**2016 Annual Review Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council**

October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

**Date Council Began**: November 29, 2012

**Clinic Information:**

The Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council (Council) is located at 4812 Asheville Highway, Knoxville Tennessee in a region metropolitan area of approximately 1,250,000.

## The William C. Tallent VA Outpatient Clinic (KOPC) serves Knoxville Tennessee and 8 surrounding counties, a very large outpatient clinic in a region with a large veteran population of 87,213.  The Council’s service area includes 18 counties with a veteran population of 250,000. Counties include: Anderson, Blount, Bradley, Cocke, Grainger, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Meigs, Monroe, Putnam, Roane, Rutherford, Sevier, Union and Williamson. The parent medical facility is Mountain Home VA Healthcare System, Mountain Home TN, about 110 miles away. Many of the counties listed are served by the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System - Alvin C. York (Murfreesboro) Campus.

**Council Mission Statement**:

The mission of the Council is to be a bridge between veterans receiving mental health services and their families, the VA Mental Health professionals and the community support or Veterans service organizations. This bridge allows information and services to flow both ways to develop methods of measuring Veteran's satisfaction and advocate needed changes. Most importantly, to improve the communication and understanding between Veterans and the MH staff in reducing the stigma associated with seeking and using mental health services.

**Fiscal Year 2016 Activities and Accomplishments:**

**Accomplished 6 of the 6 KRVHMC 2016 Goals.**

1. Increase the number of Veteran Friendly Congregations/Ministries/Organizations
	1. Four new Veteran Friendly Congregations
		1. Faith Lutheran Church
		2. Springbrook Vineyard
		3. New Hope of Cumberland Presbyterian Church
		4. Faith Encounter Church.
	2. Two new Veteran Friendly Organizations
		1. Holbrook Peterson Smith PLLC
		2. Covenant Homecare/Hospice
	3. **Goal complete**
2. Expand PAIR training program to include faith based organizations, veteran service organization, and other veteran organization
	1. Craft United Methodist Church; first PAIR Plus QPR
	2. Knoxville Police Department Crisis negotiators
	3. Faith Lutheran Church
	4. Monroe/Loudon County 911 Dispatchers and emergency management personnel
	5. Central High School Navy JROTC cadets in Knoxville TN; first JROTC program
	6. Monroe County Tennessee D.A.V. Chapter 93
	7. City of Loudon Fire and Police Department
	8. V13ION in Sale Creek, Tennessee; first motor cycle and tattoo community program
	9. Tennessee Order of the Eastern Star 383 Vonore Chapterin Madisonville, Tennessee
	10. American Legion Post 256
	11. **Goal complete**
3. Improve veteran rural outreach with the support and collaboration with VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC
	1. Open first Vet to Vet Tennessee (V2VT) rural outpost Monroe County
	2. Open rural outpost in Loudon County
	3. Open 2nd Knox County rural outpost at Concord United Methodist Church
	4. Initiated a justice involved veterans’ rural mental healthcare partnership with the new Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center.
	5. Initiated a veterans’ homeless partnership with Tennessee Valley Coalition for the Homeless
	6. **Goal complete**
4. Develop a new veterans suicide awareness and prevention program to help stop *“the toughest war the military has ever faced: veteran suicide.”* Cannot wait for the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act to be funded
	1. Developed and implemented the first Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Veteran/Military/First Responder suicide prevention program in Tennessee.
	2. V2VT’s QPR program is referred and support by the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN).
	3. **Goal complete**
5. Expand Vet to Vet TN outreach programs to colleges and universities. Tentative educational partners: Maryville College, Pellissippi State Community College and the University of Tennessee.
	1. Partnered with University of Tennessee VOL Fighters (VOLF) a student veteran advocacy group.
		1. Elected VOLF Vice President, Tyler W. Warner USMC veteran to the Council
	2. Partnered with Pellissippi State Community College Cut From Kevlar
	3. Funded joint venture media program with VOLF and CFK, “Project 22” movie shown at the West Town Theater.
	4. **Goal complete**
6. Develop a new homeless liaison mentoring program using the Vet to Vet Tennessee outreach & training model with the support and collaboration of Tennessee Valley Continuum of Care (CoC). COC is 12 counties (Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Loudon, Monroe, Sevier and Union) working together advocating for the homeless.
	1. Tennessee Valley Coalition for the Homeless (TVCH), Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Council have partnered to train homeless counselors to learn more about veterans needs and train homeless veteran mentors.
	2. Board of Directors of approved partnership and plan as a CoC’s 2016 goal.
	3. **Goal complete**

**Other 2015 Achievements**

1. Conducted **215** Legacy Peer Support Group meetings in fiscal year 2016.
2. Peer Facilitators and Veteran Court mentors provided **12,484** VA volunteer hours in fiscal year 2016. Increase in volunteer hours as result of the following:
	1. New outpost
	2. QPR program
	3. Vietnam War Commemoration partnership
	4. Increased number of justice involved veterans
	5. Increased number of Veterans Court mentors
	6. Increased number of Veteran Peer Facilitators
3. PTSD Awareness, Intervention, Resolution (PAIR) summary. Total end of FY 2016 – **65**, total to date **1,033**. 66 % Males, 34% Females,25% Veterans, 17% Combat Veterans, 17% aware of Drug Courts, 26% aware of Veterans Courts.
	1. Number of attendees increased; females, number of veterans and combat veterans
	2. Number of attendees how had knowledge of Drug Court increased by 8% and by 15% of Veterans Courts.
	3. Council’s PAIR program received copyright approval by the United States Register of Copyrights and Director in October 2015. The effective date was September 13, 2015; registration number TXu 1-984-072.
4. Military Chaplains Association (MCA)
	1. December 29, 2015 CareForTheTroops went out of business after 8 years and transferred the management of the Veteran Friendly Congregation Initiative to MCA
	2. April 18, 2016 partnered with MCA to develop a national Veterans Friendly Congregation (VFC)
	3. MCA & the Council developed a national survey
5. New partnership with Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center
	1. January 23, 2016, V2VT President and Helen Ross McNabb Military Service Center (HMMS) Therapist meet at the Tennessee Veterans Business Association Annual Expo.
	2. February 25, 2016 First justice involved veteran from the Loudon County Veterans Court.
	3. March 21, 2016 First collaborative meeting with VA Clinical Therapist, HMMS Director and Clinical Therapist to review processes between the three organizations and Veterans Treatment Courts.
	4. **22** veterans referred and accepted by HMMS from March 2016 to September 2016
6. Recommenced VA partnership with VISN 9, Mountain Home VAMC and KOPC
	1. October 2016, Council discontinues meeting with VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC council liaisons
	2. December 2016, VISN 9 Chief Medical Officer and Council Chairman agree to a new communication path forward
	3. New partnership collaboration will include one of the following chooses:
		1. Partners agree to work together on a new program
		2. VA cannot work with Council because of VA protocol
		3. VA does not want to proceed with a new Council project
	4. Because of the agreement, the Council agreed to meet with the VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC leadership effective January 14, 2016.
	5. New Acting Mountain Home Facility Director met with Council on March 10, 2016. Council members agreed this meeting was the best council meeting ever; encouraged by new leadership.
	6. Collaborating with the VA Liaisons this year has been the most cordial, productive and resolution driven since the inception of the Council; Council is grateful for the new leaderdhip
	7. VA Knoxville Outpatient Clinic’s Medical Director and Mental Health Director welcomed to the council as KOPC’s liaisons.
7. Website, [www.tnvhc.org](http://www.tnvhc.org) has become one of the most important outreach media outreach program the Council is implementing. Updated announcements, more video and more buttons to search through site. Much more comments and emails from the website.
	1. Front page buttons now include announcements, training, Vietnam War Commemoration, Korean Ambassador for Peace.
8. Vet to Vet Tennessee starts IRS 501 c 3 process April 18, 2016 with pro bono support from attorney Eddy Smith, US Army from the law firm of Holbrook Peterson Smith PLLC, Knoxville, TN.
	1. HPS filed the Streamlined Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501 c 3 of the Internal Revenue Service (form 1023-EZ) on September 27, 2016.
	2. Expected to be approved in two (2) with an effective date of April 18, 2016.
9. VAOIG Report No. 14-04435-265 “*Mental Health Service Concerns at the Knoxville VA Outpatient Clinic James H. Quillen VA Medical Center Mountain Home, Tennessee*” released on June 7, 2016.
	1. June council meeting reviewed the report with the VA liaisons including the Acting Facility Director
	2. Council concurred with much of the report
	3. Council concurred VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC have completed the report recommendations
	4. Excellent path forward; Council submitted formal response to VA Secretary, US Congressional member, State and Local Congressional members and VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC on July14, 2016
10. Three (3) council members resigned and five (5) new council members elected.
	1. New members:
		1. Tyler Warner. USMC, VOLF Vice President
		2. Mayor Tim Burchett, Knox County Mayor
		3. Pastor Larry Trotter, Concord United Methodist Church Senior Pastor
		4. Karl Griffith, (Army CW-3 retired) Afghanistan veteran
		5. Cecil Clark, Vietnam veteran and former Pastor
11. Developed and implemented a Veterans/Military/First Responders Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention program with Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network’s Regional Coordinator Amy Dolinky.
	1. First class on October 24, 2015
	2. Total end of FY 2016 – **227**
	3. 65 % Males, 35% Females, 23% Veterans, Average age 49. 90% surveys returned with an average grade of 9.3 out of 10
	4. Statistics from PAIR is consisted with the numbers from QPR program
	5. Council and V2VT focusing on QPR.
	6. New moto: “Do Something”
	7. Individual training programs designed for specific population
		1. Veteran Friendly Church
		2. Veteran Service organizations
		3. Peer Support recovery group
		4. First ROTC cadets
		5. Motor cycle and tattoo community
		6. Crisis negotiators
12. NAMI Homefront veterans’ family program
	1. Four (4) Council member certified Homefront trainers.
13. V2VT is approved on July 1, 2016 as a Department of Defense Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) partner.
	1. First V2VT VWC presentation on July 8, 2016 at the Tsali Manor Senior Center, Cherokee, North Carolina.
	2. Completed **17** events; **3,372** attended, **794** Vietnam War Veterans were recognized and presented with the VWC lapel pin and presidential proclamation.
	3. Events occurred in:
		1. Cherokee North Carolina
		2. Knoxville, Tennessee
		3. Madisonville, Tennessee
		4. Bradley & McMinn County, Tennessee
		5. Maryville, Tennessee
		6. Chattanooga, Tennessee
		7. Athens, Tennessee
		8. Tellico, Tennessee
		9. Dayton, Tennessee
		10. Sweetwater, Tennessee
		11. Alcoa, Tennessee
		12. Sevierville, Tennessee
		13. Smyna, Tennessee
14. Veterans Courts
	1. Justice For Vets National Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Boot Camp. September 28-29, 2016.
		1. Council Chairman and Co-Chairman attend
		2. New training director
		3. Modified original December 2013 inaugural boot camp.
	2. 9th & 10th Judicial District Veterans Courts
		1. 9th Judicial
			1. First LCVC Graduate
			2. June 29, 2016 First 2 JIVs graduate from the Loudon County Veterans Court. Loudon County Veteran Court Judge Hank Sledge, 9th Judicial District Attorney General Russell Johnson Mountain Home VAMC Director, HMMS Director and 2 Clinical Therapist, V2VT Officers and Veterans Court mentors attended the ceremony.
			3. Seven (7) JIVs graduated from the Loudon County Veterans Court and one (1) graduate from Roane County and one (1) graduate from McMinn County.
			4. Mountain Home VAMC Acting Director read a letter from VISN 9 Chief Medical Director, Acting Mental Health Director which was presented on behalf of VISN 9 Network Director
		2. 10th Judicial District
			1. January 27th the first JIV graduated from the Monroe County Veterans Court. This was the 1st JIV who was charged with a felony. This was made possible because of the cooperation of the 10th Judicial District Criminal Judge and Assistant District Attorney General, Monroe County Veterans Court Judge, VA Therapist from KOPC and Vet to Vet Tennessee mentor coordinators and mentors.
			2. June 14, 2016 the Monroe County Veterans Court (MCVC) had two more justice involved veterans graduate.  The two graduates successfully complete the KOPC’s PTSD workgroup conducted by Dr. Donald Richardson.  The event was made special with the attendance of Monroe County VC Judge Dwaine Thomas, 10th Judicial District Assistant District Attorney Tayloe, Monroe County Mayor Tim Yates and Madisonville City Mayor Glenn Moser.  MCVC also received a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs Mid South Health Care Network (VISN 9) Chief Medical Officer Dr. Cecilia Farina-Morin and Interim Chief Mental Health Officer Rob Campbell.
			3. Three (3) JIVs graduated.

**Concerns brought up during the year that impact Veterans and the delivery of mental health services**:

1. VA veteran services in the rural communities; i.e. homelessness, incarceration, suicide
	1. Only two (2) Suicide Prevention Coordinator in Eastern Tennessee.
2. Veterans reporting that VA primary care doctors do not spend much time interacting with patient during scheduled appointments.
	1. Doctor spends more time inputting than talking directly to the veteran; only minutes speaking with veteran.

1. OEF/OIF veterans reporting VA OEI/OIF case management not known.
2. Many OEI/OIF veterans complaining they are over medicated
3. Veterans requesting a more frequent follow up when prescribed a new medication.
4. Pain medication –
	1. closer medication monitoring
	2. earlier transition notification
5. Information sharing from DoD to VA about veterans’ pain management protocol.

**VA Staff Presentations during the Fiscal Year 2016:**

1. KOPC Vietnam War Commemoration “Welcome Home.” May 26,2016
2. KOPV Chief Medical Officer provides Council with clinic updates. September 8, 2016
3. Mountain Home VAMC Town Hall Meeting at KOPC. September 20, 2016 KOPC
	1. VBA Director, Tri-West Executives, Mountain Home VAMC Facility Director and Chief of Staff presenters

**Veterans Mental Health Council Information Sharing to VISN 9 and Mountain Home Medical Center:**

Council shares information during Council meetings, Committee & Outreach briefings with the VISN 9 Network Director, Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Mental Health Program Manager, and Mountain Home VAMC Liaisons.

**Goals for Fiscal Year 2017:**

1. **Partner with at least two (2) non-VA homecare and hospice facilities in the “We Honor Vets” program**
2. **Co-develop a National Veterans/Military Friendly Congregation initiative with MCA**
3. **Expand Veterans Courts (VC) in the 10th Judicial District, Tennessee**
	1. **Currently one VC in Monroe County who accepts all JIVs in the 10th Judicial District**
	2. **Expand to one of the three other Counties; Bradley, McMinn and Polk.**
4. **Expand V2VT VWC program**
	1. **Approve Veteran Friendly Congregations, Veterans Service Offices, Veteran Organizations and “We Honor Vets” facilities as V2VT VWC presenters.**
5. **Promote and help expand VA telehealth programs in rural communities**
6. **Partner with a “*Celebrate Recovery*” (CR) Church and expand CR outreach to rural southeastern Tennessee.**

Respectfully Submitted:



Edouard “Ed” Junod

Chairman, Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council

Mountain Home MH Liaisons

1. The council gives permission for a copy of this report to be shared on the VA VMHC SharePoint.

\_\_X\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

1. The council gives permission for a copy of this report to be shared with other VMHCs.

\_\_X\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_\_no