

BRIEFINGS

VISN 6 MIRECC

20
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during the day.

6. **Positive thinking, gratitude and acceptance**—Use mindfulness and CBT strategies to promote positive, balanced thoughts such as “we will all adjust and be fine.” Choose gratitude to reframe negative situations and focus on what you can control.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Welcome back to the office! After several years of remote or hybrid work, returning to a shared workspace can be both refreshing and challenging.

Here are a few tips to ease the transition:

1. **Reestablish your routine**—Give yourself time to adjust by setting and sticking to a consistent schedule that includes regular wake times, commuting patterns, breaks, lunch and when you leave the office.
2. **Take advantage of in-person interactions to build relationships**—Genuinely and authentically connect/reconnect with colleagues, use comic relief to minimize reluctance, resistance, or frustration. Consider starting or reviving office traditions or gatherings.
3. **Make and stick to a plan to help focus/concentrate in a shared space**—There are likely to be many more distractions in the office than at home. Consider headphones to reduce extraneous noise and setting specific hours for complete focus/concentration which may include the minimization of electronic notifications.
4. **Personalize your workspace**—Create a comfortable workspace that includes everything you need to be productive throughout the day.
5. **Incorporate daily self-care practices into the workday**—Take a walk at lunch, keep fresh flowers at your desk, bring in healthy snacks, teas, hand lotions, and anything else that will increase your comfort or give you a refresh

IN THIS ISSUE**DIRECTOR'S UPDATE****FOCUS ON THE VISN****NEWS****HONORS AND****AWARDS****EDUCATION AND****DISSEMINATION****SCIENTIFIC POSTERS,****RESEARCH****PRESENTATIONS AND****OTHERS****PUBLICATIONS****RESOURCES FOR****VETERANS****PROVIDER EDUCATION****SITES AND CONTACTS**

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE, Continued

Do you have other ideas to facilitate a smooth return to office? Please share through the VISN 6 MIRECC listserv or send your ideas directly to me at jennifer.naylor2@va.gov.

We look forward to seeing everyone back in the office daily and hope to foster a sense of community and collaboration. Let's make this transition a positive and productive experience for all. Welcome back!

Jennifer C. Naylor, PhD

Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC

FOCUS ON THE VISN

Honors, Grants and Awards



Dr. Beckham, J.C., PhD., has been awarded the 2025 John B. Barnwell Award (Barnwell Award).

This award is the VA Office of Research & Development's (ORD) highest honor for outstanding achievement in clinical science and is given for scientific contributions that change clinical practice for Veterans.

"The overall significance of Dr. Beckham's research in the areas of PTSD, suicide prevention, smoking and smoking cessation, substance abuse, and, more recently, psychiatric genetics is extraordinary" said Dr. Grant Huang, Acting Chief Research and Development Officer for ORD.

Dr. Courtney, R.E., PhD, was recently selected for the Early-Stage Investigator Program of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research. She was accepted as an Active Member of the Appalachian Translational Research Network. Dr. Courtney was also awarded the First Place-Faculty Poster, at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) research day.

In addition, Dr. Courtney's research has been recognized in varied media platforms:

- ABC, kcrq.com: [VA Study: "Rural veterans prescribed 'dramatically' more opioids"](#)
- VA Research News Briefs: "[VA opioid prescribing dropped dramatically, still higher in rural areas](#)"
- Roanoke Star: "[Whole Health Consortium at Virginia Tech funds teams to tackle community health challenges](#)".

Dr. Dillon, K.H., PhD, was funded for the project entitled "Pilot randomized controlled trial of the Mobile Intervention for Suicidal Thoughts". April 1, 2025. R & D grant.

Dr. Martindale, S.L., PhD, was also funded for the project entitled "Relationship Between Blast Exposure and Cellular Senescence in Veterans". September, 2025 – September 2030.

Congratulations to all!

EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION

Scientific Posters, Presentations, Webinars, Conferences and Other Activities



Caretti, J. L., Smith, S. L., Courtney, R. E. (January, 2025). PREVAIL Interdisciplinary Team Track: Feasibility and Patient Engagement in a Chronic Pain Intervention at a VA Serving Appalachian Veterans. Virtual poster presentation for the Appalachian Translational Research Network 2024 Annual Health Summit, Abingdon, VA.

Courtney, R.E. (March, 2025). Peer Support Use of the Personal Health Inventory to Guide Discussions about Treatments in Veterans with Co-Occurring Chronic Pain and Mental Health Diagnoses. Invited Speaker, VISN 5 Peer Support.

Courtney, R. E., (March, 2025). Integration of the VHA Whole Health System into Interdisciplinary Pain Care: PREVAIL Interdisciplinary Team Track. Invited presentation at Central Virginia VA Health Care System Pain Management Grand Rounds.

Courtney, R. E. (January, 2025). Using Lean Six Sigma to Improve Access to Care and Reduce Emergency Room Visits for Appalachian Veterans with Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorder and Chronic Pain: The 'Dom Fast Track' Project. Virtual presentation for the National VA Strong Practice Forum.

Duggal, J.*, Santos, E.*, Curry, L., Vebares, T. J.*, Blalock, D. V., Meckes, S. J*, Black, A., Becker, W. C., Hadlandsmayth, K., Naylor, J., Brem, M., Woods, K., Patel, S., Miller, P.*, Courtney, R., E. (March, 2025). Determining the Feasibility of a Chronic Pain Education Class in a Rural Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program for Veterans: "Dom Fast Track". Poster presentation at the Society of Behavioral Medicine, 46th Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions, San Francisco, CA.

López-Ojeda, W. & Hurley, R.A. (March, 2025). Insights on Instructional Immersive Experiences: Designing Extended Reality Mental Health Learning Modules for Patient Education. Poster presentation at the 9th Annual IVRHA Global Virtual Reality and Healthcare Symposium. Sarasota, FL.

Martindale, S. L. & Rowland, J. A. (April, 2025). Blast Exposure and Brain Health Outcomes. Invited lecture for the Grand Rounds, Salisbury VA Healthcare System, Salisbury, NC.

Scientific Posters, Presentations, Webinars, Conferences and Other Activities, Continued

Martindale, S. L., Bailie, J. M., Miles, S. R., Davenport, N. D., Babakhanyan, I., Hinds, S. R., Walker, W. C., & Rowland, J. A. (April, 2025). Long-Term Effect of Cumulative Low-Level Blast Exposure on Cognitive Function. Oral Presentation for the Human Factors & Medicine Panel, Research Specialists Meeting on Blast Exposure Monitoring in Military Training and Operations for The NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) Collaboration Support Office, Toronto, CAN.

Martindale, S. L., Stapleton-Kotloski, J. R., Godwin, D. W., Hamilton, C. A., & Rowland, J. A. (March, 2025). Mild TBI and Blast Exposure Affect Cognitive Function through a Neurobiological Pathway in Veterans. Oral presentation for the International Brain Injury Association 15th World Congress on Brain Injury, Montreal, CAN.

Martindale, S. L., Bailie, J. M., Miles, S. R., Davenport, N. D., Babakhanyan, I., Hinds, S. R., Walker, W. C., & Rowland, J. A. (February, 2025). Long-Term Effect of Cumulative Low-Level Blast Exposure on Cognitive Function. Invited presentation at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society, New Orleans, LA.

Martindale, S. L. & Rowland, J. A. (December, 2024). Effects of Traumatic Brain Injury and Blast Exposure on Long-Term Symptoms and Cognition. Invited lecture for the National Intrepid Center Excellence, Washington, DC.

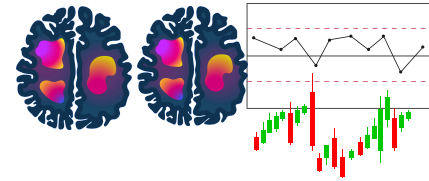
Rowland, J. A., Stapleton-Kotloski, J. R., Hamilton, C. A., & Martindale, S. L. (April, 2025). Thresholds of Sub-concussive Blast Exposure Associated with Differences in Brain Structure and Function. Invited presentation for the Human Factors & Medicine Panel, Research Specialists Meeting on Blast Exposure Monitoring in Military Training and Operations for The NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) Collaboration Support Office, Toronto, CAN.

Rowland, J. A., Stapleton-Kotloski, J. R., Hamilton, C. A., & Martindale, S. L. (March, 2025). Thresholds of Sub-concussive Blast Exposure Associated with Differences in Brain Structure and Function. Invited presentation for the International Brain Injury Association 15th World Congress on Brain Injury, Montreal, CAN.

Rowland, J. A., Stapleton-Kotloski, J. R., Hamilton, C. A., & Martindale, S. L. (February, 2025). Thresholds of Sub-concussive Blast Exposure Associated with Differences in Brain Structure and Function. Poster presentation for the 2025 International Neuropsychological Society Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Shura, R. D. (February, 2025). ADHD in VA: Diagnosing and malingering. Virtual presentation for the Eastern Colorado VA Mental Health Medical staff.

PUBLICATIONS



Scientific Articles

Courtney, R. E., Lund, B. C., Hadlandsmyth, K. (2025). Rural-Urban Differences in Opioid Prescribing in the Veterans Health Administration. *Journal of Rural Health*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jrh.70014>

Epshtein, E., Shraga, S., Radomislensky, I., Martindale, S. L., Bushinsky, S., Israel Trauma Group, Benov, A., Almog, O., Tsur, A. M., & Talmy, T. (2025). Blast injury and chronic psychiatric disability in military personnel: Exploring the association beyond posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2025.03.026>

Goodrich, M., Halverson, T.F., Aho, N.A., Patel, T.A., Mann, A.J., Calhoun, P.S., Beckham, J.C., & Kimbrel, N.A. (in press). A descriptive study of non-suicidal self-injury characteristics among veterans meeting diagnostic criteria for non-suicidal self-injury disorder. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*.

Polick, C.S., Sims, C.A., Meckes, S., Magnante, A.T., Braley, T.J., Wilson, S.M., Dennis, P.A., Calhoun, P.S. (in press). Smoking cessation screening and treatment amongst veterans with multiple sclerosis. *Military Medicine*.

Puente-López, E., Pina, D., Shura, R. D., Lopez-López, R., Merten, T., & Martínez-Jarreta, B. (2025). The risk of bias – symptom and performance validity (RoB-spv): a risk of bias checklist for systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13854046.2025.2469354>

Shura, R. D., Schroeder, R. W., Ord, A. S., Bieu, R. K., O'Connor, V. L., Magnante, A. T., Snodgrass, M., Miskey, H. M., Martindale, S. L. & Rowland, J. A. (2025). Symptom validity indices for the Beck Depression Inventory-II: Development and cross-validation in research and clinical samples. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*, ePub ahead of print. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13854046.2024.2432058>

Zaur, A. B., Latourrette, C., Rappaport, L. M., Fountain, C., Walker, W. C., Austin, T. A., Martindale, S. L., Amstadter, A. B., & Sheerin, C. M. (in press). Functional relationships between alcohol use/problems and posttraumatic stress symptoms in a pilot sample of veterans. *Journal of Dual Diagnosis*.

Book Chapters

Reeves, S., Deng, Z. & Young, J. (2025). A History of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation, in Dubljević, V. and Young, J. (Eds.): *TMS and Neuroethics*, Cham: Springer. [Accepted]

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & FAMILIES

Visit [Self-help resources](#) to obtain education and support information for Veterans, friends and family members who may be facing mental health challenges. VA specialists have assembled a short list of reviewer's recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the most appropriate information for you.

Please click on each resource topic for more information.

- [General Mental Health](#)
- [Depression & Anxiety](#)
- [PTSD](#)
- [Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\)](#)

For additional help, access "[Learn About Resources and Support](#)."

PROVIDER EDUCATION

Webinars for [National CBOC MENTAL HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS \(GRs\)](#) and Other Presentations

Check the website for previous and upcoming webinars in this series available for credit in TMS.

For direct registration links, click [here](#).

MIRECC PRESENTS WEBINARS

Register through VA TMS EEA then attend
LIVE at
[http://va-eerc-](http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/)

[ees.adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/](http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/)

Access the MIRECC Presents webinar series calendar for upcoming events online at
<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn20/Education/webinars-mirecc-presents.asp>

[VETERANS TRAININGS](#). There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use Interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges.

- [Moving Forward](#)
- [Veteran Parenting](#)
- [Anger Management](#)
- [Path to Better Sleep](#)

The DMVA Resource Guide is produced and published by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal veteran benefits.

To view/download the newest guide sections click [here](#).

[PACERS](#) is an education program for health care staff who care for Veterans with cognitive disorders and their caregivers. While this program targets rural health care staff, providers working in any setting may benefit from this information.

VA Providers: Take courses using TMS links

Non-VA Providers: Use [TRAIN](#) links

[VISIT PACERS](#) for individual Cognitive Disorders courses. Link to VHA TRAIN for [other courses](#) and events [calendar](#).

RESEARCH SITES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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BRIEFINGS

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Next Issue: SUMMER 2025



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