

KNOXVILLE REGIONAL VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL



TNVHC
.ORG

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

2017 Annual Review Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017

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 17 counties with a veteran population of 250,000. Counties include: Anderson, Blount, Bradley, Campbell, Grainger, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Marshall, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Roane, Sevier and Washington. 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. Council specializes in Veteran Suicide prevention, Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations, Veterans Courts, Veteran Recovery, Veteran Homelessness and Expungement. The Council's implementing organization is Vet to Vet Tennessee (VTVT).

Fiscal Year 2017 Activities and Accomplishments:

Accomplished 6 of the 6 KRVHMC 2017 Goals.

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- 1. Partner with at least two (2) non-VA homecare and hospice facilities in the “We Honor Vets” program.**
 - Completed. Partnered and trained three (3) hospice care facilities; Covenant Home & Hospice Care, Smoky Mountain Home & Hospice Care (6 locations) and the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

- 2. Co-develop a National Veterans/Military Friendly Congregation (VMFC) initiative with MCA.**
 - Completed. October 5, 2017 MVA The Veteran/Military Friendly Congregation Ministry (VMFC) of the MCA continues to grow as an increasing number of congregations respond to the call to care for military members, veterans, and their families. First Regional Coach is the Rev. Dr. Orea Jones-Wells, a retired VA chaplain who remains active in rural North Carolina
 - MCA’s Executive Director Lyman Smith attended the Council’s March 24, 2017 Boot Camp and confirmed MCA has agreed to partner with VTVT’s VMFC program and expand it nationally using a new MCA VMFC program and website. VTVT agreed to support MCA’s VMFC website.

- 3. Expand Veterans Courts (VC) in the 10th Judicial District, Tennessee**
 - Completed. Monroe County General Sessions & Veteran Court Judge Dwaine Thomas has prepared a court order authorizing other Tennessee counties to allow eligible justice involved veterans (JIV) to transfer jurisdiction and supervision to his Veterans Court. Judge Thomas has accepted JIVs from Grainger, Loudon, McMinn, Roane and Washington counties,
 - First female justice involved veteran graduated in August 2017 from the Loudon County Veterans Court.

- 4. Expand VTVT Vietnam War Commemoration (VWC) program**
Approve Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations (VMFC), Veterans Service Offices, Veteran Organizations and “We Honor Veterans” facilities as VTVT VWC presenters.
 - Completed. Five (5) new VMFCs , three (3) new Veteran Service Offices, four (4) new Veteran organizations and three (3) new “We Honor Veterans” facilities.

- 5. Promote and help expand VA telehealth programs in rural communities.**
 - Completed. November 10, 2016 Dr. Heidi Vermette and Dr. Elizabeth Bishop provided the Council all of the current telehealth programs including mental health.

- 6. Partner with a “Celebrate Recovery” (CR) Church and expand CR outreach to rural southeastern Tennessee.**

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- Completed. Maryville Celebrate Recovery & Celebrate Recovery of North Knox enrolled as first CR Veteran/Military Friendly Ministries. VTVT supported two new rural Celebrate Recoveries: Celebrate Recovery Community in Sweetwater TN in June 2017 and Celebrate Recovery Englewood, TN in September 2017.

Other 2017 Achievements

- 1) Conducted 77 Legacy Peer Support Group meetings in fiscal year 2017.
- 2) Peer Facilitators and Veteran Court mentors provided **12,912** VA volunteer hours in fiscal year 2017. Increased number of volunteers from 5 to 24 in March 2017.
- 3) Evidenced based Veteran Specific Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) suicide prevention summary: FY 2017 – **102** QPR gatekeepers, total to date **391**. 66 % Males, 34% Females, 61% Veterans with an average grade of **9.44** out of 10.
 - All sessions are free. Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) and the VA provide suicide prevention material and support.
 - Cornerstone of Recovery, Alcoa Tennessee’s Veterans’ Director requested VTVT’s QPR to be taught the last Thursday of every month beginning in June 2017.
 - September 2017 Cornerstone of Recovery authorizes VTVT to expand attendees to the monthly sessions to include non-residence of Cornerstone. Public is welcome.
- 4) Vietnam War Commemoration program stats: 106 events, 15,923 attendees, 4,069 Vietnam War Veteran recipients and 110 surviving spouses.
- 5) October 3, 2016. VTVT was approved as a tax exempt 501 (c) (3).
- 6) October 5, 2016. Council’s VMFC initiative is endorsed Military Chaplains Association of America October’s Newsgram.
- 7) October 13, 2016. Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett partners with the Council to recognize Vietnam Veterans and their families with “Vietnam War Commemoration” Proclamation Day. VISN 9, VAMC Mountain Home and Knoxville Outpatient Clinic leadership participated.
- 8) November 3, 2016. VTVT announced a new program to assist eligible Korean War veterans interested in receiving the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal. The Ambassador for Peace medal is awarded in appreciation from the people of the Republic of Korea to those who served valiantly during the Korean War; partnership was facilitated by U.S. Congregational member. Processed 35 applications; recipients were from 13 states and 4 countries.

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- 9) November 11, 2016. Vice Chairman Freddie Owens was presented the East Tennessee Military Affairs Council's (ETMAC) "*Sam Hardman Memorial Award*" by Colonel Owen Hardman USAF (Ret.) ETMAC President for his leadership & outstanding progress with Veterans Courts and Veteran/Military Friendly Congregations.
- 10) December 8, 2016. The Council and VTVT finalized their new outreach program: "We Honor Veterans" QPR suicide prevention program. Clinical Social Worker Cindy Winterberger from Covenant Homecare/Hospice introduced "We Honor Veterans" program to the Council' Covenant Home Care/Hospice care certified Tier 2. Council's program facilitates progression to Tier 3.
- 11) December 9, 2016. After months of training and planning with NAMI Tennessee, the Council and VTVT is honored to announce they will be teaching the NAMI Homefront; a NAMI peer education program for families of Service Members and Veterans living with mental health conditions. The program was developed by Teris S. Brister, Ph.D. and Susanne Robinson, M.S.W.
- 12) January 9, 2017. Dean B. Borsos began his position as director for the Mountain Home VA Medical Center on January 9, 2017.
- 13) January 12, 2017. East Tennessee Military Affairs Council's (ETMAC) nominated and approved Freddie Owens as one of the new Board members of ETMAC for a three-year term.
- 14) January 18, 2017 Celebrate Recovery (CR) Maryville's Pastor Parker Benson and Lay Leader Owen Ragland enrolls as the first CR in Veteran/Military Friendly Ministry.
- 15) February 21, 2017. Council formed a partnership with Lipscomb University and with Marine Author & Professor Dr. Tom Seals, Lipscomb University's Associate Professor of Bible and Chaplain for Student Veterans and Army Director of Veteran Services Chadd Staggs.
- 16) March 9, 2017. VA Regional Office Benefits Assistance will be available the 4th Friday of every month 9:00am – 2:00pm at the Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Annex Building beginning 3-24-17.
- 17) March 9, 2017. During the April Council meeting, Mountain Home ACOS of PCCM Dr. Elizabeth Bishop presented two awards to two council members: Freddie Owens, Council received the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award and Ed Junod received the VA' Dedicated Service Award in recognition of 7,500 hours of dedicated volunteer service to Veterans.
- 18) March 23, 2017. Council hosted their second "When War Comes Home" Forum. Total attendees 66: 14 females, 52 males, 10 Pastors, 3 Military Chaplains, 5 Department of Veterans Affairs

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employees and 10 speakers: Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, Redemption Church Senior Pastor Ed King, Military Chaplains Association, USA Executive Director Lyman Smith, Lipscomb University Professor Thomas Seals, Maryville Celebrate Recovery Owen Ragland, CR Welcome Home Director Al North, Monroe County Veterans Court Judge Dwaine Thomas¹, Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center Director Amber McMillan, Helen Ross McNabb Military Services Center Clinical Therapist John Chandler and Covenant Health Home/Hospice Care Cindy Winterberger.

- 19) April 4, 2017. Council and VTVT join Knoxville Community Step Up as a member of their legal team. Legal team includes the University of Tennessee College of Law, the Knoxville Bar Association, and the Legal Aid of East Tennessee. Mission is to conduct an expungement clinic in Knoxville in October 2017.
- 20) April 5, 2017 Twenty-Two-year-old Navy veteran graduates from Monroe Country Veterans Court (MCVC) in Judge Dwaine B. Thomas' courtroom; youngest justice involved veteran in MCVC
- 21) May 24, 2017. Loudon County Veterans Court (LCVC) held its 8th graduation ceremony at the Loudon County Courts Complex in the courtroom of General Sessions and Veterans Court Judge Hank Sledge.
- 22) June 9-10, 2017. Lipscomb University Marine Author & Professor Dr. Tom Seals, Lipscomb University's Associate Professor of Bible and Chaplain for Student Veterans and Army Director of Veteran Services Chadd Staggs train four (4) Council members in "God's Word for Warrior" (GWWF) program developed by Professor Seal. Professor Seal also created and provided the Council with the syllabus and teachers manual for the four new GWWF's instructors.
- 23) June 12, 2017. Monroe County Health Council, VTVT, the Council along with First Baptist Church of Sweetwater provides the wherewithal to help open Celebrate Recovery Community in Sweetwater Tennessee. Numerous members of various churches have collaborated since October 2016.
- 24) June 24, 2017. Knoxville Area Korean Association (KAKA), the Council, VTVT host the 13th Annual Rex Davis Korean War luncheon. The founder unexpectedly passed away in May in 2017. With little time, KAKA took the leadership role and presented a great event. 41 Korean War Veterans received VTVT Korean War Certificates of Honor and 21 attendees received the Vietnam War Commemoration Presidential proclamation.

¹ Judge Dwaine Thomas was not able to attend due to the flu, however, Judge Thomas sent a letter which was read by Council Member Karl Griffith.

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- 25) July 2, 2017. Council and VTVT host a Korean & Vietnam War Recognition Day in North Carolina at the Crossroads United Methodist Church. After the ceremony Pastor Lowell McNaney enrolled as our first North Carolina VMFC.
- 26) July 15, 2017. Tri-State Veterans in Middlesboro KY's and VTVT host Middlesboro's "Welcome Home." First event in Kentucky; 110 attendees, 61 recipients including four (4) surviving spouses.
- 27) July 19, 2017. Council and VTVT support U.S. Senator Corker's Joint Operation in Knoxville.
- 28) July 29, 2017. Vietnam War Commemoration event in Marshall County Tennessee. Over 130 recipients received their awards. Honored guest included: Tennessee Commissioner of Veterans Services Many Bears Grinder was the guest speaker. Special guest included TN Representative Rick Tillis, Marshall County Mayor Joe Boyd Liggett, City of Lewisburg Mayor Jim Bingham, Town of Chapel Hill Mayor Danny Bingham, Town of Cornersville Mayor Melisa Peters, District Five Cdr of VFW - Hundley Ford, Cdr of Local American Legion - Richard Gunther, Cdr of DAV - Ralph Dietz, Moms On A Mission (Moms) - Barb Blackmore, Veteran Service Officer- Sgm (Ret) Freda Johnson, Lewisburg Police Department and Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council Ed Junod.
- 29) August 2, 2017. First female Army National Guard justice involved graduates (JIV) from the Loudon County Veterans Court; she is the 13th JIV to graduate from LCVC.
- 30) August 15, 2017. VTVT receives grant from East Tennessee Foundation to support the 10th Judicial District Veterans Court.
- 31) September 1, 2017. the Council acknowledged the extraordinary work and dedication of the leadership & members of the Post. The Council recognizes the Post as an important positive influence in the Blount County and their position on the Council will benefit not only the veterans and their family in Blount County but also the veterans in the VA Mountain Home Healthcare systems in eastern Tennessee. Post member USMC Barbara Chagnon is approved by Post as their representative on the Council.
- 32) September 3, 2017. The Englewood Church of God kicked off their inaugural Celebrate Recovery(CR) program Sunday evening. This the third CR in the Tenth Judicial District in Tennessee and the first in McMinn County.
- 33) September 6, 2017. Monroe County Director of Finance Libby Hicks provided a grant to VTVT to support the 3,615 veterans and their family in Monroe County. This first government grant was

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made possible because of Judge Dwaine B. Thomas's recommendation and the Council's secretary Bob Hatley and VTVT's Outreach Officer Taylor Thomas hard work.

- 34) September 11, 2017. First Reboot Combat Recovery program in Monroe County began at the Christ Presbyterian Church, Sweetwater, Tennessee; church is a Veteran/Military Friendly Church. Council member and VTVT Vice President Randall Scott is the co-founder of the program.
- 35) September 13, 2017. Council creates their first recognition award in memory of Joseph "JL" Tucker; Army Vietnam War veteran and VTVT's 2nd Vice President. The first award was presented to Monroe County General Sessions & Veterans Court Judge Dwaine B. Thomas for his vision and mission to improve veterans' quality of life.
- 36) September 15, 2017. Elmcroft of West Knoxville, the Council and VTVT hosted a POW/MIA event recognizing one of America's great heroes, World War II Army POW Robert William Chadwick. Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett presented Mr. Chadwick with the Knox County POW proclamation. Special guest also included VA Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Medical Director Dr. Andrew Sexton.
- 37) September 22, 2017. Blount County Habitat for Humanity, the Council, Amvets Post 22 and VTVT develop a memorandum of understanding to begin a new veterans repair program in Blount County.

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

1. Compliance with VA Secretary Shulkin's Veteran Suicide prevention initiative and VAOIG Suicide Prevention report
2. Spiritual and Comprehensive Care from Chaplain services at Knoxville Outpatient clinic and rural communities
3. Opioid abuse treatment
4. Mountain Home VAMC telephone system

VA Staff Presentations during the Fiscal Year 2017:

1. Council receives VAMC & KOPC updates from Mountain Home & KOPC leadership at each Council meeting. Extremely helpful.
2. Mountain Home VAMC Chief of Chaplain services presentation.

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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 Mental Health Director, and Mountain Home VAMC & Knoxville Outpatient Clinic Liaisons.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2018:

- 1) Opiate Abuse Education/Accidental Overdose
- 2) Women Veterans' Outreach and Service Recognition
- 3) VA Chaplain Services in KOPC and rural communities
- 4) 2nd Expungement Clinic
- 5) Increase Veteran Specific Suicide Prevention/Intervention outreach/education
- 6) Blount County 50th Annual Veterans Day event

Respectfully Submitted:



Edouard "Ed" Junod
Chairman, Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council

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