioned repeatedly as strengths. One reviewer stated that our MIRECC “is viewed within the VISN as integral to improving access and clinical care.”

A number of MIRECC programs were described in glowing terms by the reviewers. Reviewers were impressed by the many educational products designed and produced by VISN 16 clinicians in the Clinical Educators Grant Program and noted that many of these products are in use locally and nationally. They also singled out the Clinical Partnership Program many times as a model program. Our efforts to “grow” research in VISN 16 were noted. The Fellowship program was commended and the Training Residents in Psychiatric Scholarship (TRIPS) program was described as highly “innovative” by many reviewers. Reviewers were also impressed with the Grantwriting Scholars program and the Pilot Study Program. Virtually all reviewers were interested in our efforts to establish Telementoring and many urged us to evaluate this program carefully.

Our MIRECC’s research emphasis on “closing the gap” between the potential benefit of treatments and what they actually achieve in clinical care was seen as appropriate. In addition, our emphasis areas of access to care, older veterans, and psychological effects of trauma were seen as timely and highly relevant to veterans in our network. Reviewers commended our collaboration on national projects, including both TIDES/WAVES/COVES and CATIE projects. Several specific research projects were mentioned,

including Dr. Jennifer Vasterling's longitudinal study of OEF/OIF veterans; Dr. John Fortney's telemedicine project; Dr. Lynn Snow's pain assessment instrument development; Dr. Snigdha Mukherjee's research on the stigma of Alzheimer's disease; and Dr. Lauren Marangell's study of older persons with bipolar disorder.

Reviewers thought that our self-evaluations efforts were "exemplary." They noted that we had voluntarily conducted two reviews by external consultants and that these reviews had been extremely valuable in guiding the center. For the most part, they felt we had responded very adequately to all the consultant's recommendations. They also commented favorably about our productivity monitoring system – that is, the procedures we have in place to track publications and grants.

I think it is fair to say that our five year review was extremely positive! All of us who work closely with the MIRECC know we have made tremendous progress as a center and in our work in the VISN. To remain meaningful and effective, all centers must evolve in ways that enhance their efficiency and move them forward collectively to meet their goals. In the next six months MIRECC leadership will begin the process of strategic planning for the coming five years. We expect to continue to involve clinicians, research investigators, administrators, and veterans in our efforts to improve mental health care within VISN 16 and nationally.

In reflecting on our first five years as a MIRECC, I recall the initial meeting of the MIRECC. This occurred at the first site visit in Little Rock in 1998. At that time, most of us had never met each other face-to-face, much less worked together. The primary authors of the original MIRECC application were Dr. Vance Hamilton, Dr. Jeff West, Dr. Henry Nasrallah, and myself, and numerous other people contributed to the application. We have come a very long way since then! I hope that all individuals working in mental health in VISN 16 feel proud about our collective efforts to improve mental health care for veterans and will continue to work with the MIRECC as we move into our second five years.

### Restored Third "After the Storms" Program

The third program in the *After the Storms* series, "Impact on Two Employees," was broadcast January 23, 2006. However, due to a technical problem, the visual feed was lost during the airing. The video has been restored, and this program will be rebroadcast on the VA Knowledge Network (Channel 1) on the following schedule:

February 13	1:30-2:00 PM ET
February 16	4:00-4:30 PM ET
February 21	10:00-10:30 AM ET
February 24	5:00-5:30 PM ET
February 28	11:00-11:30 PM ET

In this program, two displaced VA employees – Donna Collins and Darlene Eubanks-White – talk about their stressors and stress reactions following the hurricanes. Both discuss how they have coped over the past 5 months and what coping strategies worked for them. Then, Dr. Fran Norris, an expert on post disaster social and community functioning, comments on common stress reactions experienced by disaster victims and effective ways of managing stress. Dr. Norris is a Research Associate, Executive Division, at the National Center for PTSD, and a Research Professor, in the Department of Psychiatry, Dartmouth Medical School.

A fourth program focused on social support and how a facility helped to provide support to displaced employees will be broadcast at a date to be announced soon. If you have topics, issues, or questions that you would like addressed in these programs, please contact [Michael.kauth@med.va.gov](mailto:Michael.kauth@med.va.gov).

This series is sponsored by the MIRECC, the South Central VA Health Care Network (SCVAHCN), and the SCVAHCN Mental Health Product Line, in collaboration with the National Centers for PTSD and VA Employee Education System (EES).

## MIRECC Retreat in Little Rock

On January 12-13, 2006, the South Central MIRECC held its annual retreat in Little Rock, AR. The theme of this meeting was “Celebrating Renewal.” The MIRECC recently passed a successful 5-year review but had just received the reviewers’ comments. (See Dr. Sullivan’s article in this newsletter). The meeting was an opportunity to celebrate the positive review and begin to look forward to the next five years. In attendance were MIRECC investigators, Fellows, administrators, staff, and Network clinical leaders.

On the first day, Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH, shared specific comments from reviewers from the June 2005 review. Reviewers saw the MIRECC as being on the right track and as significantly contributing to improved care for veterans. Dr. Sullivan also discussed the MIRECC’s reorganization of research and clinical education programs into three theme areas: access to care, psychiatric consequences of war, and treating older adults. Finally, she commented on how hurricanes Katrina and Rita have affected, and are still affecting, the Network and MIRECC. Several personnel are still in temporary work details.

Next, Joseph Francis, MD, MPH, Acting Deputy Chief, Research & Development and Associate Director, HSR&D, gave an overview of current and future changes and challenges in VHA. This presentation set the stage for a discussion about critical research that the MIRECC could support to address these challenges.

Lisa Rubenstein, MD, MSPH, Director, Center for the Study of Healthcare Provider Behavior and Co-Clinical Coordinator, Mental Health QUERI, then discussed the evolution and maturation of her center. She outlined some of the major organizational challenges the MIRECC will face as it grows and sets a more focused research agenda.

The afternoon presentations were largely devoted to a panel discussion on the impact of the hurricanes. Maga Jackson-Triche, MD, MSHS; Gustave Sison, PhD, and Kathy Henderson, MD, discussed the impact on mental health services in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, as well as critical issues for services in the future. Fred Sautter, PhD, and Michael Kauth, PhD, described findings from employee interviews after the hurricanes and how

this information was used to develop a series of informational programs for employees about stress reactions following a natural disaster and healthy coping responses. Lastly, Dr. Sullivan reported on the research capacity in affected areas and new opportunities for research, including potential partnerships with other agencies.

On the second day, Matthew Chinman, PhD, Health Science Specialist at the Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (and new father!), gave an insightful presentation on what constitutes “recovery” and how it can be measured. This was followed by Dr. Kauth’s presentation on the significant role of the MIRECCs in implementing and evaluating a recovery model of care in VA. Recovery-focused activities in the SC MIRECC and other MIRECCs were described.

Next, JoAnn Kirchner, MD, discussed how clinical change can take a “bottom up” approach, citing the successful Clinical Partnership Program as an example. She then introduced the principal investigators of two Partnership projects who discussed their projects and lessons learned. Janet Gearin, RN, MS, described the Buddy Program underway at the Muskogee VA, and Eve Wiseman, MD, reported the results from her contingency management program for homeless veterans in substance abuse treatment at the Little Rock VA.

Also attending the meeting were members of the Consumer Advisory Board who had a face-to-face meeting during the retreat. Estella Morris, PhD, LCSW, reported to the MIRECC on the Board’s clinical and educational priorities. These included expansion of family services and peer support programs. In addition, the MIRECC Fellows attended strategic planning sessions with investigators and presented their own research at a poster session. Fellows were Scott A. Cardin, Ph.D. (Psychology Fellow), Amy K. Cuellar, Ph.D. (Psychology Fellow), and Lisa A. Miller, MD (Psychiatry Fellow). Seven residents recently received TRIPS (Training Residents in Psychiatric Scholarship) awards and six attended the retreat. They are Asif Chaudhry, MD (Baylor College of Medicine), Bao Xue, MD (LSU Shreveport), William E. Tankersley, MD (University of Oklahoma HSC), Sandeep Mellacheruvu, MD (University of Mississippi Medical Center),

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**MIRECC Retreat** (continued from page 3)

Kristen Coleman, MD (University of Mississippi Medical Center), and Brian Hyatt, MD (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences). Amy Hudkins, MD (Tulane University School of Medicine) was unable to attend the retreat.

As is often the case, time was too short to complete all objectives for the retreat. To further strategic planning and set priorities for the next five years, a small group of MIRECC personnel and clinical leaders agreed to meet again very soon.



## Special Awards

The MIRECC recognized the outstanding contributions of several investigators, educators, and leaders in VISN 16 at the annual retreat. Join us in congratulating the following award recipients:

### **Major Contributor Award**

Dean Blevins, PhD, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock

### **Excellence in Education Award**

Randy Burke, PhD, G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center and University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson

### **Excellence in Research Award**

John Fortney, PhD, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock

### **Clinical Leadership Award**

Maga Jackson-Triche, MD, MSHS, VA Medical Center and Tulane School of Medicine, New Orleans

### **Clinical Care Award**

Annapurni Teague, MD, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and Baylor College of Medicine, Houston

### **Best Publication by a Junior Investigator**

Dinesh Mittal, MD, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock

### **Excellence in Research Education**

Nancy Jo Dunn, PhD, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston

### **“Bridge” Award** *for five years of outstanding organizational creativity and leadership*

Greer Sullivan, MD, MSPH, Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock



## Last Group of Videos from National MIRECC Conference

The Employee Education System St. Louis Resource Center announced the availability of the remaining five of a total of 14 videotaped presentations for broadcast on the Content Delivery Network (CDN). The presentations are from the 2005 National MIRECC Conference, **Risk, Rehabilitation, and Recovery: Treating Mental Illness in the VA**, June 6 - 8, 2005 in New Orleans, LA. The presentations will be available through February 28, 2006:

***Challenges in Working with Chronic Long Term Suicide Risk in the Veteran with Serious Mental Illness***, by **Gretchen L. Haas, PhD**

[http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl\\_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media\\_ID=586&M\\_Cat\\_ID=24](http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=586&M_Cat_ID=24)

The link to VA Learning Catalog: [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=21017](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=21017)

***Monitoring Side Effects of Antipsychotic Medications***, by **Teresa Hudson, PharmD, and Kathy Henderson, MD**

[http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl\\_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media\\_ID=536&M\\_Cat\\_ID=24](http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=536&M_Cat_ID=24)

The link to VA Learning Catalog: [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=21018](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=21018)

***Time-Limited Case Management***, by **David Smelson, PsyD; Miklos Losonczy, MD, PhD; Kathy Castles-Fonseca, PsyD; Bradley Sussner, PhD; Maureen Kaune, MD; Chris Kilker, BS; & Doug Ziedonis, MD, MPH**

[http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl\\_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media\\_ID=588&M\\_Cat\\_ID=24](http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=588&M_Cat_ID=24)

The link to VA Learning Catalog: [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=21019](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=21019)

***Pharmacotherapy of PTSD and Substance Use Disorders***, by **Thomas Kosten, MD**

[http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl\\_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media\\_ID=587&M\\_Cat\\_ID=24](http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=587&M_Cat_ID=24)

The link to VA Learning Catalog: [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=21020](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=21020)

***Involving Families in Treatment***, by **Fred Sautter, PhD**

[http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl\\_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media\\_ID=520&M\\_Cat\\_ID=24](http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=520&M_Cat_ID=24)

The link to VA Learning Catalog: [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=21021](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=21021)

To go directly to CDN: <http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov>

If you have any questions, please Ms. Linda Truman at [Linda.truman@lrn.va.gov](mailto:Linda.truman@lrn.va.gov) or 314-894-5736.



## Fellowship Videoconference Series on Research & Methodology

The VA Special Fellowship Program in Advance Psychiatry and Psychology hosts a series of excellent videoconferences on research and methodology. The current series runs through June 2006. These programs are intended for junior investigators and research trainees. Non-MIRECC Fellows are welcome to attend. To join a videoconference, contact Dr. Ruth O'Hara, Director, Special Fellowship Hubsite, at [roh@stanford.edu](mailto:roh@stanford.edu) or 650-493-5000 x63620 *well in advance of the program* to determine how and where your local site can view the conference. You can also join the program on *audio-only* and follow the slides from your desktop.

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**Special Fellowship Videoconference** (continued from page 7)

**February 15: Test Evaluation: Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve Analysis**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenter: Helena Kraemer, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Biostatistics,  
Department of Psychiatry, Stanford University

**March 1: Emotional Dysregulation in Mental Health Treatment and Research**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenters: Lucia Vail, Ph.D., MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
Bronx VA, Mount Sinai Medical Center

**March 15: Meta Analyses and Effect Sizes**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenter: Helena Kraemer, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Biostatistics,  
Department of Psychiatry, Stanford University

**April 5: Challenges in Implementing Novel Approaches in Mental Health Research**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenters: Scott Cardin, Ph.D., MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
Houston VA, Baylor University  
Eric Kuhn, Ph.D., MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
Palo Alto VA, University of California at San Diego

**April 19: Mental Health and Comorbidities: A Translational Research Model**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenters: Tom Tomcho, Ph.D., MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
Philadelphia VA, University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia,  
John Stricker, Ph.D., MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
San Diego VA, University of California at San Diego

**May 3: Data Transformation Approaches and the Importance of Centering**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenter: Helena Kraemer, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Biostatistics,  
Department of Psychiatry, Stanford University

**May 17: Behavioral Treatment Approaches in Mental Health: Examples from Smoking Cessation Programs**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenters: Andrea Weinberger, MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
West Haven VA, Yale University  
Jessica Cook, MIRECC Psychology Fellow,  
Seattle VA, University of Washington

**June 7: Time Analysis and the Limitations of Repeated Analysis of Variance**

Time: 1:00 – 3:00pm EST, 12:00 – 2:00 pm CST, 11:00-1:00pm MST, 10:00am – 12:00pm PST  
Presenter: Helena Kraemer, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Biostatistics,  
Department of Psychiatry, Stanford University



## New MIRECC Grants Since June 2005

Below is a partial list of new grants by South Central MIRECC personnel during the last six months of 2005. MIRECC personnel are identified in bold text. For more information, please contact the principal investigator directly.

### GRANTS

**Edlund, M. (PI), Hudson, T. (Co-PI):** *Mental Health Problems, Substance Abuse, and Opioids for Chronic Pain*. Submitted to VAMC on 12/13/2005, proposed project period 7/01/2006 – 6/30/2009, \$515,195.

**Fischer, E. (PI), Pyne, J.M. (Co-I),** McSweeney, J. (Co-I), Williams, K. (Co-I), Valenstein, M. (Co-I), Blow, F. (Co-I): *Shared Decision-Making in Schizophrenia: Extent, Nature, and Predictors*. Submitted to VA HSR&D on 12/15/2005, proposed project period 7/1/2006 – 6/30/2009, \$690,474.

**Fortney, J. (PI):** *Implementing Telemedicine-Based Collaborative Care for MDD in Contract CBOCs*. VISN 16 / HSR&D, Grant No. IMV04-360, 10/1/2005 - 9/30/2008, \$1,354,349.

**Hudson, T. (PI),** Martin, B. (Co-PI), Owen, R. (Co-I), Phillips, M. (Co-I), Steffick, D. (Co-I): *Evaluation of the Florida Medicaid behavioral pharmacy management program*. 4/1/2005 - 3/31/2007, \$490,803.

Due to length, a list of publications and presentations since June 2005 will appear in future newsletters.



### February Conference Calls

**1-800-767-1750**

- 6—Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, access code 16821#
- 6—Access Group, 2:00 PM CT, access code 97738#
- 8—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 14—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 15—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 15—Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 22—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 21—Substance Abuse Team, General, 1:00 PM CT, access code 23400#
- 28—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#

The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published March 6, 2006. Deadline for submission of items to the March newsletter is February 28. Urgent items may be submitted for publication in the *Communiqué Newsflash* at any time. Email items to the Editor, Michael R. Kauth, Ph.D., at [Michael.Kauth@med.va.gov](mailto:Michael.Kauth@med.va.gov) or FAX to (601) 364-1395.

South Central MIRECC Internet site: [www.va.gov/scmirecc/](http://www.va.gov/scmirecc/)

SC MIRECC intranet site: [yaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm](http://yaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm)

National MIRECC Internet site: [www.mirecc.med.va.gov](http://www.mirecc.med.va.gov)