



South Central MIRECC Communiqué

A publication of the Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center

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“Closing the efficacy-effectiveness gap”

MIRECC-VISN 16 Programs for Employees on Response to Natural Disaster

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), announced the launch of a series of informational programs entitled, *After the Storms: Employees' Guide to Managing Stress*. Over the next several months, programs will provide information targeted to VISN 16 employees about common stress responses following natural disaster and coping with loss and stressors associated with these events. The first program, **“Impact on the Network,” by Robert Lynch, MD, Director, SCVAHCN (VISN 16), will air live December 12, 2005 from 12:30 – 1:00 PM CT (1:30 – 2:00 PM ET)** on Channel 5 of the VA Knowledge Network (VAKN) and the Content Delivery Network (CDN). The program will be rebroadcast on Channel 1 of VAKN: December 14, 5:00 PM ET; December 16, 9:00 AM ET; December 20, 11:00 PM ET; December 23, 1:00 PM ET; and December 28, 3:00 PM ET.

In the first program, Dr. Lynch will discuss the significant impact that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had on VISN 16, from evacuation of facilities and relocation of employees to re-establishment of clinical services in affected areas. Most facilities in VISN 16 were directly involved in initial rescue and relocation efforts. The other 8 medical centers in VISN 16 and every VA Network have received approximately 1500 displaced VISN 16 employees. In addition, Dr. Lynch will discuss the general plan for recovery in affected areas.

In the second program, **“Impact on Three Facilities,” will air December 19, 2005, 12:30 – 1:00 PM CT (1:30 – 2:00 PM ET)** Channel 5 on VAKN and CDN, administrative leaders from three medical centers (Alexandria, Biloxi, and New Orleans) will describe how their facilities and employees were affected by the storms, as well as disaster relief efforts and future plans. Presenters include Gustave Sison, PhD, Chief, Psychology Service, Biloxi VA Medical Center; Maga Jackson-Triche, MD, Director, Mental Health Service Line, New Orleans VA Medical Center; and Barbara Watkins, Director, Alexandria VA Medical Center.

Subsequent programs will provide information about common stress responses following natural disaster, coping with loss and stress, living with displaced children and family members, adopting wellness strategies, and managing the long-term stress of recovery. Specific topics have also been identified by affected employees. If you have topics, issues, or questions that you would like addressed in these programs, please contact Michael.kauth@med.va.gov. Dates for future programs will be announced soon.

These programs will broadcast live initially. Each program will be rebroadcast and then archived for viewing in the CDN library.



Please Save the Date!!

The annual **South Central MIRECC Retreat** will be held in Little Rock, AR on **January 12-13, 2006**. We invite all interested parties to attend. The MIRECC recently successfully completed our five year review and renewal for the next five years. The theme of this year's retreat is "**Celebrating Renewal.**" A detailed agenda and hotel information will be available soon and mailed out as a *NewsFlash*. Much of the program will focus on issues relevant to the coming five years, so this is an especially important retreat.

In addition, we are also holding a **Pre-Retreat Research Meeting** on the afternoon of **January 11, 2006** at the hotel. At this meeting we will discuss plans for MIRECC research over the next five years. For this reason, all MIRECC researchers (affiliate and core) are urged to attend. We would like to have input from as many researchers as possible.

The MIRECC will support travel for all Core MIRECC investigators and a few designated Affiliate MIRECC investigators who have already been notified. Travel letters will follow shortly. We strongly encourage all MIRECC Affiliate and Associate investigators to attend, and we welcome non-MIRECC investigators who have an interest in the future of MIRECC research, especially those based in Little Rock.

Recovery Assessment Information

Several facilities have begun to implement recovery-oriented programs. Attached is a link to information about tools for evaluating recovery approaches:

<http://tecathsri.org/redirect.asp?pid=129&where=tecnews112805&oid=0>

To join a discussion forum about recovery assessment instruments, go to:

<http://www.tecathsri.org/bb/viewforum.php?f=15>

Presentation on Combat Psychiatry and Treating Active Duty Service Members Dec 15

The MIRECC *Bringing Science to Practice* web-based conference series presents **COL Elspeth Cameron Ritchie, MD, MPH; LTC Robert D. Forsten, DO; and MAJ Brett J. Schneider, MD** on "**Combat Psychiatry: From the Battle Front to the Home Front,**" **December 15, noon to 1:00 PM CT**. This presentation will focus on treating mental health problems in active duty service members, including combat stress management and pharmacotherapy. The presenters will discuss the meaning of *combat readiness* from a psychiatric and medical perspective and will comment on the mental health needs of service members who are transitioning to civilian life.

COL Ritchie serves as Psychiatry Consultant to the Army Surgeon General. LTC Forsten is Assistant Chief of Psychiatric Continuity Service at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC. MAJ Schneider is Chief of Telepsychiatry and Community Mental Health at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

The PowerPoint slides for the presentation can be downloaded from a VA-networked computer at <http://vaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm> beginning December 14. The live audioconference can be accessed December 15 at **1-800-767-1750, access code 45566#**. This presentation is accredited for 1.0 hour of discipline-specific continuing education by the VA Employee Education System.

Deadline for VISN Research Proposals Approaching

Please note that applications for each of the three South Central VA Health Care Network (SCVAHCN) research grants are due December 16, 2006. The three research grant awards are:

- **South Central Research Career Development Grant** – up to \$80,000 per year for up to three year's funding, intended for new research investigators with no prior funding history.
- **Pilot Project Grant** – up to \$50,000 per year for up to two year's funding, intended for junior researchers to collect pilot data.
- **South Central Research Planning Grant** – up to \$20,000 for a one year period, intended to provide junior investigators who have little experience with research with an opportunity and the funds to plan a research protocol.

The purpose of these programs is to promote research in the South Central Network through the development of promising junior investigators who have demonstrated their commitment to a research career. This program is not intended for independent, established investigators. Applicants for a SCVAHCN Research Grant award must hold a 5/8s VA appointment at an SCVAHCN facility, possess a doctoral degree (e.g., MD, PhD, PharmD), and hold a university faculty appointment. All research disciplines and areas of expertise (basic sciences, clinical and health services) are welcome to apply.

Applications are available through Research Service and from Ms. Melonie Shelton. Applications should be submitted electronically to Ms. Shelton at MSShelton@uams.edu. Address questions about the application and review process to Ms. Shelton at 501-257-1971. For questions about research design, please call your local ACOS for Research or Dr. Greer Sullivan at 501-257-1971.

UAMS Memory Research Center Pilot Grants

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Memory Research Center (MRC) is accepting applications for pilot research grants. Deadline for submitting a letter of intent is January 6, 2006; full proposals are due January 27, 2006.

These grants are intended to advance basic, clinical, and health services research in the area of Alzheimer's disease, other forms of dementia, and relevant aspects of aging. Investigators are encouraged to use the MRC database. Priority is given to proposals that will provide pilot data to support future submissions for major extramural funding. Faculty members at UAMS and at other institutions are eligible for these pilot grants. Junior investigators and established investigators are encouraged to apply.

For more information about this program and details concerning the letter of intent and application, contact Ms. Marian Hart, MRC Project Coordinator, at hartmarianc@uams.edu or 501-603-1294.

Please note: Pilot funding for this program is dependent on continued funding of the UAMS Alzheimer's Disease Core Center. An application was submitted to NIA for continued funding 7/01/06 – 6/30/11, Cornelia Beck, PhD, RN, Principal Investigator. The initial peer review should be completed by the end of March 2006, and a funding decision will be made by May 2006.



Recent grants, publications, and presentations by MIRECC personnel will appear in the February 2006 issue. Send updates to Michael.kauth@med.va.gov

MIRECC Personnel in the News

Reeves, Parker & Konkle-Parker Write *Article of the Year*

In July 2005, **Roy Reeves, DO, PhD, Jefferson Parker, PhD, and Deborah Konkle-Parker, MSN, PhD**, published an article entitled “War-Related Mental Health Problems of Today’s Veterans” in the *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services*. Recently, this article was recognized as the **Article of the Year** for that journal.

Congratulations to Drs. Reeves, Parker, and Konkle-Parker on this distinction!

Kunik Receives Educational Leadership Award

The Baylor College of Medicine announced recently that **Mark E. Kunik, MD, MPH**, has received the **Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. Faculty Excellence Award for Educational Leadership**. The Excellence Award is a criterion-based program that recognizes faculty contributions in four categories: Teaching and Evaluation; Development of Enduring Educational Materials; Educational Leadership; Educational Research. A peer review panel reviews submitted portfolios for evidence of quality, quantity and breadth to ensure they meet established standards for the designated category. The award recognizes Baylor faculty who meet designated standards for their sustained (at least 3-5 years), exemplary educational contributions to the College.

Dr. Kunik is Associate Director of Research Training, South Central MIRECC; Associate Director, Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center; and Associate Professor, Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine.

Congratulations to Dr. Kunik!

A Successful Psychopharmacology Update

The Baylor College of Medicine/MIRECC *2005 Psychopharmacology Update* course took place October 14-15, at The Houstonian Hotel, in Houston TX, under the direction of Dr. Lauren Marangell. Topics included: FDA Warnings on Psychiatric Drugs: A Review and Recommendations for Clinicians; Update on the Treatment of Bipolar Disorders; Psychotropics in Pregnancy and Postpartum Depression; Drug Interactions; The New Psychopharmacology of Substance Abuse; Pharmacotherapy for ADD/ADHD; Using Medications in the Context of Medical Illness and Treatment-Resistant Depression: New and Old Treatment Options. Approximately 200 participants attended the course and they once again endorsed the need for an annual program. Almost a dozen MIRECC Affiliates attended the program, and their registration fees were covered by the MIRECC. Plans for the *2006 Psychopharmacology Update* are underway.

Thank you to everyone who attended the program and thanks to our generous commercial supporters which included, GlaxoSmithKline, Shire Pharmaceuticals, Eli Lilly and Company, AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP, Cyberonics Inc, Forest Laboratories, Novartis Pharmaceutical, Pfizer and Wyeth Pharmaceuticals.

Archived Presentations from the MIRECC Conference

The Employee Education System St. Louis Resource Center announced the availability of five videotaped presentations on the Content Delivery Network. 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 and will be available through December 31, 2005:

Assisting the Wounded by Col. Stephen J. Cozza. The link to access this presentation is:
http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=645&M_Cat_ID=24

Combat Stress: Report from Iraq by Jim Sardo, PhD. The link to access this presentation is:
http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=583&M_Cat_ID=24

Getting Your Treatment Programs Ready for the New War Veteran by Fred Gusman, MSW.
The link to access this presentation is:
http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=509&M_Cat_ID=24

How the VA Can Help by Larry Lehmann, MD. The link to access this presentation is:
http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=521&M_Cat_ID=24

Iraq War Clinician Guide by Josef I. Ruzek, PhD. The link to access this presentation is:
http://vaww.vakncdn.lrn.va.gov/cl_popup.asp?mode=popup&Media_ID=585&M_Cat_ID=24



December Conference Calls 1-800-767-1750

- 5 —Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, access code 16821#
- 5—Access Group, 2:00 PM CT, access code 97738#
- 7 —Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 13 —Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 14 —Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 19 —Disorder Team Leaders, 2:00 PM CT, access code 20143#
- 20 —Substance Abuse Team, General, 1:00 PM CT, access code 23400#
- 21—Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#
- 21 —Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 27 —Directors Call, 3:00 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 28 —Neuroimaging Group, 9:00 AM CT, access code 24394#

The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published January 2, 2006. Deadline for submission of items to the January newsletter is December 27. 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 or FAX to (601) 364-1395.

South Central MIRECC Internet site: www.va.gov/scmirecc/

SC MIRECC intranet site: yaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm

National MIRECC Internet site: www.mirecc.med.va.gov