

# *South Central MIRECC Communiqué*

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

### **Director’s Desk: Guest Columnist**

#### **NEW MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTOR AT JACKSON VAMC**

Roy R. Reeves, Ph.D., D.O., Director, Mental Health Service  
G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson

I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce myself and describe the good work we do at our medical center. I came to the Jackson VA Medical Center in November 1998 and assumed the position of Associate Chief of Staff for Mental Health in April 2004. Prior to working with the VA, I was with the Psychiatry Department at the LSU (Shreveport) School of Medicine for several years.

I received my graduate degree (Ph.D.) in Chemistry at the University of Southern Mississippi and my medical training at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. I completed residencies in Psychiatry at the University of Oklahoma (Tulsa) and Neurology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. I am ABPN certified in both fields and have added qualification in Geriatric Psychiatry. My research interests include quantitative EEG and evoked potentials in psychiatric disorders (particularly early dementia) and spirituality in medicine and psychiatry. I am currently Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

Now let me tell you about our facility. The G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center is a full service medical center in an easily accessible location just off I-55 near downtown Jackson, MS. The VA is adjacent (within walking distance) to the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and serves as one of the primary training sites for a number of residency programs at the medical school.

The Mental Health Product Line is one of the largest services at the hospital. We are approved for 12 full time psychiatrists, 6 psychologists, and 10 social workers in the mental health area. In FY03 our outpatient clinic treated more than 4000 individual patients and had more than 12,000 visits. Our substance abuse program had more than 7000 encounters and the PTSD program more than 5000. The substance abuse program has been CARF accredited for several years.

Our primary mission is to provide high quality clinical services to veterans with mental disorders. Research activities and the education of trainees in several different disciplines are also important missions. We offer a broad range of services that include diagnostic assessment, neuropsychological evaluation, outpatient and inpatient treatment, counseling, psychopharmacology, psychotherapy, rehabilitative services, and smoking cessation programs. We provide specialized programs in Substance Use Disorders and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Inpatient and outpatient mental health consultation to other service lines is also provided.

New patients may access mental health treatment without an appointment through our Triage section. After assessment, depending on their needs, patients are assigned to one of three teams: Outpatient clinic (general psychiatry), Trauma Recovery Program (PTSD), or Chemical Dependency Treatment Program. Each patient is assigned a case manager to provide consistency and continuity of care. The service

line also has a Homeless Program and performs Compensation and Pension examinations. A primary care clinic for mental health patients has been in place for several years. We now have mental health social workers and telemedicine services in community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in Greenville, Kosciusko, Hattiesburg, Natchez, Meridian, and Columbus (all in Mississippi).

We are affiliated with the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and are actively involved in the training of medical students, psychiatry residents, and doctoral and post-doctoral psychologists. We are also a training site for social workers from Jackson State University and the University of Southern Mississippi.

Several of our staff are also MIRECC investigators and have obtained funding for education and pilot research projects. I look forward to working with the MIRECC and with other VA facilities in VISN 16.



## SCMIRECC Internet Site is Active

[www.va.gov/scmirecc/](http://www.va.gov/scmirecc/)

The South Central MIRECC *Internet* web site is a reality, offering a centralized site for mental health information for veterans, caregivers, providers, and other professionals. Over the past several months, many investigators, Mental Health leaders, and staff have developed content, reviewed pages, and provided feedback about the site. Our goal is to have a relevant and valuable web presence on the Internet for VA and non-VA mental health care professionals and for veterans and caregivers. The MIRECC will maintain the secure *intranet* site for VA-specific activities.

As with all good web sites, the SCMIRECC Internet site requires frequent refreshment with announcements of clinical and educational initiatives, findings from MIRECC projects, publication of upcoming events, and updates about affiliated personnel. Tom Teasdale, DrPH, Oklahoma City, is the MIRECC web site coordinator. Tell him what you think of the site! Send suggestions. Send him new material. Tell him when a link is broken. **The site reflects on you as a MIRECCer and VA provider.**

To reach Dr. Teasdale, e-mail [thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu](mailto:thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu) or call him at 405-270-0501 x1491.

## September Web Presentation on Couples Therapy

The *Bringing Science to Practice* web-based series presents **Susan Johnson, Ed.D.**, on **“Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples Dealing with Trauma,”** **September 16, noon to 1:00 PM CT.** Dr. Johnson will describe treatment for traumatized couples and how to reestablish a sense of safety and security between partners. Dr. Johnson is Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa and founding Director of the Ottawa Couple and Family Institute. Her book, *Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy for Trauma Survivors*, was published by Guilford in 2002.

The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded at <http://vaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm> beginning September 15 from a VA-networked computer. The live audioconference can be accessed at **1-800-767-1750, access code 45566#**. This presentation is accredited for all disciplines.

For additional information about this program, contact [Tonya.Welch@med.va.gov](mailto:Tonya.Welch@med.va.gov)

## MIRECC Training Residents in Psychiatry (TRIPS) 2004

Mark Kunik, MD, MPH, Co-Director VA Special Fellowship Program  
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston

South Central MIRECC is pleased to sponsor the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Training Residents in Psychiatry Scholarship (TRIPS) for 2004. Five of our six academic affiliates selected one of their PGY-II residents to receive this award. The criteria for choosing a TRIPS awardee included:

- interest in clinical scientist career
- interest in mental health research
- interest in academic medicine
- interest in a career within the VA
- good academic standing
- leadership potential

TRIPS affords a unique experience for psychiatry residents to learn about cutting-edge mental health research and training programs in the VA, MIRECC, and affiliated academic programs. This award showcases the benefits of fellowship training for academic career development. As such, the primary goal of the TRIPS is to increase the number of psychiatry residents entering post-residency research training fellowships in the South Central VISN. Secondary goals include increasing the visibility of the MIRECC, improving resident perception of the VA and careers within the VA, and recognizing residents with research promise.

TRIPS awardees are assigned a career mentor who assists in career planning and who informs the awardee of ongoing research projects and potential opportunities for collaboration with MIRECC investigators. Awardees receive \$1,000 to attend a national meeting of their choice and/or pay for books or tuition and are also supported to attend the MIRECC Annual Retreat. This year's TRIPS awardees are:

- **Mazhar Salim, MD, MPH**, University of Mississippi Medical Center, Jackson, MS
- **Jeffrey Palmer, MD**, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, AR
- **Josh Mathew, MD**, Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, LA
- **Sara Allison, MD**, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX
- **Anil Swarup, MD**, LSU Shreveport, Shreveport, LA

In 2003, all six academic affiliates selected a TRIPS awardee. All TRIPS awardees attended the MIRECC 2003 Annual Retreat and met with their mentors at least four times during the year, and most met at least monthly. When polled for suggestions on improving the program, the 2003 TRIPS awardees unanimously asked for more time with a mentor, two years if possible instead of the current one year. Our first TRIPS year was also a productive one. From this first class of six residents, there were four publications, two pending publications, and three scientific presentations. We expect an equally successful and productive year in 2004!



**Looking for clinical tools for your practice?** Visit the South Central MIRECC web site ([www.va.gov/scmirecc/](http://www.va.gov/scmirecc/)), click on "Information for Providers." Go to "Education," then click on "Clinical Education Products." To request a product, send an email to [Tonya.welch@med.va.gov](mailto:Tonya.welch@med.va.gov)

## **Clinical Education Grants Report Group Manual for Health Promotion for Veterans with PTSD**

In 2003, **Cynthia Helwig NP** (VA-Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System) received a MIRECC Clinical Education grant entitled, “A Resource Manual for Health Promotion in PTSD Veterans.” The resource manual was developed as a group intervention that focused on disease processes and problems common in the PTSD veteran population. The manual was used in the Health Promotion Group, an open psychoeducational group, in the PTSD clinic.

This population is characteristically poor in self-care and healthy habits and often neglectful of medical problems. Research has consistently demonstrated an interrelationship between physical and mental domains. This manual was intended to increase awareness and knowledge of chronic illnesses for veterans with PTSD and promote health and wellness.

A needs assessment of patients identified topics of interest and learning needs among PTSD patients in the clinic. Medical records also revealed

common health problems. Selected topics were then organized into 10 sessions. The program employed a range of teaching modalities, including a written manual, PowerPoint presentations, videotapes, audiotapes, pamphlets, and group discussion. Materials were reviewed for readability and appropriate reading level. Guest speakers, such as dietitians, were featured to introduce specific topics. A calendar of group dates, times, and topics was posted in the PTSD clinic.

To date 28 veterans have participated in the group and used the manual. Several veterans have repeated the entire 10-week session, stating that they learn something new every time they come. After completing 5 or more sessions, veterans were asked to evaluate the manual. In general, veterans reported a high level of satisfaction and stated that the manual was very beneficial in providing them with knowledge about health care.

For more information about this manual, contact Cynthia Helwig NP at [Cynthia.Helwig@med.va.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Helwig@med.va.gov). For a copy of the manual, contact Ms. Lymuel-Hartley at [Melonie.lymuel-hartley@med.va.gov](mailto:Melonie.lymuel-hartley@med.va.gov)



## **Funding Opportunities**

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is seeking small grant applications to (1) stimulate and facilitate data archiving and secondary analyses of data related to caregiving, cognition, demography, economics, epidemiology, behavioral genetics, and other behavioral research on aging; (2) provide support for preliminary projects using secondary analysis that could lead to applications for other research grant award mechanisms; (3) provide support for rapid analyses of new databases and experimental modules; (4) provide support for the development, enhancement, and assembly of new databases from existing data; and (5) provide support for pilot research on under-utilized databases. For more information, go to <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACDA>

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) requests R34 and R21 applications exploring potential interventions to decreasing morbidity, mortality, and disability associated with multiple, co-occurring diseases in elderly patients. For clinical trial planning grants (R34), applicants may request a project period of one year and a budget for direct costs of up to \$150,000. For exploratory/developmental studies (R21), applicants may request a project period of up to two years and a budget for direct costs of up to \$275,000 for the total project period not to exceed \$200,000 in any one year. Application deadline is January 13, 2005. For more information, go to <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-05-007.html>

## Funding Opportunities (continued)

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) invites research grant (R01) applications that will utilize human longitudinal data and specimens and/or conduct ancillary studies to longitudinal studies, to gain information and answers to important research questions regarding the progression and determinants of change across all segments of the life span that affect health in old age; effects of age, disease stage, and comorbidity on the effects of risk factors; variability among and within individuals in rates of change with age in physiologic, pathologic, behavioral, social, and functional characteristics; determinants of exceptionally healthy aging; and the health and physiologic effects in human aging of factors that influence aging in other species. Applicants may request a project period of up to 4 years and a budget for direct costs up to \$275,000/yr. Application deadline is January 11, 2005. For more information, go to <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AG-05-004.html>



## Upcoming Educational Events

### Satellite Broadcast on Traumatic Brain Injury

The Employee Education System, St. Louis Employee Education Resource Center, in collaboration with the Mental Health Strategic Health Care Group is pleased to announce a rebroadcast of **Management of Neurobehavioral Syndromes after Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** on Monday, September 14, 2004 from 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM ET, Channel 1. This satellite program is designed to provide information on various neurobehavioral syndromes that occur after TBI and offer treatment options to address acute and chronic problems with behavioral and emotional functioning. At the end of this broadcast, participants should be able to identify common neurobehavioral and emotional consequences of TBI in the acute and chronic treatment setting, discuss medical and behavioral interventions for managing the common syndromes, and discuss common barriers to effective treatment presented by patients with TBI, and strategies for coping with these barriers.

For more information and rebroadcast dates and times, go to [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=17075](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=17075)

### Satellite Broadcast on Implementing Recovery Programs

The Employee Education System, St. Louis Resource Center, in collaboration with the Mental Health Strategic Healthcare Group in VA Central Office, is pleased to announce an upcoming satellite broadcast titled **Transforming Mental Health Clinical Practices to Implement Recovery** on Wednesday, September 15, from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM ET, Channel 1. This program is designed to assist VHA mental health clinicians to begin the process of transforming mental health care in VA by providing information on how recovery oriented principles can be incorporated into their clinical practices in order to implement recovery. Mental Health clinicians will receive information on what is a mental health recovery culture and the difference between rehabilitation/recovery and the traditional medical model approach to treating mental illness among America's veterans.

For a full description and handouts for this event, as well as rebroadcast dates and times, please go to [http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu\\_detail.asp?id=18716](http://vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov/vacatalog/cu_detail.asp?id=18716)



## September Conference Calls 1-800-767-1750

- 6—Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, *cancelled due to holiday*
- 6—Schizophrenia Team, 3:00 PM CT, *cancelled due to holiday*
- 8—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 14—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 15—Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 20—Disorder Team Leaders, 2:00 PM CT, access code 20143#
- 21—Substance Abuse Team, General, 1:00 PM CT, access code 23400#
- 27—PRECEP Call, 11:00 AM CT, access code 39004#
- 28—Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#

The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published October 4, 2004. Deadline for submission of items to the October newsletter is September 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 (504) 585-2954.

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

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