



Presentation to the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Military Installations

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Veterans Mental Health Program

- DSHS began developing mental health services for returning veterans and their families in 2009
- Purpose of the program is to build trust, camaraderie, and hope through interaction with:
 - A well-coordinated network of trained peers
 - Clinicians trained in military-informed care
 - Accessible community based resources

- Requires DSHS to develop a mental health program for veterans that includes
 - Peer-to peer counseling
 - Access to licensed mental health professionals for volunteer coordinators and peers
 - Training for peers
 - Technical assistance for volunteer coordinators and peers
 - Grants to organizations providing services
 - Recruitment, retention, and screening of community-based therapists
 - Suicide prevention training
 - Jail diversion services

Peer-to-Peer Counseling

- Added 13 new fulltime veteran volunteer coordinators during FY 14
 - Total now is 35
- 21,067 peers were served as of May 31, 2014
 - 53,637 peer-to-peer service interactions

Access to Professional Care

- Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN) added staff:
 - Assistant director
 - Training manager
 - 2 field clinicians
- Trained 948 community partners
 - 222 non-mental health providers in military informed care
 - 155 mental health providers in military informed care
 - 571 providers trained in trauma informed care

Peer and Coordinator Training

- Distributed coordinator handbook
 - All Coordinators trained in volunteer management
 - All trained as basic peer skills trainers
- MVPN/DSHS staff made 81 site visits
 - Held 12 coordinator training events
- Coordinators held 136 peer events
 - 816 peers participated
- 1,000 peers registered in MVPN
 - 986 trained in peer support skills

- Enhanced community partnerships
 - Joint events with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to train veteran county service officers
 - Trained county judges and commissioners about veterans mental health program objectives
 - Required contractors to integrate veterans programs with veteran county service officers, community-based TVC staff, and others

Justice-Involved Veterans Conference

- Coordinated a statewide conference to provide training for:
 - Law enforcement
 - Judiciary
 - Mental health professionals
- Focused on:
 - Early intervention opportunities
 - Trauma informed care
 - Coordinated response systems

- DSHS–TVC joint program
 - \$1.55 million awarded to 11 local and regional veterans mental health projects
 - Grantees are to serve 5,291 peers
 - Service area includes 94 counties

Screening and Recruiting Therapists

- Created registry of military informed providers
 - 185 identified as accessible military-informed providers
- MVPN roster includes
 - 58 professional counselors
 - 26 medical professionals

Suicide Prevention

- 1,606 individuals trained in basic mental health skills and/or suicide prevention:
 - 986 volunteers
 - 270 TVC staff
 - 350 community partners

Jail Diversion Expanded

- Trauma informed diversion initiative expanded to 8 new communities
 - 192 veterans served at expansion sites
 - 179 veterans served at pilot study site
- DSHS-TDCJ initiated pilot projects to:
 - Provide pre-and post-release peer support
 - Provide continuum of care, reduce recidivism
 - Veteran-only pilot at Travis State Jail with 24 participants



Texas A&M Contract with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)

- In FY 15 DSHS began subcontracting with TVC to support the MVPN
 - DSHS contracts directly with Texas A&M Health Science Center (TAMU HSC), TAMU HSC subcontracts with TVC, and TVC subcontracts with Samaritan
 - Total contract amount \$1.2 million
- MVPN staff moved to TVC and will continue to:
 - Provide training and technical support to LMHAs
 - Oversee field clinician operations
 - Oversee military informed provider training/registry
 - Train TVC and support staff and VCSOs
 - Enhance community partnerships
 - Texas Association of Counties; Texas Council of Community Centers; Sheriff's Association of Texas; Veteran County Service Officers Association of Texas, others