



South Central MIRECC Communiqué

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

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“Closing the efficacy-effectiveness gap”

Six Clinical Partnership Grants Awarded

The South Central MIRECC recently awarded funding for six Clinical Partnership Program grants at three facilities. The Clinical Partnership program offers funding for innovative interventions related to provision of clinical care or education of mental health clinicians in VISN 16. This year the theme was “Improving Access to Care.” Proposals were reviewed for creativity, feasibility, expected outcomes, and exportability, and all applicants received constructive feedback on their proposals.

Congratulations to the 2007 Clinical Partnership Program principal investigators:

- **Kimberly Garner, MD, JD** (Little Rock). *Qualitative analysis of hospital executives, physician administrators, and hospital legal counsel’s perception of end-of-life care.* \$24,694.
- **Ellen Teng, PhD** (Houston). *Intensive two-day treatment for post-deployment military personnel with panic disorder.* \$29,998.
- **John Vincent Roca, PhD** (Little Rock). *Evaluation of Life Guard: A community-based workshop for returning veterans.* \$68,348.
- **Ming Tai-Seale, PhD** (Houston). *Limitation or liberation: Reconstructing physician’s experience with collaborative care models for treating depression in primary care.* \$30,000.
- **Frederick Sautter, PhD** (New Orleans). *Development of a program to increase treatment engagement in OEF/OIF veterans and their spouses.* \$29,434.
- **Michael R. Kauth, PhD** (Houston). *Facilitating the training of mental health providers to deliver cognitive processing therapy.* \$115,380.

The Clinical Partnership Program is led by JoAnn Kirchner, MD, Associate Director for Improving Clinical Care. For more information about the program, contact Penny White at WhitePennyL@uams.edu.

Two Clinical Educator Grants Awarded

The South Central MIRECC recently awarded funding for two Clinical Educator grants. These proposals were submitted off-cycle. Submissions for FY08 are currently under review. The Clinical Educator grants program provides funding for innovative educational tools or interventions designed to improve the quality of clinical care. Proposals are reviewed by members of the Education Core and content experts for creativity, feasibility, potential impact, and exportability.

Congratulations to the awardees:

- **Delilah Noronha, PsyD; John Tassej, PhD** (Oklahoma City). *Polytrauma community transition group program: A support and education program for returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with polytrauma who receive services at non-polytrauma VA sites.* \$3,700

- **Quang X. Nguyen, PhD, Rayan K. Al Jurdi, MD, Delores Hendrix-Giles, LCSW, Jane Kang, MD, Deborah Lundin, LCSW, Paul Sloan, PhD, Anna Teague, MD (Houston); Kathy Dohoney, PhD (Dallas); Lisa Martone, APN, CPRP (Little Rock); Scott Cardin, PhD (Biloxi); Wayne Gregory, PhD (Waco).** *Mental health and illness: An introduction to the recovery model (DVD)*. \$6,150.

For more information about the Clinical Educator program, contact Dr. Randy Burke, PhD, program manager, at Randy.burke@va.gov.



Meet the MIRECC Researchers: Dr. JoAnn Kirchner

Interview with

JoAnn E. Kirchner, MD

Associate Director for Clinical Care, South Central MIRECC

Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
College of Medicine

Editor: *What is your area of research?*

Dr. Kirchner: My primary area of research is in implementing evidenced-based practices into routine clinical settings. In particular, I am interested in providing mental health and substance use care in non-specialty settings. I have focused my research on identifying the need for and developing processes and tools that facilitate implementation efforts.

Editor: *What active studies do you have going?*

Dr. Kirchner: The project that I am most excited about and the one that takes up most of my time is the VISN 16 implementation of mental health collaborative care models in Primary Care. This is a particularly fulfilling project for me because it lets me work directly with clinical managers and providers in each of the ten VISN 16 VA medical centers, as well as allows me to incorporate findings from two of my earlier studies into a network-wide clinical initiative. In the COVES (Cost and Value of Evidenced-based Solutions) study, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 110 regional and medical center managers, as well as front line primary care and mental health clinicians, across three different VA networks and five different medical centers. We asked them about their experiences with a depression quality improvement effort (the TIDES study). One of the key findings from COVES was that informants from all

organizational levels believed that it was essential to involve local site participants in implementation efforts to assure buy-in and customization.

Although many recognized the importance of adhering to evidence and providing consistent care to veterans across VHA's many facilities, they also recognized that top-down mandated change is rarely successful. Frontline staff members need to be able to customize interventions to fit local needs and circumstances.

We also found that sites were not always adequately prepared prior to implementation. Specifically, it is not always clear to program participants what their roles or those of the implementation team members should be, the "nuts-and-bolts" of the program (e.g., what sort of work space, equipment, and supervision program staff require), and the process for implementing the program (e.g., required marketing). Therefore, preparatory work, prior to implementation is crucial for program success.

As part of the regional dissemination of TIDES and based on these findings, we have developed processes and tools to help frontline managers and quality improvement (QI) champions implement QI programs. During the COVES study, we also interviewed veterans and veterans' advocates. We are continuing this work through a

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South Central MIRECC supported study to identify mechanisms that will facilitate veteran consumers' involvement in QI activities.

Editor: *What are the implications or potential benefits of your research?*

Dr. Kirchner: The potential benefits of my work are in providing tools and processes that can be used by clinical managers and providers to facilitate the incorporation of quality improvement initiatives. I view my work as the practical side of implementation science: how you actually “get it done” in real time, in a real setting with the real resource limitations that exist in the clinical environment.

Editor: *How did you get started in this area of research?*

Dr. Kirchner: I actually went to medical school so that I could do research in child psychiatry. During my research fellowship I used a VA administrative database to describe the detection and management of alcohol use disorders in medically hospitalized veterans. I became fascinated with looking at ways to change the process of care that we deliver in clinical settings. I was encouraged by my mentoring team (G. Richard Smith, Richard Owen, and Brenda Booth) to apply for an entry level VA Career Development Award (CDA) and did so, focusing on the detection and management of alcohol disorders in the primary care setting. That led to an advanced CDA that incorporated issues of comorbid depression. With the emergence of VA QUERI (Quality Enhancement Research Initiative), I found a program that allowed me to be on the forefront of the development of implementation science. Once I finished my advanced CDA, I knew that the South Central MIRECC was a venue within which I could maximize my expertise and continue my research in “bridging the gap.”

Editor: *What person or experience had the most influence on your research career?*

Dr. Kirchner: My father, former Staff Sgt. Roy Griffin, has been the most influential person in my career. My Dad volunteered for WWII before Pearl Harbor and participated in nine campaigns in the European Theater as part of an engineering company that assisted in establishing invasion beach fronts. I feel that my connection to him has been the most important tie that ensures that I keep my research “real” and that I use the precious time I have doing research activities to help to make changes in the care that veterans receive.

Editor: *What advice would you give to junior investigators and to people who are new to research?*

Dr. Kirchner: There are several words of advice that I can share:

- Trust yourself and your passion. Be true to what led you to research.
- Life is long. You do NOT have to complete everything you want to do in one project.
- Find people to collaborate with that challenge you.
- Beware of “cookie-cutter” projects that may get you a promotion and tenure, but don’t advance science.
- Care for the people who care for you – make sure that your family and friends have key roles in your life.
- But, most of all ENJOY what you do! A life in research is a life that by nature is changing, stimulating and exciting. If you lose the joy and excitement of the work, then you risk your research becoming just a job.

I have to stop now, but I could go on and on and on and on.....

Editor: *How can people get in touch with you if they have questions about your work?*

Dr. Kirchner: My contact information is listed below:

Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System,
2200 Fort Root Drive, Bldg 58 (152/NLR), North
Little Rock, AR 72114. Telephone is (501) 257-
1719. Email is kirchnerjoanne@uams.edu



2007 Psychopharmacology Update

Baylor College of Medicine and the South Central MIRECC will hold the **2007 Psychopharmacology Update** on Friday and Saturday, November 2-3, 2007, in Houston, TX. The complete program is forthcoming. This meeting is approved for CME.

Space is limited! To register, go to www.baylorcme.org/1377/ or call Baylor College of Medicine, Office of Continuing Medical Education at 713-798-8237 for a registration form. **South Central MIRECC Affiliates can have their registration fees covered by the MIRECC. To inquire about registering as a MIRECC Affiliate, contact Ms. Brenda Schubert at Brenda.schubert@med.va.gov. The deadline for registration is October 15, 2007.**

The Houstonian Hotel is located at 111 North Post Oak Lane, Houston, TX 77024. The special group rate is \$185 per night. For reservations, call 800-231-2759.

For more information, email the Baylor Office of Continuing Medical Education at cme@bcm.tmc.edu.

VISN 16 Presenters at the National VA Mental Health Conference

The July 17-20 national VA conference, *Transforming Mental Health Care: Promoting Recovery and Integrated Care*, was a tremendous success with more than 740 attendees! This conference combined the MIRECC and Best Practices in Mental Health conferences. The meeting was a collaborative effort involving the 10 MIRECCs, Mental Health Liaisons, NEPEC, SMITREC, PERC, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder QUERIs, National Centers for PTSD, CESATE, Vet Centers, and VISN 2 Center for Integrated Care. Major themes of the conference focused on clinical, research, and educational initiatives related to VHA's Mental Health Strategic Plan, including suicide risk reduction, psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery, programs for OEF/OIF veterans, integrated care, disseminating research into practice, and promoting access to mental health care.

VISN 16 and MIRECC personnel were well represented at the conference. The following individuals made oral presentations at the conference. MIRECC affiliates are in bold.

- **Michael Kauth, PhD**, *Implementing Recovery in VISN 16*
- Jeffrey Smith, *Facilitation in Implementing Evidence-Based Practices for Schizophrenia*
- **JoAnn Kirchner, MD**, *Building Clinical Research Partnerships to Improve VA Mental Health Care*
- **John Fortney, PhD**, *NetDCMS: A Decision Support System to Facilitate the Implementation of Evidence-Based Depression Care Management*
- **Michael Kauth, PhD**, *Implementing Successful Large Scale Clinical Education Programs*

The following individuals had poster presentations at the conference. MIRECC affiliates are in bold.

- **Andra Teten, PhD, Nancy Jo Dunn, PhD, Su Bailey, PhD & Thomas Kent MD**. *Emotional Characteristics Associated with Impulsive Aggression*. Houston.
- **Mark E. Kunik, MD, MPH; JoAnn Kirchner, MD**. *TRIPS: A Research Training Program for Psychiatric Residents*. Houston.
- **Amy K. Cuéllar, Ph.D.** *Effects of Daily Stress on Mood in OEF/OIF Veterans*. Houston.
- **Lisa Miller, MD**. *Characterization of Aggression in Vietnam-Era Veterans with Military-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*. Houston.

- **Amy K. Cuéllar, Ph.D**, Laura H. Tolpin, PhD, **Su Bailey, PhD**, Thomas R. Anderson, PhD, Ashley E. Campbell, PhD, Stacey H. Lanier, PhD, & **Nancy Jo Dunn, PhD**. *Effects of Daily Stress on Mood in OEF/OIF Veterans*. Houston
- **Michelle Sherman, PhD, Ellen Fischer, PhD**, Allen Doerman, PhD, Ursula Bowling, PhD, Lisa Dixon, MD, & W. McFarlane, PhD. *Improving Access to and Engagement in Family Programs: The REACH Demonstration Project*. Oklahoma City.
- Paul Sloan, PhD. “Open the Doors” – *An Initiative to Implement an Enhanced Patient-Centered Culture on the Mental Health Inpatient Units*. Houston.



Research Rounds on OEF/OIF Database

The South Central MIRECC **Research Rounds** features **David P. Graham, MD, MS**, on “*A Retrospective Database Review of OEF/OIF Veterans with and without TBI*,” **Monday, September 10 at 2:00 PM CT**. Dr. Graham is a research scientist at the Houston Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies (HCQCUS) at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston and Assistant Professor, Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Graham is also a former MIRECC research fellow.

The purpose of the Research Rounds is to inform MIRECC investigators about each others’ research interests and expertise and solicit feedback about work in progress. This series employs a web-based conferencing technology that you can access from your desktop PC. Please contact Dr. Thomas Teasdale (Thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu) for information about how to access the system.



Web-based Presentation on Substance Use Continuity of Care

The MIRECC *Bringing Science to Practice* web-based conference series presents **Steven J. Lash, Ph.D.**, on “*Improving Substance Use Disorder Continuity of Care*,” **September 20, 2007 at noon CT**. Dr. Lash is a Professor of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia and a clinical psychologist in the substance abuse treatment program at the Salem VA Medical Center in Salem, Virginia. He earned his PhD at Virginia Tech. He has worked in the area of substance abuse treatment for 15 years and is currently working on a multi-site clinical trial of his Contracting, Prompting and Reinforcing aftercare adherence intervention with Dr. Jefferson Parker at the G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery VA Medical Center, Jackson, MS.

The PowerPoint slides for Dr. Lash’s presentation can be downloaded from a VA-networked computer at <http://vaww.visn16.med.va.gov/mirecc.htm> beginning September 19. The live audioconference can be accessed September 20 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.

For additional information about this series, contact Randy.burke@med.va.gov



Library Tip: MyHealthVet – Gateway to Veteran Health Benefits and Services



Sara I. Blackwell, MSLIS
Chief, Library Service, Oklahoma City VA Medical Center

MyHealthVet (MHV) provides access to: reliable health, drug, and lab information; links to other Federal and Veterans Administration benefits and services; an opportunity to build a personal health journal; and the access to refilling VA prescriptions online. Much of the information on this website is available for anyone to search. However, veterans, veteran caregivers, and VA employees must register on MHV in order to build a personal health journal. Building a personal health journal means that one may keep track of blood sugar values, blood pressure, weight, food intake, activities (to support the MOVE initiative), over-the-counter medications, military history, family medical history, etc., and then bring these printouts of compiled lists and charts to his/her next appointment. Veterans who are patients may become In-Person Authenticated in order to have an electronic link to their medical records. Right now the only available electronic link is to the names and numbers of their VA prescriptions which may be displayed in order to request refills online. Access to electronic records in the future will include access to upcoming VA appointments, co-pay balances, some laboratory results, plus other key portions of their VA medical records.

View a PowerPoint presentation on MHV at: <http://10.132.30.14\vha16\Tips\MyHeltheVet.pps>

September Conference Calls 1-800-767-1750

- 10—Research Rounds, 2:00 PM CT, contact Thomas-teasdale@ouhsc.edu for access
- 11—Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT – *cancelled*
- 13—PSR Group Call, noon PM CT, access code 85388#
- 17—Education Core, 2:00 PM CT, access code 16821# -- *rescheduled from September 3*
- 19—Program Assistants, 2:00 PM CT, access code 43593#
- 25—Leadership Council, 3:30 PM CT, access code 19356#
- 27—National MIRECC Recovery Interest Group, noon CT, access code 22233#

The next issue of the *South Central MIRECC Communiqué* will be published October 1, 2007. Deadline for submission of items to the October newsletter is September 25. 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.

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

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

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