

KNOXVILLE REGIONAL VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL



TNVHC
.ORG

4812 Asheville Hwy Knoxville, TN 37914
865-336-2624

2015 Annual Review Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015

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 15 counties with a veteran population of 150,000. The parent medical facility is Mountain Home VA Healthcare System, Mountain Home TN, about 110 miles away.

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 2015 Activities and Accomplishments:

Achieved 4 of the 5 KRVHMC 201 Goals.

1. Council's VTC Committee to help start ten (10) Veterans Treatment Courts/Track.

- a. Helped 20 counties with VTC services.
 - i. Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Fentress, Grainger, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Lawrence, Loudon, McMinn, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Polk, Roane, Sevier and Union County,
 - ii. JIVs from 13 different counties.
 - iii. **Goal completed.**

2. Council's VTC Committee to start a VTC outreach intern program with the University of Tennessee and the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court. Course title - "East Tennessee Center for Transformative Justice"

- a. Syllabus SOCI 492—Internship Experience in Sociology: Sociology, Social Justice, and Experiential Learning, Instructor: Zachary McKenney, Office: 242 Greve Hall, Class Meeting: W 5:05-7:45pm, Location Haslam Music Center -010
- b. University of Tennessee course began on August 20, 2015
- c. **Goal completed.**

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3. Council's VFC Committee to register ten (10) Veteran Friendly Congregations/Ministries

- a. Enrolled three (3) new VFCs
 - i. Craft Memorial UMC, Columbia, TN
 - ii. Faith Lutheran Church, Hixson, TN
 - iii. Springbrook Vineyard, Alcoa, TN
- b. Enrolled one (1) new Veteran Friendly Organization (VFO)
 - i. Elmcroft of West Knoxville, Knoxville, TN
 - ii. **Did not meet goal.**

4. Council's Veteran PTSD Law Enforcement subcommittee to train 530 law enforcement officers

- a. Trained **927** law enforcement, first responders, correction officers, and judicial members.
- b. ***Goal completed.***

5. Council to begin a Women's Legacy Peer Support Group Committee

- a. Women's LPG formed in April 2015 after the third attempt.
- b. Committee determined that having regularly scheduled meetings for women were not practical.
- c. Veteran spouses and women veterans serve as female mentors and began to support families of the justice involved veterans and others.
- d. Knoxville Outpatient Clinic began first evidence based women's PTSD workgroup.
- e. Justice involved veterans are encouraged to have family support. Our LPG female mentors have been available to families.
- f. ***Goal completed***

6. Council meetings to include more Department of Veterans Affairs guest speakers

- a. VA Central Office: Sean Clark, National VJO Coordinator attended two (2) meetings
- b. VISN 9: Robert "Rob Campbell, Deputy Mental Health Program Manager and David Hansard, Network Homeless Coordinator.
- c. Mountain Home VA Healthcare System: Dr. David Hecht, Chief of Staff, Joan LePage, Homeless Programs Coordinator, Brenda Hawthorne, Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist
- d. Knoxville Outpatient Clinic: Torrie Dorschug, Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist
- e. Tennessee Valley VA Healthcare System: Amy Montgomery, VJO/Healthcare for Re-Entry Veterans and Rudolph Ragnauth, Peer Support Specialist.
- f. ***Goal completed.***

Other 2015 Achievements

- 1. Council collaborates with Knox County Sheriff Office Regional Training Academy to create a POST certified in service PTSD training October 3, 2014

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2. Created first Recovery and Resiliency Support Group to support LPG Peer Facilitators and VTC Mentors. October 6, 2014
3. First Mental Health First Aid training taught by Council officer who is a MH 1st Aid instructor. October 21, 2014
4. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General schedules in person interviews with Council Officers and OIG Team for Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.; all council members to agree to testify to the OIG team.
5. Completed Veteran PTSD Law Enforcement pilot training program November 14, 2014
 - 5.1. Trained 255 Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) in Union and Blount Counties
6. UTK approves Council's request VTC to begin VTC Outreach/Internship course or fall semester with 15 interns; course title: *East Tennessee Center for Transformative Justice*". November 21, 2014
7. Council presented "All we can do is help" VTC introduction to the 10th Annual Tennessee Association of Drug Court Professionals, Murfreesboro, TN December 2014
8. Council presented "All we can do is help" VTC introduction to the 10th Judicial District, December 2014
9. First JIV from Grainger County, 4th Judicial District to KCVTC. December 2014
10. Council website redesigned.
 - 10.1. VA page modified to reflect an emerging partnership
 - 10.2. Personal comments from VA liaisons included
11. First JIV from Fentress County, 8th Judicial District January 5, 2015
12. January 8, 2015 Council meeting
 - 12.1. The current officers: Ed Junod, Fred Owens, Frank Vollmer, Ron Morton, Henry Cleveland, Jesse Rivera, Howard Jenkins, Randy Baxter, Robert Cooter and Charles Dabbs agreed to stand for re-election for one year
 - 12.2. Three new members were nominated to Council seats, presented themselves and gave a short bio. Unanimously elected are: Robert Hatley, Dennis Lovin and Randy Scott.
13. First JIV from Blount County, 5th Judicial District to KCVTC January 12, 2015
14. Council created first Justice Involved Veterans (JIV) Legacy Peer Support Group (LPG) January 21, 2015
15. Council met with the 13th Judicial District VTC team; Judge, District Attorney General and Court Director to help a JIV in Smith County. January 26, 2015
16. Completed new PTSD Awareness, Intervention & Resolution (PAIR) LEO Training program. January 22, 2015
 - 16.1. Approved by Knox County Sheriff Office Regional Academy instructors

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- 16.2. Sent to Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission for certification
17. KOPC Therapist conduct first Sands/JIV evidence-based PTSD pilot 16 week workgroup.
February 11, 2015
 - 17.1. Findings
 - 17.2. Not beneficial to VTC phase I JIVs
 - 17.3. Legacy Peer Support Group recommended in lieu of workgroup during initial stabilization phase. PTSD evidence-based workgroup recommended for VTC Phase 2 JIVs.
18. February 12, 2015 council meeting. The following nominees were elected by unanimous vote:
Don Davis, Kristy Mashburn, Johnny Shults, Leticia Wallace
19. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, or SAV Act, is named after Clay Hunt, a decorated Marine veteran who, upon his return from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, struggled with post-traumatic stress. Feb 12, 2015
 - 19.1. President Obama signed the SAV Act to reduce 22 veteran & 1 active duty suicide per day
 - 19.2. First bill to focus on the increasing numbers of daily suicides; however, the bill **was not** funded
20. Tennessee Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission certifies Council's PAIR training and trainers February 19, 2015
21. Council attended hearing for JIV in Smith County, 15th Judicial District. Smith County Judge, ADA, PD and PO excited about the VTC program but did not know anything about VTC. Want to learn more. JIV Hearing postponed. February 23, 2015
22. Council began 5th LPG recovery program in March 9, 2015
23. First JIV from Sevier County, 4th Judicial District, transferred Knox County VTC. March 9, 2015
24. Council begins first PAIR in service training to the Knox County Sheriff Office (KCSO) in March 6, 2015 through April 24, 2015
 - 24.1. 255 KCSO LEOs trained in 2015
25. Council partnered with CoParenting Solutions, Inc. CoParenting Solutions offers pro bono and sliding fee legal assistance and mediation to clients who need help with family court and unable to hire an attorney. March 10, 2015
26. Council's officer, certified as a Black Belt in Lean Six Sigma leads VA, Knox County VTC and Council in a Veteran Treatment Court Roundtable discussion. March 11, 2015.
27. March council meeting cancelled due to a 4-hour Council Six Sigma Roundtable meeting with VA on 3/11/15.
28. April council meeting was cancelled due to the East Tennessee Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Orientation held on 4/9 & 10/15 in Knoxville.

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29. Veterans Treatment Court Mentor Orientation April 9-10, 2015
 - 29.1. 33 new VTC mentors
 - 29.2. 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 21st Judicial District represented: 22 counties
 - 29.3. Blount County and Knox County mayors, three (3) judges
 - 29.4. VA support from Central Office, VISN 9, Mountain Home Healthcare System, Knoxville Vet Center and three (3) Veteran Justice Outreach Specialist
 - 29.5. Special guest speakers; Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court
 - 29.6. Special guest; Hon. John Ragan and Tennessee Veterans Affairs Assistant Commissioner Don Smith.
 - 29.7. Printed materials provided by the Mountain Home VAMC
 - 29.8. Knox County Veterans Treatment Court Justice Involved Veterans participate
 - 29.9. All other expenses including food, transportation, lodging, speaker fees etc. paid by Vet to Vet Tennessee through the generosity of numerous private and veteran service organizations financial support.
 - 29.10. No support from the Tennessee Department of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
30. First JIV from Monroe County, 10th Judicial District, transferred Knox County VTC. April 14, 2015
31. Council opposes TN Senate Bill SB0711 "Criminal Justice Veterans Compensation Act of 2015" or the "CJVC Act." - Amends TCA Title 16; Title 39, Chapter 17 and Title 55, Chapter 10, Part 4. Council requested Tennessee Rep. Hon. John Ragan to vote no or amend the bill. April 15, 2015
32. First Veteran Friendly Congregation enrolled from Vet to Vet Middle TN. Craft Memorial UMC, Columbia, TN which bring the number of VFCs to 15. April 14, 2015.
33. First Council teleconference with Mountain Home VA Healthcare System Chief of Staff. April 17, 2015.
 - 33.1. Introduction to Dr. David Hecht was very enlightening to the council members on matters other than mental health.
 - 33.2. Council members optimistic about future teleconferences and sharing information.
34. May council meeting was cancelled due to issues that developed during a pre-meeting teleconference on May 5, 2015. These issues required more review and research.
35. First JIV from Hamilton County, 11th Judicial District, transferred to Knox County VTC, May 19, 2015
36. PAIR training in Monroe County, 10th Judicial District including a Judge and three Police Chief. Program extended from 2 hours to 2 ½ hours at the request of the Judge. May 28, 2015
37. VA Secretary announced the formation of an office called "Community Employment Coordinator" whose job is to assist veterans find employment. Dr. Vermette reported that Mountain Home has already created this position. June 10, 2015
38. Vet to Vet Middle Tennessee requested Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee to train members of the 21st Judicial District VTC team including mentors. June 18, 2015

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- 38.1. Veterans Treatment Court Introduction
- 38.2. PTSD Awareness, Intervention, Resolution training
39. Council incorporated “*Battlemind Training*” into the Legacy Peer Support Groups. Battlemind was developed by Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command 1. June 22, 2015.
40. First JIV from Jefferson County, 4th Judicial District, deferred to Mountain Home Healthcare system for treatment. June 29, 2015
41. Full Battlemind Training program and material posted on the Council’s website: www.tnvhc.org June 30, 2015
42. First JIV from Lawrence County, 22th Judicial District, transferred to Knox County VTC. July 1, 2015
43. "Criminal Justice Veterans Compensation Act of 2015" or the "CJVC Act." - Amends TCA Title 16; Title 39, Chapter 17 and Title 55, Chapter 10, Part 4 approved with Rep. Ragan’s amendment on May 26, 2015. Bill effective July 1, 2015.
44. Council officers voted to cancel the July 7th and August 4th Council/Liaison teleconferences and the July 9th and August 13th Council meetings. All parties were notified on July 6, 2015
 - 44.1. We will resume our Council meetings on September 10th.
 - 44.2. Too many of our members are on vacation and quite a few new projects beginning.
45. Council was requested to partner with the Tennessee Valley Coalition for the Homelessness on a Veteran homeless program in Monroe County which has a potential of 30 beds available to Veterans in the near future. The focus is to provide a variety of short term to medium term housing while each veteran rests, recovers, and focuses on their future. The program will build confidence and independence and inspires veterans to pursue their personal goals and aspirations as it relates to work, school, family, health, and recreation. July 7, 2015
46. Chairman submits resignation to council. July 8, 2015
47. UTK course list new Sociology 492 (*East Tennessee Center for Transformative Justice*) for 2015 fall semester. Sent a memorandum of understanding to the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court. Council member and Peer Facilitator is the lead student in this new program and has participated since inception. 15 students have registered for the 15 student class July 13, 2015
 - 47.1. UTK repeatedly submitted a memorandum of understanding to the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court (KCVTC) Director to allow UTK and KCVTC to use interns to support the court.
 - 47.2. KCVTC did **not** answer any telephones call or emails, therefore, the VTC portion of the program was NOT implemented.
 - 47.3. UTK, the Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee will incorporate PAIR training program in the second semester.
48. First JIV from Union County, 8th Judicial District, transferred to Knox County VTC. July 16, 2015

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49. Council voted unanimously approved a newly created Council VA report card and report card grade explanation and approved the submission to VISN 9 leadership. July 22, 2015
 - 49.1. Dramatic increase from a “F” grade in 2014 to a “B” grade in 2015
 - 49.2. Communication, trust and cooperation were instrumental.
50. Council approves “a vote of confidence motion”. July 22, 2015
 - 50.1.1. Request Chairman to withdraw 7-8-15 resignation; vote 9 yeas, 0 nays, 1 did not vote. Chairman withdrawals resignation request.
51. Council Secretary resigns effective July 22, 2015. Council accepts resignation on July 26, 2015
52. Against the Grain founder founders, Rob and Meredith Kendall, has develop the nationally recognized 180 program. The curriculum was developed to answer the questions asked by the women and help them gain the skills they needed to overcome their struggles and become self-sufficient.
 - 52.1. Council member certified as a 180 program trainer on July 30, 2015
 - 52.2. LPG, Vet to Vet TN, and Council members participated.
 - 52.3. Council and Against the Grain formed a partnership and are listed as a honored supporter of the council.
 - 52.4. Sponsored by Metro Drug Commission
53. 2nd PAIR training July 30, 2015 in Monroe County, 10th Judicial District.
 - 53.1. Program extended from two (2) hours to three (2) hours at the request of the Monroe County Sheriff.
 - 53.2. Sheriff Tommy Jones includes PAIR training to Monroe County in service training requirement.
54. Council unanimously approves new council secretary; Adam Deffinger. August 13, 2015
55. Council approves new Government Steering Committee. Freddie and Dennis are Co-chairs. Henry Cleveland and Ron Morton committee member 8-13-15
56. September council meeting with VISN 9 with Network Director John Patrick, CMO Dr. Cecilia Farina-Morin, Deputy Mental Health Program Manager Rob Campbell and Staff Assistant to the Network Director Joe Shoeck. September 10, 2015
57. Council unanimously approves to terminate the Veterans Treatment Court Committee and to withdrawal from Veterans Treatment Courts activities due to SB07011. September 10, 2015
 - 57.1. However, due to the committees and mentors’ VTC training and expertise, Council agreed to support any justice involved veterans, or their families or any local governmental agencies who seeks support from the Council or Vet to Vet TN.
58. Council unanimously approved to replace the VTC Committee’s PTSD Law Enforcement Subcommittee with a new PTSD Awareness, Intervention, Resolution training (PAIR) Committee. 10, 2015 September
59. PAIR committee adds two (2) new topics in training program:
 - 59.1. Faith as a fundamental component of recovery.

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- 59.1.1.1. Includes veteran friendly congregation/ministry initiative and moral injury; moral injury information from Army One Source webinars and Joseph Lynch's book "*How to start a Veteran Friendly Congregation.*"
 - 59.1.1.2. Faith in recovery information from the VA Chief of Chaplain services presentation.
 - 59.1.2. Added "*FUN*" to recovery. Veterans in recovery usually do not have any fun programs in their recovery; usually medication and individual and group therapy. Encouraging veterans to do something fun in their recovery substantially improves their quality of life and help the veteran to integrate with others.
 - 59.1.2.1. Project Healing Waters, Train a Dog, Save a Warrior (TADSAW), STAR, plus horse, music, painting therapy.
60. Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee to travel to Franklin TN to train members of the 21st Judicial District VTC team and Vet to Vet Middle TN including mentors. September 12, 2015
- 60.1. Nine (9) members of council participate in training
 - 60.2. All related travel expenses paid by Vet to Vet Tennessee.
61. Second in service PAIR training for the Monroe County Sheriff Department. September 18, 2015. Total 2015 attendees – **662**.
62. Council opposes CJVC Act because it is "*detrimental*" to the VTC program as described in the Tennessee Supreme Court Administrative of Courts (AOC) one-year study published July 2012.
- 62.1. The AOC report suggests in those states with legislation, decisions made for statewide oversight were based on financial and political reasons.
 - 62.2. Council disputes the fact that the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' has any real experience in managing and understanding military issues. Nor has the department demonstrated in any meaningful way, knowledge of VTCs. Veterans Treatment Courts cannot and should not be administered in the same way as drug courts or other problem-solving courts. Sole experience with substance use is insufficient in managing a VTC.
 - 62.3. Council' position paper distributed on September 22, 2015
63. Council unanimously elected Sheryn Davis (wife of Army Vietnam Nam Veteran) and George Howell as new council members. September 30, 2015
64. Council unanimously approve to cancel the Legacy Peer Support Group Wednesday meetings conducted at the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court KCVTC). September 30, 2015
- 64.1. KCVTC Office and staff environment was to stressful for our non-JIV recovery veterans, our peer facilitators and our VTC mentors.
 - 64.2. JIV attendees were more concerned about the uncertainty of the KCVTC procedures and had many inquiries.
 - 64.3. These inquiries were disruptive and better answered by the KCVTC staff.
65. Conducted **184** Legacy Peer Support Group meetings in fiscal year 2015.
66. Peer Facilitators provided **5,844** VA volunteer hours in fiscal year 2015. Volunteer hours are actually substantially higher since only 6 veteran volunteers are registered with the VA; does not include VTC mentor volunteer hours.

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67. PAIR summary. Total end of FY 2015 – **917**. 91 % Males, 9% Females, 18% Veterans, 9% Combat Veterans, 9% aware of Drug Courts, 11% aware of Veterans Treatment Courts.
- 67.1.1. Great outreach and educational results. Knowledge of Drug and Veterans Treatment began at 0% - 1%. Currently at 11% for VTCs.
68. Over 41,000 hits on our www.tnvhc.org website. Website expanded to include instant announcements and honored supports.
69. East Tennessee Military Affairs Council accepted Council and Vet to Vet Tennessee as members to their Council
- 69.1. Annual fee waived
- 69.2. Attended and presented to all ETMAC meetings which are scheduled on the first Thursday of every month.
70. Four (4) council members resigned and nine (9) new council members elected.

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

1. VHA overloaded with current veteran patient panel sizes
 - a. Too many veteran patients and not enough VHA staff
 - b. Uncertainty about dental and mental health procedures
 - c. Lack of out of network providers
 - d. Competition from private sector effecting VA hiring
2. Lack of veteran services in the rural communities; i.e. homelessness, incarceration, suicide
 - a. Potential VA/Council partnership project.
3. Not prepared for the known increase in veteran homelessness, suicide and mental health historical increases.
4. Council's June 12, 2014 VA OIG complaint still under investigation after 15 months. Council realizes the overwhelming amount of complaint submitted in 2014 to the OIG and are patiently waiting for the report which is suggested to be complete by end the fourth quarter of 2015.

VA Staff Presentations during the Fiscal Year 2015:

1. Mountain Home VAMC Homeless Programs Coordinator Joan LePage and Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Local Recovery Coordinator Jonathan Hartsell January 8, 2015

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

Council shares minutes from Council meetings, Committee & Outreach briefings with the VISN 9 Network Director, Acting Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Mental Health Program Manager, Staff Assistant to the Network Director and Mountain Home VAMC Liaisons

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Goals for Fiscal Year 2016:

1. Increase the number of Veteran Friendly Congregations/Ministries/Organizations
2. Expand PAIR training program to include faith based organizations, veteran service organization, and other veteran organization
3. Improve veteran rural outreach with the support and collaboration with VISN 9 and Mountain Home VAMC
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
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.
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.

Respectfully Submitted:

Edouard “Ed” Junod
Chair, 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.

yes no

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

yes no