Virginia Wounded Warrior Program: Addressing the Needs of Military/Veteran Families

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VIETRNANS IN VIRGINIA

- Virginia has approximately 837,051 veterans
- 1 in every 10 citizens is a veteran, 1 in 5 in Hampton Roads
- By 2016 Virginia is projected to have the 4th largest veteran population in the nation
- Virginia ranks seventh among the states in total veteran population and fourth in younger veterans (age 20 – 49)
- Virginia has the largest percentage of women veterans
- VDOE: nearly 80,000 students in Virginia have military ties
- Governor’s goal is to become the most veteran-friendly state
The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP), in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, monitors and coordinates behavioral health and rehabilitative services and support through an integrated, comprehensive and responsive system of public and private partnerships. VWWP facilitates these services for Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Armed Forces Reserves (not in active federal service), and their families, especially those affected by stress related conditions or traumatic brain injuries resulting from military service.

_Safety net provider for ALL Virginia Veterans_
INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
A SYSTEMS APPROACH

- Program grounded in the Code of Virginia
- State funded; augmented with grants and donations
- Reinforced by Executive Order 29
- Inter-Secretariat Letter of Support
- Interagency Executive Strategy Committee
- Interagency Advisory Council
- Strategic Plan in Place (VWWP Comprehensive needs assessment from 2010, update planned)
INTERAGENCY EXECUTIVE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Commissioner, Department of Veterans Services

Director, Dept of Health Professions

Commissioner, Department of Health

Commissioner, Department for Aging & Rehabilitative Services

Director, USDVA VISN 6

Virginia Employment Commission

Director, Medical Assistance Services

Director, Medical Assistance Services

Virginia Armed Forces Reserve Component

Adjutant General, Virginia National Guard

we are Virginia VETERANS

www.WeAreVirginiaVeterans.org
WHAT WE DO

- Comprehensive Assessment of Individual and Family Needs
- Case Management/Care Coordination
- Veteran Peer Specialists/Resource/Family Support/Reentry Specialists
- Marriage and Family Support
- Peer Support and Family Support Groups
- Outreach and Community Education
- Linkage to VA Benefits, Financial Assistance, Employment and Education Programs
- Homeless and Housing Services
VWWP’s FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

- Family Resource Specialists that provide case management and support to family members
  - Family Support Groups
  - Family of Heroes online training (communication skills and help seeking for PTSD/TBI)

- Resilience-Focused Retreats for Military/Veteran Couples and Families (focus on post-deployment concerns)
  - Spotlight on Mission: Healthy Families Retreat, our April event was featured in the Richmond Times Dispatch!

- Service Provider Education and Training
  - Community briefings/events on family support
  - ASIST Suicide Intervention Workshops
SETTING THE STAGE: Family Support & Housing Stability

- Military service/combat may place enormous strain on the family unit: lengthy separations, frequent moves, increased familial responsibilities/stress on the military spouse/children
- The divorce rate among enlisted female soldiers is triple that of their male counterparts which is at 9.4%
- OIF/OEF Veterans experience high rates of PTSD/TBI (as high as 30% among returning service members)

How do family stressors contribute to housing instability, and how can we support our military and Veteran families?
SETTING THE STAGE: Family Support & Housing Stability

- War winding down/military downsizing will result in an influx of veterans and their families seeking employment in an already weak job market
- After Vietnam, it often took 9-12 years for Veterans’ situations to deteriorate to the point of homelessness, reports suggest that OIF/OEF veterans are seeking VA homeless services more quickly

- What are the contributing factors for homelessness among veterans?
- Are OIF/OEF veterans more likely to be homeless than veterans of other service eras?
- What are effective services for homeless veterans and their families?