

RETIRED JUSTICE EVELYN LUNDBERG STRATTON'S VETERANS' CRIMINAL JUSTICE & MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES NEWS

JANUARY 1, 2017

Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton, Retired **Veterans in the Courts Initiative**

Evelyn Lundberg Stratton retired from the Ohio Supreme Court at the end of 2012 so as to pursue more fully criminal justice reforms with a particular emphasis on veterans who become involved with the justice system. She established the Veterans in the Courts Initiative in 2009. Video <http://bit.ly/1gICXZ0>

Subscribe to this free weekly, all volunteer-generated, news summary by joining our Veterans in The Courts Initiative Group <http://bit.ly/1DZ3esD>

4,506 providers of veterans' services, just like you, nationwide & internationally, receive this free newsletter directly. Another 11,000+ can see it on 5 social media sites. My blog has been viewed by over 5,000 people in 52 countries. Thank you for sharing!

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FEATURED STORIES

***Collaboration to Help Veterans* – A Year End Perspective** **By Evelyn Lundberg Stratton**

Dear Fellow Veterans Assistance Providers,

As we enter the New Year, some reflection.

When I started this newsletter in 2012, I knew that those of us working to help veterans in the areas of criminal justice and mental illness needed information about what each of us was doing, in our individual organizations and states, so that we could leverage our combined efforts.

There was an urgent need to help veterans who were caught up in the criminal justice system primarily due to their war-related mental illnesses, such as PTSD and TBI.

Putting out a weekly newsletter requires a good working knowledge of computers and the internet, and is a time consuming task. I was fortunate that Pete Miller came forward to edit and publish my newsletter. Pete said that this would be an excellent way for him to give back for the benefits of a 33-year career in the aerospace & defense industry.

At the beginning we only had enough materials for two pages and about 100 subscribers mostly in my home state of Ohio.

Flash forward five years, and we now have over 4,500 subscribers nationwide, many who resend my newsletter to their groups and networks, and we add more subscribers weekly. In fact, except for vacations and Pete's medical leave, we have added subscribers every week, since our first issue back in 2012. Pete's open-heart surgery in early 2016 paused but didn't stop our momentum.

We have international subscribers, too, primarily from countries whose military fought in recent middle-eastern conflicts, otherwise known in the U.S. as coalition countries.

Our subscribers generally can be put into the following categories:

- Local, state, national or international organizations
- Government agencies
- Researchers
- Practitioners
- Veterans & their caregivers

Pete also posts my newsletter on five social media sites with an initial reach (audience) of over 11,000 friends and followers. Again, many of these people forward the newsletter to their networks.

Our newsletter is a "two-way street". Many of our subscribers send us articles for the newsletter. Those who do it on a regular basis are thanked and acknowledged every week in the newsletter.

This sharing of information is the first step in our combined collaborative efforts to help veterans everywhere.

Pete struggles to know what to cut to try to keep the newsletter to around 30 pages and in a format that is easily scanned with links to the original article for those who wish to dig deeper into a given topic.

There is so much information that I created a blog in 2014 , [VETERANS IN THE COURTS INITIATIVE](#).

We needed a blog to provide longer term items, such as lists of events and resources for veterans, their families and we service providers. We provide job listings and hiring fair information, lists of state-based and national-based legal assistance for veterans, conference videos, and even lists of other veteran-related newsletters and blogs.

In two years, my blog has attracted over 5,000 visitors from 52 countries who viewed my blog posts over 9,600 times. I also have 88 blog subscribers, who receive major news items in real time as they are posted on the blog plus my weekly newsletter.

Stanford Law School invited me to participate in a two-day conference on Veterans Treatment Courts at Stanford last September. In addition to a very productive exchange of information, the folks at Stanford told me that my newsletter had resulted in a much larger and more diverse conference audience.

One of the organizations attending the veterans treatment court conference at Stanford because they read about it in my newsletter, was American University of Washington, DC. Three months later, American University invited me to participate in a webinar on veterans treatment courts.

Hopefully, someone has read about your work in our newsletter and has followed up with an email, phone call or invitation.

The sharing of people's experiences is another step in our collaborative efforts to help veterans.

What does this say about our society? That we have become far more aware of our veterans and the need to assist them. Veterans courts now number 450 and counting.

There are countless new non-profits and groups dedicated to special veterans' issues, like our [Operation Legal Help Ohio](#) where I am president.

In short, we, America and other countries, care very much about our veterans. We recognize their extraordinary sacrifices in serving our country, personal sacrifices being away from family, the physical and mental sacrifices from the wounds of war.

We care! We want to Help! We are helping! Please help our veterans to reach out for assistance.

And finally, a big thank you to Pete Miller, my editor. Although my name goes on the newsletter and he gives me credit, it is really Pete who starts on Monday morning-reading and collecting the huge volume of material that now exists, and organizing and putting in the captions so that you can quickly search and read the articles that interest you. Thank you, Pete.

Happy New Year, and thank you to our veterans and military who have and still keep us safe.

*Evelyn Lundberg Stratton
EStratton Consulting, LLC*

Blue Star Families Research: Study shows strain on force, civilian-military disconnect
<http://bit.ly/2iOFhBe>

In a nation where less than a half-percent of the population wears the uniform, those who do, and their families, are feeling the strain after more than 15 years of war.

That's the findings of a report released in December by Blue Star Families, a Washington-based non-profit supporting men and woman in uniform and their families.

The study, conducted in April and May 2016, contacted more than 8,300 respondents, including military spouses, active-duty service members, veterans and their immediate family members.

Among the key findings:

- 72 percent of active-duty and military spouse respondents said they feel too much stress for a healthy work-life balance and 37 percent said they have experienced relationship challenges because of worry over future deployments.
- 42 percent of military family respondents report experiencing more than six months of family separation in the last 18 months. Thirty-seven percent of military couples reported experiencing relationship challenges in the past year related to worry over future deployments.
- The majority of active military families — 57 percent — are unlikely to recommend service to their own children.

- Military families were 27 percent less likely to have dual incomes than married non-military couples with children under 18. Fewer than half — 48 percent — of military families with a civilian spouse earned two incomes, as compared with two-thirds — 66 percent — of the general U.S. population with children.

- 66 percent of military families said they can't find adequate childcare while 33 percent say school does a good job of complying with the Interstate Compact of Educational Opportunity for Military Children and 9 percent say they homeschool.

The survey also found there is a sharp civilian-military divide, with 88 percent of those responding feeling that the public does not understand their sacrifices.

American University Webinar Results (YouTube): Veterans Treatment Courts: 2015 Survey Results <http://bit.ly/2i7qBN3>

The Justice Programs Office at American University conducted an interactive webinar session entitled, "Veterans Treatment Courts: 2015 Survey Results," on Tuesday, December 13th, 2016. You can watch and listen to the entire webinar at the link above.

OPPORTUNITIES

Work Study Student at VA's Manhattan, Brooklyn or St. Albans campus

<http://bit.ly/2hy5HIG>

If you are a Veteran/dependent enrolled in a college or university and want to sign up to be placed as a Work Study Student at VA's Manhattan, Brooklyn or St. Albans campus, call: 212-686-7500 x7124 x7125

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

White House Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force Final Report and the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health.

<http://bit.ly/2iK8i0F>

Patrick J. Kennedy Facebook Post:

Two extremely important reports were released this fall—[The White House](#) Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force Final Report and the [U.S. Surgeon General's](#) Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health.

By enforcing the parity law and reducing stigma, these reports will help ensure that people with mental health and substance use disorders get the treatment and support they need to recover.

Read the reports here:

<http://bit.ly/2hzOXPB>

<http://bit.ly/2gmPaWg>

U.S. Supreme Court Brief: Opening a Door to Malpractice Suits Against the Veterans Administration (Subscription) <http://bit.ly/2iJUkfg>

When veteran Richard Milbauer sued the government for medical negligence, a federal court ruled it did not have jurisdiction to hear the case.

That decision could leave all veterans without a way to obtain judicial review of their malpractice claims against Veterans Administration hospitals, a petition for certiorari in *Milbauer v. United States* warns.

Reed Smith filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of two law school clinics: the Antonin Scalia Law School Mason Veterans and Servicemembers Legal Clinic and the Baylor Law School Veterans' Assistance Clinic.

DoD News

- [U.S. military medicine finds way to help developing countries help themselves](#)
- [Recently approved cholera vaccine available for use in the U.S.](#)
- [DoD Announces New Outreach Efforts Regarding Discharges, Military Records](#)
- [Physical Disability Board of Review to veterans: We want to help](#)
- [DARPA provides groundbreaking bionic arms to Walter Reed](#)
- [Departing DoD Official Reflects on Military Health System Improvements](#)
- [DoD Funds New Tissue Biofabrication Manufacturing Consortium](#)

AMSUS SmartBrief (The Society of Federal Health Professionals) <http://bit.ly/2iOsILo>

- [Tonix Pharma's PTSD treatment gets FDA breakthrough status](#)
- [Reservists may get to test private health insurance options](#)
- [Navy surgeon general adopts private-sector tactics to improve care](#)
- [How surgeon Karen Guice rose to the top of the Military Health System](#)
- [Military veterinarians bridge gap between animal, human health](#)
- [VA to consider expanding benefits for Agent Orange exposure](#)
- [Surgeon general's goals remain unchanged as White House changes hands](#)
- [Defense Dept. to provide \\$80M for new tissue, organ research institute](#)
- [Compound prevents bacteria from adhering to cells in wounds](#)
- [VA-ECHO program could change providers' sleep-management practices](#)
- [Obtaining CEs from 2016 AMSUS Meeting](#)
- [Videos from 2016 AMSUS Annual Meeting](#)

WSJ Feature: The VA Hooked *Veterans on Opioids*, Then Failed Them Again

<http://on.wsj.com/2iOv3kc>

. . . The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledges its role in creating a large population of opioid-addicted veterans by overprescribing painkillers for injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. After the agency tightened prescribing practices in 2013, many veterans bought pain pills sold illicitly on the streets. When those became too expensive, they sought heroin and fentanyl, a potent synthetic narcotic.

The VA is now struggling to undo the damage. Hampered by budgetary and bureaucratic obstacles, it has failed to build a rehabilitation program robust enough to meet the overwhelming demand for treatment from the tens of thousands of veterans with opioid addiction, say analysts who have studied the issue. That has left many veterans to fend for themselves, tapping whatever resources they can find to battle a chronic, complex—and frequently fatal—condition.

VA is lowering copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions Feb. 27, 2017. <http://bit.ly/2iK0bBI>

Washington – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending its regulation on copayments for Veterans' outpatient medications for non-service connected conditions. VA currently charges non-exempt Veterans either \$8 or \$9 for each 30-day or less supply of outpatient medication, and under current regulations, a calculation based on the medication of the Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI-P) would be used to determine the copayment amount in future years.

. . . These copayment amounts will be effective February 27, 2017:

- \$5 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 1 outpatient medication
- \$8 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 2 outpatient medication
- \$11 for a 30-day or less supply - Tier 3 outpatient medication

VA reverses course, releases health care quality data <http://usat.ly/2hpk5fG>

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs has quietly released quality-of-care ratings for its medical centers across the country, despite years of refusing to share them with the public.

The move follows a USA TODAY investigation that revealed ratings for 146 VA medical centers for the first time earlier this month. VA Secretary Bob McDonald complained at the time that their publication across the USA TODAY Network caused “unwarranted distress” to veterans and could dissuade them from getting care.

But last week, according to an internal memo obtained by USA TODAY, the agency posted updated ratings on its website and also included indicators of whether hospitals were improving or declining, allowing members of the public to see for the first time how their local VA medical centers have been faring over time.

VA New Website: www.MakeTheConnection.net

MakeTheConnection.net is an online resource designed to connect Veterans, their family members and friends, and other supporters with information, resources, and solutions to issues affecting their lives.

VA Local Events & Other News

- [Roseburg VA Medical Center schedules Town Hall in Eugene, Oregon, Jan. 5th](#)
- [VA New Orleans Town Hall, Jan 10th](#)
- [Veterans Crisis Line Improves Service with New Call Center Opening in Atlanta](#)
- [Nearly 100,000 Vets Enrolled in Burn Pit Registry](#)
- [Riverside National Cemetery employee receives President’s Award for Customer Service](#)
- [Think college, think health care, think VA](#)
- [VA is the USA’s largest employer of nurses — 93,500 RNs, LPNs & NAs, which includes 5,769 advanced practice nurses.](#)
- [VA lays out plans for cloud-based Digital Health Platform](#)
- [Suicide try at Colorado Springs VA clinic prompts support conversation.](#)
- [Tainted CDC: Deadly water at Pittsburgh VA hospital demands answers](#)
- [Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Cardiac stem cell clinical trial to help Veterans](#)
- [Cervical cancer screening for women Veterans more important than non-Veterans](#)
- [Screening Frail Veterans Pre-Surgery](#)
- [VA launches MyVA311](#)
- [VISN 21 Capital Asset Management \(CAM\)](#)
- [VA homelessness studies yield insight on Housing First approach](#)
- [How to file a Notice of Disagreement on your VA compensation claim](#)
- [NEW ROCHESTER VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC SITE AWARDED](#)
- [New law allows injured veterans to recoup erroneous severance taxes](#)
- [VA develops blueprint for cloud-based technology platform](#)

VA OIG Reports

- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Las Vegas, Nevada VA Medical Center \(14-02890-410\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Columbia, South Carolina VA Medical Center \(14-02890-404\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Dallas, Texas VA Medical Center \(14-02890-407\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Temple, Texas VA Medical Center \(14-02890-411\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Phoenix, Arizona VA Medical Center \(14-02890-87\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Loma Linda, California VA Medical Center \(14-02890-88\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Los Angeles, California VA Medical Center \(14-02967-83\)](#)

- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Tampa, Florida VA Medical Center \(14-02890-406\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Ft. Harrison, Montana VA Medical Center \(14-02890-408\)](#)
- [VA OIG Administrative Summary of Investigation at the Charleston, South Carolina VA Medical Center \(14-02890-122\)](#)
- [New England Compounding Center's National Sales Director Pleads Guilty](#)
- [Review of Alleged Improper Non-VA Community Care Consult Practices at Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Charleston, South Carolina](#)

Additional resources from my blog

- **LIST OF VA TOWN HALLS & OTHER MEETINGS NATIONWIDE:** <http://bit.ly/1Gg1DN6>

OHIO

Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy TRAINING EVENT: Interacting With and De-Escalating the Special Needs Population, OPOTA Main Campus, London, OH, Jan 11th
<http://bit.ly/2iK76e3>

Law enforcement officers are often called to help in situations where a person is suffering a mental-health crisis. This one-day course is designed for those who have not received the most current training on dealing with people potentially suffering from mental illness.

- Jan 11th, London, OH
- March 8th, Richfield, OH
- May 31st, London, OH
- August 30th, Richfield, OH
- October 10th, London, OH
- November 1st, Richfield, OH

Lawrence County veterans legal clinic announced <http://bit.ly/2iOx0Nr>

With the assistance of Jack Welz and his staff at the Lawrence County Veterans Service Office and the full support of the Lawrence County Commission, Southeastern Ohio Legal Services has announced a new Veterans Legal Clinic in Lawrence County.

This legal clinic is the first of its kind in the county. The next clinic will be from 1-2 p.m. on Jan. 4, in the county commissioners' chambers, which is located on the third floor of the Lawrence County Courthouse in Ironton. SEOLS will host the clinic monthly at that location.

The new clinic is unique in that it will be available only to military veterans from Lawrence County. In addition to domestic relations and juvenile court matters, veterans will also be able to obtain brief legal advice, information and possibly direct representation in many other civil legal matters, including landlord-tenant issues, consumer/debt collection issues, record sealing, small claims and some veterans benefits cases. The clinic will be staffed by a SEOLS attorney.

Making military a priority (Ohio House Bills 423, 471 & 535) by State Rep. Rick Perales of Fairborn, Ohio <http://bit.ly/2iOCHLz>

. . . As a veteran, one of my top priorities in the Ohio House is to advocate for legislation that benefits our currently serving military members and our veterans.

Provisions from House Bill 423 that were included in House Bill 471 clarify Ohio's Public Records Act to ensure that orders or other documentation regarding the deployment of those in the armed forces, reserves, or Ohio National Guard are not considered public records.

This change will allow our public employees at all levels of state government the security, privacy and peace of mind they deserve while preparing for and serving out their deployment. Such documents will subsequently become public record 15 years after the published date for historical purposes.

Another bill of mine, House Bill 535, was also included as a part of House Bill 471. This legislation offers employment protection for people working in Ohio but who are a part of another state's National Guard or Reserves, and are called to service by their unit.

Such employment guarantees are currently afforded to Ohio National Guard and Reserve members, but not to out-of-state members. These provisions will help our service members, regardless of which state they are enlisted in, to keep their jobs and remain an important part of Ohio's job sector.

Tainted CDC: *Deadly water at Pittsburgh VA* hospital demands answers (Editorial)

<http://bit.ly/2gZuUoF>

Editor's Note: Thousands of eastern Ohio veterans receive health care at the Pittsburgh VAMC.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has some explaining to do after a series of stories by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's Sean D. Hamill raised troubling questions about the agency's handling of an investigation into an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease at the Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System.

In the wake of those stories, U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, a Democrat, and U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy, R-Upper St. Clair, have called for inquiries into the CDC's conduct. The six veterans who died from the outbreak, the 16 seriously sickened by it and all Americans who use VA facilities or rely on the CDC's expertise deserve the answers that additional scrutiny may bring.

Above all else, the CDC should strive to keep Americans safe, using the best-available research and scientific practices. However, Mr. Hamill's stories show that some CDC officials seemed less interested in getting to the bottom of the 2011-12 Legionnaires' disease outbreak than in using the tragedy to discredit a copper-silver water disinfection method they opposed and in undermining two former VA researchers — Victor Yu and Janet Stout — who championed it.

Cleveland News 5 investigation: 'Til death: How Ohio fails to protect women trying to escape abusive relationships <http://bit.ly/2hltc1f>

An exclusive News 5 investigation uncovered potentially deadly loopholes in Ohio law regarding protection orders, which are designed to keep victims safe from abusers, and a legal system that allows abusers to obtain guns.

We found only a fraction of abusers ever spend a day behind bars.

WATCH our full hour-long investigative special [here](#).

Overview of Findings

Our investigation found Ohio has no state law barring abusers from buying guns. In addition, we found emergency protection orders are not filed in a federal database that allows abusers to legally purchases guns.

Plus, Ohio has no central registry that allows law enforcement officers to quickly identify whether abusers have protection orders on file in courts across the state, which allows abusers to go free instead of getting arrested for violations.

Even more alarming, Ohio has no state law authorizing police to take guns away from abusers.

We also found abusers are intent on exploiting the system.

Over nearly two decades, we found 113,000 abusers and nearly 48,000 more under protection orders, still walked into gun shops around the country and tried to buy deadly weapons.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, just the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.

Just as troubling, abusers easily evade enforcement of protection orders because law enforcement fails to prioritize serving abusers.

Our review of more than two years of data from Cuyahoga County revealed the sheriff's department failed to serve 61 percent of temporary protection orders.

It's even worse in the City of Cleveland. We found no one in the city is assigned to serve abusers with temporary protection orders.

An exhaustive review of 700 felony domestic violence cases in Cuyahoga County revealed 1 of every 3 abusers never spent a day behind bars, and 8 out 10 repeatedly abused women.

The Plain Dealer: Heroin a mass killer of Ohioans (Veterans Treatment Courts Results are Encouraging) in 2016; outlook for 2017 is similarly grim: Phillip Morris

<http://bit.ly/2ims810>

The scourge of heroin continued to wage relentless and deadly war on Ohio in 2016. At least 500 people died from drug-related overdoses in the past year in Cuyahoga County alone. Thousands more died similar deaths throughout the state.

Heroin or fentanyl or some combination of the super-potent opioids are now a leading cause of deaths for Ohioans -- surpassing the longstanding toll wrought by gun violence and automobile accidents.

The epidemic leaves massive collateral damage in its wake. The drugs not only claim lives across a broad spectrum of humanity, they take a tremendous toll on family, friends and communities.

... That indifferent response appears to be changing. In Ohio -- an epicenter of the heroin epidemic -- we're starting to fight back. Many state and local officials have come to an understanding that better treatment options and more productive law enforcement are just as important as early drug education and crisis family intervention. These community leaders are becoming increasingly vocal. That trend in leadership must continue. There are evolving public health and criminal justice models worth watching and maybe emulating. Sometimes, a committed court system or a committed judge can facilitate rehabilitation rather than punishment.

. . . Just before the holiday season got underway, I spent an afternoon in the courtroom of Judge Michael E. Jackson, who presides over the **Cuyahoga County Veterans Treatment Court**. What I witnessed was encouraging.

Jackson invited me to see firsthand how his court is attempting to help veterans who wrestle with addiction, mental illness and sometimes both. I observed a series of remarkable encounters between a firm but caring judge and a roomful of addicts, who once served the nation in uniform.

. . . The number of veterans courts around the state continues to grow. Judge Charles Patton presides over a highly regarded veterans court in Cleveland Municipal Court. Many other court systems around the state are closely watching the experiences of our two veterans treatment courts, with an eye toward creating their own.

Stark court takes aim at elderly abuse <http://bit.ly/2hp4fBO>

Stark County Probate Court has received a roughly \$625,000 federal grant to aid its efforts in preventing elderly neglect and abuse.

Juddith Libbey recalls visiting a man with a developmental disability who loved trains. Working as a volunteer for Stark County Probate Court, the retiree was checking on the man to ensure his guardian and others were caring for him properly.

The man was quiet, not prone to opening up to a stranger. But chatting about trains initiated a lengthy conversation. Libbey also had talked with staff at the facility where he lived. Previously she had talked with the ward's guardian.

And she filled out reports for probate court as part of a program overseeing wards who have mental health concerns, health issues or disabilities preventing them from making independent decisions involving finances, medical care and other vital matters. Libbey reported the man was not being neglected or exploited.

That's the goal of the guardian visitor's program; it's among the first of its kind in the state of Ohio as well as nationally, said Stark County Probate Court Judge Dixie Park. And it was among a handful of recipients to recently receive a roughly \$625,000 Elder Justice Innovation Grant. Some of the funds will be used to enhance and expand the Court Angel program as well as focus on an effort to prevent elder abuse and avoid or cease guardianships when possible.

Awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the grant will support the Stark County Elder Justice Innovation Project, which also includes the development of the Stark County Eldercaring Coordination Program. Eldercaring coordination is a new concept for Stark County Probate Court and an emerging field across the country related to the care and safety of the elderly, Park said.

75-year-old donates \$100,000 award to help **Marion Correctional inmates <http://bit.ly/2iJTcly>**

. . . The red-haired Jo Dee Davis, 75, has a long history of relating to people in trouble — as a high-school teacher, a conflict mediator and, for the past 16 years, the director of a prison rehabilitation program that employs activities ranging from yoga to acting.

Her efforts were recognized recently with a \$100,000 award from the KIND Foundation, the charitable arm of the company that makes KIND Health Snacks. Davis was one of seven people nationwide given no-strings-attached awards for “serving as beacons of empathy” in their communities.

She is donating the entire amount to [Healing Broken Circles](#), her nonprofit organization, in hopes of expanding her work to other Ohio prisons.

Additional resources from my blog

- **OPERATION LEGAL HELP OHIO** <http://bit.ly/1Gg0HbK>
- **RESOURCES FOR VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/1Gg21LH>
- **OHIO JOBS FOR VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/1CL3Ay0>
- **RESURRECTING LIVES FOUNDATION** <http://bit.ly/1R9toOV>
- **EVENTS FOR OHIO VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/1Tx7tix>
- **EVENTS FOR LAWYERS & OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR OHIO VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/2fQHYN7>
- **RESOURCES FOR OHIO VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/2fQNEql>

STEPPING UP INITIATIVE

*Editor's Note: Closely associated with Veterans Treatment Courts and other specialty docket courts dealing with mental illness is the new **STEPPING UP INITIATIVE**. Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illness in Jails.*

Stepping Up and similar initiatives are an important evolution in the treatment of veterans and others incarcerated with mental illness.

*Supreme Court of Ohio **Justice Evelyn Lundeberg Stratton (Retired)** is the Director of Stepping Up Ohio. We have decided to create this new section of Retired Justice Stratton's News Clips, rather than bury the stories somewhere else.*

*We particularly wish to thank County Court **Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren** in The Criminal Division of the 17th Judicial Circuit, Broward County of Florida, a Pioneer and Creator of America's first mental health court dedicated to the decriminalization of people with mental illness, for sending us news articles to share with you.*

How to fix *Florida's failing mental health system* <http://bit.ly/2hp1Eli>

Ask **Broward Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren** what Florida needs to improve mental health services and she immediately says: "Money."

So does former Broward County Commissioner Lois Wexler. "Clearly, we are grossly underfunded in the state of Florida."

In an investigative series published this month, the Sun Sentinel showed the catastrophic impact of Florida lawmakers' failure to adequately fund mental health care.

The result has been devastating for mentally ill people and the family members who tried to get them help: More than 500 disturbed people in Florida have killed or brutally assaulted a relative since 2000, the newspaper calculated, and countless others have died from suicide.

***REAL Program* bridging gap between police, mental health association in Lincoln, NE** <http://bit.ly/2hp4Rrr>

A Lincoln program is helping bridge the gaps between mental health providers, those who need mental health services and the police officers who are frequently sent to mental crises.

The REAL Program, run by the Mental Health Association of Nebraska, connects Lincoln cops with mental health peers who can help people in need, whether it's a place to sleep, a pamphlet of resources or someone to talk to. The association will send someone who also has struggled with mental health issues to listen, talk and find some hope.

Canada: Group offering *brain injury services at jail* <http://bit.ly/2imLjrx>

The Prince George Brain Injured Group launched a program this year for jail inmates after an informal study suggested the majority of offenders suffer from at least one traumatic head injury.

After dozens of sessions with local offenders and crash-courses with staff Jane Daigle has shared strategies to deal with brain trauma and learned that jail can both be an aggravator and allayer of symptoms she's teaching them to control.

"There needs to be education and there needs to be awareness because brain injury is invisible," said Daigle, BIG's education facilitator and case manager whose main focus this last year has been getting the one-of-a-kind program off the ground. "It's really exciting... To have all those numbers in front of me and see the successes and what worked and what didn't and how the centre up there wants to keep it going and are absolutely willing to do whatever it takes to keep us up there."

In the first eight months, Daigle led 32 sessions with Prince George Regional Correctional Centre inmates, 13 with corrections staff and another 12 with community organizations.

In its first year, more than 45 inmates have gone through five cycles of the Corrections Acquired Brain Injury Education, a Prince George-born approach dreamed up by executive director Alison Hagreen years before.

Why the rate of *Americans on probation* has plummeted to a 20-year low <http://wapo.st/2hp9QZ5>

Probation is the most expansive component of the U.S. correctional system, overseeing more criminal offenders than all jails and prisons combined. During the height of the U.S. crime wave, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, the number of probationers grew by thousands every month, many of whom eventually ended up serving prison terms for more serious crimes.

It can therefore only be good news that a [Bureau of Justice Statistics report](#) released yesterday shows that the rate of Americans being on probation is at a more than 20-year low.

The number of probationers dropped by 78,700 in 2015 — about 2 percent — which is roughly equivalent to the population of Gary, Ind. This latest annual decline continues a trend that began almost a decade ago and has brought the rate of probation supervision down to 1,522 per 100,000 adults, its lowest point since early 1994.

Three factors likely contributed to this generational low in the proportion of Americans who are on probation.

First, the crime rate has [plummeted in recent decades](#), which obviously translates into fewer people becoming involved in the correctional system. Second, innovative probation models using "swift, certain and fair" behavior-change strategies have promoted rehabilitation and [helped more offenders successfully exit the criminal justice system](#).

Third, declining caseloads allow probation departments to devote more resources to each offender, creating a virtuous cycle in which successful probation feeds further success throughout the community supervision system.

***U.S. Correctional Population* at Lowest Level in Over a Decade** <http://nyti.ms/2hxmTaE>

The nation's jail and prison population decreased in 2015, according to federal data released on Thursday, and the number of adults locked up or on parole or probation fell to a level not seen since 2002 while overall crime continued to drop.

Reasons for the declining incarceration rates include the federal prison system releasing thousands of nonviolent drug offenders in 2015 and states seeking to save money by enacting legislation and policies to reduce prison populations.

Local jail fees face legal challenges in court <http://bit.ly/2iOoTk7>

A county in Minnesota has come under fire for its practice of making all arrestees pay a booking fee at the time of their arrest, regardless of whether they are charged or convicted of a crime.

. . . That cost, critics argue, can have a much greater impact on poor arrestees. "While thirty dollars [may not seem like much](#) to the governing class in our society, including lawyers and judges, it is for too many people a vital amount of cash," wrote one federal judge in a dissent in an Illinois-based case involving booking fees, noting that thirty dollars is "roughly the average allotment under the federal Food Stamp program...to help feed an adult for a week," as well as the federal minimum wage for more than half a day of work.

Elsewhere, [such as in Kentucky](#), state and local governments have similarly come under fire for charging arrestees who have been jailed – even those whose charges were dropped – with the costs of their incarceration. Today, the number of Americans in jail, and the average length of their stay, is much higher than in decades past, as Henry Gass [reported for the Monitor](#) last year:

- America's national conversation on race and inequality has reached a crescendo over the past year, and the country's criminal justice system is at the center of it. Few institutions embody the country's issues of racial and economic inequality more starkly, and recent tragedies have amplified calls for reform on both sides of the political aisle...
- There are almost 12 million local jail admissions every year – 20 times the number of prison admissions – according to a report from the [Vera Institute for Justice](#). Jail populations have tripled since the 1980s, with nearly 75 percent of sentenced offenders and pretrial detainees in jail for nonviolent offenses.
- The average length of stay in jail has also increased from 14 days to 23 days [between 1983 and 2013](#).

"Jails are where the [problems of mass incarceration](#) begin," Julian Adler, director of research-practice strategies at the Center for Court Innovation, told the Monitor. "Prison reform is very important, but if you don't focus on how America uses and overuses jail you're really missing that threshold moment where mass incarceration begins."

Idaho's new director of Correction aims to keep prison reforms going <http://bit.ly/2imHrHc>

BOISE — Amid a two-year flurry of prison reform in Idaho, Henry Atencio faces the challenge of maintaining that momentum within the Idaho Department of Correction.

This month, Atencio was named the Department of Correction's new director, succeeding former director Kevin Kempf, who during his tenure oversaw a whirlwind of reform.

Kempf left the department to take a new position as the executive director of the Association of State Correctional Administrators.

His two years as director have been marked by dramatic changes in Idaho's correctional system, from reductions in the use of solitary confinement to changes in prison standards and releasing hundreds of non-violent offenders into parole programs as part of the state's Justice Reinvestment Act

Illinois rethinks its approach to juvenile justice <http://bit.ly/2hpcUUZ>

More than 100 years ago, Illinois became the first state to create a separate court for juveniles. Now, Illinois is once again changing the way it treats young offenders. Part 1 of 3.

. . . In the past nine years, Illinois has reduced the number of incarcerated youth by 62 percent and shifted support to more community-based resources.

The shift comes amid a growing nationwide consensus that juveniles do not benefit from adult like incarceration. In Illinois, it was reinforced by the 2012 resolution of a federal class action lawsuit against the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice brought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Last February, Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner promised to further reduce the state's overall prison population by 25 percent over the next 10 years.

Fears that reducing the juvenile prison population would lead to spikes in crime have proved unfounded.

Maryland jail inmates to be trained to administer overdose drug <http://bsun.md/2hpcVs8>

Inmates finishing their time at Baltimore-area jails will leave with something public health officials hope will save lives — kits containing the overdose antidote naloxone.

The plan is part of a statewide push to teach people to recognize signs of an opiate overdose and increase access to naloxone.

Health officials say recently incarcerated people are particularly susceptible to overdosing — without access to drugs in jail, their tolerance has dropped. And they often associate with drug users.

"We're trying to make sure that the naloxone is in their hands when they leave," said Mary Viggiani, a program manager with the Baltimore County health department. "A very high percentage of people incarcerated are substance users."

Five counties, including Baltimore County, are receiving state funding to pay for naloxone kits as an expansion of a pilot program the state Department of Health and Mental Hygiene launched in Southern Maryland jails this year. Anne Arundel, Frederick, Harford and Washington counties are also getting new funding.

MA: Advocates: Mass. unlawfully isolates mentally ill inmates (Subscription)

<http://bit.ly/2hDjEv>

The inmates remain in isolation despite a state promise to end the practice, according to an attorneys' group.

Montana: Legal problems mount for most vulnerable, Supreme Court commission finds

<http://bit.ly/2hxn99D>

HELENA — Many of Montana's most vulnerable residents who already fear the state's court system feel they have nowhere to turn to get help with legal problems.

Those who earn low to moderate incomes, as well as the homeless population, Native Americans, veterans, senior citizens, domestic violence victims, children and people with disabilities don't know how to access legal assistance or overcome other hurdles such as daunting paperwork and bad past experiences with the courts.

MN: Sen. Al Franken: Juncture of mental-health and criminal systems now a bit safer

<http://strib.mn/2iOBzYq>

This month, when the president signed the "21st Century Cures Act" into law, our country moved toward ending the unfortunate and often tragic practice of substituting jails and prisons for a fully functioning mental-health system.

Progress can't come soon enough for our state, where too many people with mental-health issues are forced into our criminal justice system because they can't find help. Earlier this year, the Star Tribune helped to put a human face on this problem when it published a

series about the growing number of Minnesotans facing mental-health crises who have been jailed or even killed in police encounters.

In the past several years, dozens of Minnesota law-enforcement leaders and mental-health experts have told me that our state and nation can no longer afford to ignore this costly problem.

The United States has only 5 percent of the world's population, but 25 percent of the world's prison population, in part because we've criminalized mental illness. The problem led Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek to call our local jails "the largest mental-health facilities in the state of Minnesota." He estimates up to 30 percent of inmates he supervises have mental-health conditions, and many belong in treatment programs.

The system is also unfair to the law-enforcement officers who are forced to intervene in mental-health crises and make snap judgments with little or no training. And it places a steep burden on taxpayers who must pay the court and incarceration costs of people who should be getting more cost-effective mental-health services.

Virginia: Virginian-Pilot editorial: Lawmakers can do better on mental health

<http://bit.ly/2iOEKJh>

. . . This month, Joint Subcommittee on Mental Health Reform approved several pieces of legislation for the General Assembly to consider in January. Together they represent a dramatic change in the current system, though not an inexpensive one.

The most important is reform of the structure and financing of Virginia's mental health apparatus, with the intent of establishing "consistent access to the full array of comprehensive, high-quality ... services to individuals of all ages regardless of their geographic location or ability to pay."

The measures aim to provide same-day assessment, diagnosis and treatment through community service boards, improve out-patient screening, and bolster communication and record-sharing between care-givers in order to eliminate gaps in treatment.

Left unresolved is whether the CSB system remains the best administrators of service, and how to address the fact that jails now house more people with serious mental illness than do hospitals founded for that very purpose. Expect the subcommittee to tackle those questions in the coming years.

In advancing this legislative package, the subcommittee outlined the funding required to establish a comprehensive system of care, with a conservative estimate in the tens of millions of dollars. However, that seemed to find favor with the governor, who included \$31.7 million in his budget for mental illness and substance abuse.

VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS

CA: Homeless (and Veterans) Benefit from Judge Rogelio Flores' Celebration of 30 Years On Bench <http://bit.ly/2iOskY1>

A celebration of [Santa Barbara County Superior Court](#) Judge Rogelio Flores' lengthy tenure on the bench will also raise money for the [Bridge House Homeless Shelter](#) in Lompoc.

The 30-year anniversary event is planned from 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 12 at the [Dick DeWees Community Center](#), 1120 W. Ocean Ave., in Lompoc

"I'm honored my celebration of 30 years on the bench might be used as an ability to help people in need," said Flores, whose seniority is topped only by [Santa Barbara Judge Thomas Adams](#).

. . . Flores is a proponent of collaborative courts, so much so that he served on the [Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee](#) for the [Judicial Council of California](#), and has lectured nationally and internationally on the topic.

Recently, Flores has been serving as a consultant to the [Office of National Drug Control Policy](#) and the [U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs](#) in the creation of drug courts in Mexico.

. . . He also is a big proponent of the **Veterans Treatment Court in Santa Maria** to help former military members whose struggles returning to civilian life lead to trouble with the law.

"By the time we started veterans court, we had lost several veterans to long-term prison sentences which maybe could have been avoided in a lot of those cases if we had built the infrastructure to give them support in the community," Flores said.

Five months ago, he **started another Veterans Treatment Court in Lompoc**.

"I tell people this is the best work I've done," Flores said.

GA: Macon Judicial Circuit Superior Court Chief Judge Tripp Self Promotion to Georgia Court of Appeals is 'bittersweet' <http://bit.ly/2i7meSq>

In front of a crowd of some 150 people at the state Capitol Monday, Macon Judicial Circuit Superior Court Chief Judge Tripp Self and two others swore to act fairly when they take their seats on the second-highest court in the state.

Gov. Nathan Deal administered the oaths for the Georgia Court of Appeals to Self, as well as to Charlie Bethel and Clyde Reese, who are leaving the state Senate and the Department of Community Health, respectively, for the court.

. . . The new job is exciting, he said, but bittersweet in part because he'll give up oversight of the Macon circuit's [Veterans Court](#). It's a so-called "problem-solving" court that uses strict oversight along with therapies to help certain defendants stay on the right side of the law.

Self's term begins Jan. 1.

ME: "Veterans Court" Founder Judge Mills receives Advocate for Justice Award <http://bit.ly/2imytti>

Superior Court Justice Nancy Mills, of Cornville, has received the 2016 Advocate For Justice Award, Maine Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley announced Thursday in a news release.

The Judicial Branch awards the Advocate For Justice Award annually to a person who has championed the cause of justice most effectively.

. . . In presenting the award, Saufley said Mills has made a significant difference in the delivery of justice, particularly in criminal cases, through the development of two important problem-solving courts: the Co-Occurring Disorder Court and the Veterans Court. Through her consistent commitment to those courts, Justice Mills has created a model for others to follow, she said.

MI: Friends of the North Oakland County Veterans Treatment Courts <http://bit.ly/2i7nyV6>

The Friends of the North Oakland County Veterans Treatment Court (NOCVTC) is comprised of a group of Veterans and community volunteers with one very specific goal ... to assist the

Veterans Treatment Court in helping struggling Veterans assimilate back into civilian life by removing obstacles that are preventing the Veteran to stay focused on a healthy life style.

NY: McMahon 2017: Tackling robberies and burglaries a priority <http://bit.ly/2iOiGEH>
STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- In his first year in office, District Attorney Michael E. McMahon ramped up efforts to tackle drug, gun and domestic-violence crimes.

As he embarks on his second year starting Jan. 1, the D.A. said he wants to build on those programs while intensifying the focus on robbery and burglary cases.

. . . "With his support at the table, we opened a new [Veterans Court](#) to provide services and support to lead our veterans out of the criminal justice system and back to the community," said Pisciotta.

PA: Commissioners create new jobs; raise pay <http://bit.ly/2iOBWIK>

LOCK HAVEN — The Clinton County commissioners approved creation of a number of new positions Thursday, while raising pay for dispatchers and dispatch supervisors (and some court personnel) for the new year.

. . . David Goodwin was hired as specialty courts coordinator at an annual salary of \$49,400.

Speaking on behalf of the last mentioned new position, Clinton County Judge Craig Miller and Probation Supervisor Jason Fultz said the court's new emphasis on alternatives to prison sentences, and initiatives like treatment court, **veterans court**, DUI court and the most recent, a day reporting center, required the new "specialty courts" supervisory position.

TX: Veterans Court & Mental Health Resources Available to Help Veterans
<http://bit.ly/2iJO8nx>

WESLACO – After coming home from war, thousands of veterans find themselves lost when trying to adjust to civilian life. There are places and resources available to help veterans cope.

A counselor at one Rio Grande Valley agency reached out to fellow veterans to begin a program dedicated to them. Some veterans were already at a dead end, no one to turn to, and no place to go. For some life took them to the edge.

The [Military Veteran Peer Center](#) in Harlingen is open to all veterans.

"The only requirement that we have is for them to bring a copy of their DD-214 or their VA ID and that's all we require from them," Anna Castillo said.

Castillo is a veteran's program supervisor with Tropical Texas Behavioral Health.

"My belief, it has opened the doors for our young vets coming out," she said.

. . . "Don't think you're not alone. I thought I was alone, we're always here for you and they're there for us. It might not be perfect, needs a lot of work and that can be fixed, and so can you and so can I," he said.

Zamora eventually found help through the Cameron County Veterans Court three years ago. They help veterans who commit crimes that can be connected to their PTSD, find recovery through counseling and with the support of other veterans.

For more stories and information visit [Heart of the Valley: Mental Health](#).

TX: Texas judge takes specialized court for veterans on the road

<http://apne.ws/2impFUm>

... That's when Ress was flagged for a program that aims to divert certain veterans facing criminal charges into treatment programs instead of sending them through the criminal court system. And rather than requiring veterans to travel to court appearances, this court travels to reach them in five counties near Dallas.

... The judge knew there were other veterans like Ress. He had overseen the Collin County veterans' court since 2013, and neighboring Rockwall County asked him to expand the program there later the same year.

The North Texas Regional Veterans Court, which encompasses those two counties plus the more rural Grayson, Fannin and Kaufman counties, was dedicated in October. The program can take up to two years to complete, depending on the treatment and progress of individual veterans.

Judge John Roach Jr. said the court is a first of its kind, and he hopes it will be replicated in other rural areas without public transportation, where getting to hearings can be a challenge.

... Thirty-three of the more than 450 veterans' court programs nationwide allow defendants or court personnel to attend hearings by video connection, according to court liaisons for the VA. But Roach is the only judge the VA could identify who voluntarily travels outside of his elected county to hold court.

He said video court hearings are valuable, but face-to-face contact is critical with veterans.

TX: Interview: 52 Faces: Bettie Weatherspoon, adult probation officer with the Midland County Adult Probation Department <http://bit.ly/2iJN82S>

... Bettie is an Army veteran herself, having retired from the U.S. Army before beginning a second career as an adult probation officer with the Midland County Adult Probation Department.

Bettie has worked in several capacities for the probation department (misdemeanor officer, felony officer, court unit supervisor, indirect officer) before being asked to help develop and implement the Midland Veterans Treatment Court.

Bettie readily accepted the assignment and has been a key part of making the Veterans Treatment Court successful during its first year of operation.

Bettie currently works as the supervision officer/case manager for the Veterans Treatment Court. She handles the day-to-day supervision of veterans assigned to the court. This means ensuring compliance with the mandates of the court, coordinating treatment services, job services, and various veterans services for these individuals.

Other veterans are also sentenced to a period of adult probation but are not involved with the Veterans Treatment Court. Bettie continually provides resource information to her coworkers to assist these other veterans. She is a constant source of information for this department regarding veterans services.

WI: Christianson: Veterans Treatment Court provides road to recovery

<http://bit.ly/2i7pDAA>

Recently as a mentor, I was part of the second floor courtroom's overflow crowd witnessing five participants graduate from Racine's veterans treatment court.

Brad Behling, Racine's County Veterans Service Officer, dressed in a formal Air Force uniform introduced Racine's Veterans Honor Guard. They escorted the American flag into

the room in cadence to music supplied by the seven-piece Navy Band from Great Lakes. After setting the flag's staff into a floor stand, they saluted, made an about face, and marched out.

With the band providing the melody, we stood and sang our National Anthem followed with me and other former sailors standing at attention while they played Anchors Aweigh. Others attendees did the same when the band played music representing their branch of service. Behling, master of ceremonies, paid homage to Judge Gerald Ptacek who, with others, established Racine's Veteran's Drug Court.

He next introduced Judge Michael Piontek, who weekly presides over the court. Piontek congratulated each participant individually for successfully completing the rigorous program and presented him with a framed certificate. Subsequently, each graduate reflected positively on his experience in drug court.

Several times during the uplifting and emotional ceremony, a catch developed in my throat. It intensified after observing a mature woman wiped her eyes with a hankie. I suspected they were tears of joy, not of sorrow, because through the drug court, a loved one discovered the road to recovery.

Additional resources from my blog

- **LIST OF NATIONAL AND STATE LEGAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR VETERANS**
<http://bit.ly/19DC5zu>
- **U.S. VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS LOCATIONS** <http://bit.ly/1Lf1VX5>

PTS/TBI/MST

DCoE Webinar: TBI, Substance Use: This Is Your Injured Brain on Drugs and Alcohol, Jan. 12th <http://bit.ly/1Ku7pya>

Addiction to substances and traumatic brain injury (TBI) are two very different medical diagnoses. However, medical providers report an increase in patients who experience both conditions at the same time. Though these conditions usually have separate treatment plans, there are health risks to treating one without attention to the other.

Addiction, and active substance use, may significantly worsen a patient's brain injury, prevent full recovery and increase the risk for repeated TBI.

Webinar presenters will explore the complexity and importance of screening TBI patients for substance use, and highlight the specific concerns and complications associated with a patient's continued substance use.

At the conclusion of this webinar, participants will:

- Discuss the prevalence of patients with both substance use disorders and TBI.
- Articulate factors that impact diagnosis and recovery when TBI and substance use disorders are both present.
- Examine the roles of early detection, education and intervention for substance use disorders among TBI patients to improve prognoses for full TBI recovery.

EVENT: Documentary Screening: "Thank You for Your Service" film at Angelika Mosaic Cinema, NYC, Jan 24th <http://gathr.us/screening/18521>.

A screening of the documentary film, [*Thank You For Your Service*](#), hosted by Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 227, will take place at the Angelika Film Center on Tuesday, January 24, 7:30 PM.

Dealing with the mental health issues confronting many recently returning veterans, this is described as one of the best films of the year. For more information, see the movie trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNJrXxHCGDU>

The film takes aim at the failed mental health policies within the U.S. military and their tragic consequences.

It tells the stories of four struggling Iraq War veterans, along with interviews of top military and civilian leaders.

Observing the systemic neglect, the film argues for significant internal change and offers a roadmap of hope.

Interviews include Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Admiral Mike Mullen, Generals David Petraeus and Loree Sutton, Sebastian Junger, Nicholas Kristof, Dexter Filkins, Senator Patty Murray, Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Colonels Lawrence Wilkerson and Dave Sutherland.

VA Research: Home-based tele-mental health benefits Veterans <http://bit.ly/2imlkiP>

Home-based tele-mental health care for depression is well received by patients and delivers as good a quality of life as in-person visits, according to the results of a clinical trial in 241 depressed elderly Veterans reported in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry by investigators at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center (VAMC) and the Medical University of South Carolina.

Finland Research: Biomarkers of Traumatic Brain Injury: Temporal Changes in Body Fluids <http://bit.ly/2imyOwb>

Abstract: Traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) are caused by a hit to the head or a sudden acceleration/deceleration movement of the head. Mild TBIs (mTBIs) and concussions are difficult to diagnose.

Imaging techniques often fail to find alterations in the brain, and computed tomography exposes the patient to radiation.

Brain-specific biomolecules that are released upon cellular damage serve as another means of diagnosing TBI and assessing the severity of injury. These biomarkers can be detected from samples of body fluids using laboratory tests.

Dozens of TBI biomarkers have been studied, and research related to them is increasing.

We reviewed the recent literature and selected 12 biomarkers relevant to rapid and accurate diagnostics of TBI for further evaluation.

The objective was especially to get a view of the temporal profiles of the biomarkers' rise and decline after a TBI event. Most biomarkers are rapidly elevated after injury, and they serve as diagnostics tools for some days. Some biomarkers are elevated for months after injury, although the literature on long-term biomarkers is scarce.

Clinical utilization of TBI biomarkers is still at a very early phase despite years of active research.

Research: VA study finds EEG can help differentiate between PTSD and mild traumatic brain injury <http://bit.ly/2i7ma1F>

A recent VA study points to a possible breakthrough in differentiating between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), otherwise known as a concussion.

The two disorders often carry similar symptoms, such as irritability, restlessness, hypersensitivity to stimulation, memory loss, fatigue and dizziness. Scientists have tried to distinguish between mTBI and PTSD in hopes of improving treatment options for Veterans, but many symptom-based studies have been inconclusive because the chronic effects of the two conditions are so similar. If someone is rating high on an mTBI scale, for example, that person may also rate high for PTSD symptoms.

The researchers used electroencephalogram, or EEG, a test that measures electrical activity in the brain. The size and direction of the brain waves can signal abnormalities.

Analyzing a large set of EEGs given to military personnel from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the researchers saw patterns of activity at different locations on the scalp for mTBI and PTSD. They saw brain waves moving slowly in opposite directions, likely coming from separate places in the brain.

The researchers emphasize that these effects don't pinpoint a region in the brain where the disorders differ. Rather, they show a pattern that distinguishes the disorders when the EEG results are averaged among a large group.

Research: Pentagon Shelves Blast Gauges Meant To Detect Battlefield Brain Injuries <http://n.pr/2i7c2ZZ>

The Pentagon has quietly sidelined a program that placed blast gauges on thousands of combat troops in Afghanistan.

NPR has learned the monitoring was discontinued because the gauges failed to reliably show whether service members had been close enough to an explosion to have sustained a concussion, or mild traumatic brain injury.

But the small wearable devices did produce a trove of data on blast exposure that could eventually have helped researchers understand the links between bomb blasts, concussions and brain diseases. And they produced evidence that many service members are exposed to worrisome levels of blast pressure simply by being near a heavy weapon when it's fired.

The decision to warehouse the blast gauges is "a huge mistake," says retired Gen. [Peter Chiarelli](#), who was the Army's vice chief of staff before retiring in 2012 and is now the chief executive officer of [One Mind](#), a nonprofit focused on brain illness and injury.

Sen. Peters sponsors measure to aid veterans with PTSD; Obama signs into law <http://bit.ly/2hbjUB5> (The Fairness for Veterans amendment)

President Barack Obama has signed into law a bipartisan provision introduced by U.S. Sen. Gary Peters (D-Michigan) to help veterans who may have been given a less than honorable discharge from the military due to negative behavior resulting from mental traumas such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.

The Fairness for Veterans amendment, which Peters authored, was included in the final National Defense Authorization Act conference report that passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate earlier this month.

"This legislation will give our brave men and women who are suffering from the invisible wounds of war an opportunity to access the benefits they've earned through their service," said Peters, a former lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve. "I applaud President Obama for signing this critical provision into law, and I will continue fighting so that service members transitioning back to civilian life have the support they need."

A less than honorable discharge, or bad paper discharge, is often given for instances of minor misconduct such as being late to formation and missing appointments – behavior that can be seen in those diagnosed with PTSD, TBI, and other trauma-related conditions.

Senators Peters, Perdue Introduce *No Heroes Left Untreated Act* <http://bit.ly/2imycqh>

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and David Perdue (R-GA) Wednesday announced they introduced the *No Heroes Left Untreated Act*, legislation that would create a pilot program for innovative medical care for veterans to help treat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and other mental health issues.

. . . The No Heroes Left Untreated Act would establish a pilot program at two medical centers within the VA network and enroll up to 50 veterans in Magnetic EEG/ECG-Guided Resonance Therapy for a one-year period. This is an individualized non-pharmaceutical, non-invasive neuromodulation procedure that applies magnetic stimulation to help facilitate neurorestoration of proper brain function. Over 400 veterans have reported a marked improvement in symptoms associated with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction. The senators' bill is companion legislation to Congressman Steve Knight's *No Heroes Left Untreated Act*, which passed the House of Representatives earlier this year.

The following organizations have expressed their support in the No Heroes Left Untreated Act: U.S. Special Operations Command, Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, Blue Star Families, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans Advantage, American Legion Post 281, 12th Calvary Regiment Association, Patriot Project, Rally Point 6, SEALink Inc, West Care.

***The TBI Family Podcast: The TBI Family: Veterans Affairs Respite Program and a "Battle Buddy" Caregiver* <http://bit.ly/2hp9H82>**

In this third episode, we talk to Dayna Cooper, director of Home and Community Care at the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, who talks about a program designed to give caregivers a break while still providing care for their care recipient. We also chat with Danny O'Neel, an Army veteran who continues to care for his fellow veterans.

The TBI Family is produced by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. This podcast provides caregivers of service members and veterans with TBI with information on traumatic brain injury and highlights resources available to them. We also share caregiver stories.

Link to the VA Respite Care program site: <http://bit.ly/2hp72Lh>

Link to the DVBIC TBI Recovery Support Program (RSP) page <http://bit.ly/1QmOisM>

To subscribe or listen to the podcast on iTunes: <http://apple.co/2hp3nNS>

For information on TBI or to get the DVBIC Family Caregiver Curriculum, go to dvbic.dcoe.mil or email us at info@dvbic.org.

- [Episode 1: The TBI Family](#)
- [Episode 2: The TBI Family: Balance and Mantrams](#)

***Cohen Veterans Bioscience* Newsletter: The Arrow - December 2016**
<http://bit.ly/2iOF0OP>

Year-End Holiday Message from Our CEO - As 2016 draws to a close, I am proud to reflect back on our first year at Cohen Veterans Bioscience. Cohen Veterans Bioscience was created out of impatience for the pace of brain trauma research.

Started with \$47 million in seed funding by philanthropist Steven A. Cohen, we are fast-tracking the development of diagnostics, preventions and cures for trauma-related brain disorders.

In the last year, we have moved quickly to rally the national stakeholder community and jumpstart over a dozen research programs with partners in government, academia and private industry to support our mission objectives.

. . . Across medicine, a new understanding of the biology underlying illness is producing revolutionary treatments for cancer and other diseases that were once considered incurable.

At the same time, advances in genetic analysis, imaging and computing are making the living human brain more accessible to science than ever before.

These developments provide a golden opportunity to develop new diagnostics and treatments for the constellation of trauma-related conditions that affect veterans.

Our progress in year 1 is depicted in the figures below. We are well on track to delivering the first generation of diagnostics and therapeutics for PTSD and TBI.

Magali Haas, MD, PhD
CEO & President of Cohen Veterans Bioscience

Supreme Court leaves *\$1B NFL concussion settlement* in place <http://to.pbs.org/2iOlWio>

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has rejected challenges to the estimated \$1 billion plan by the NFL to settle thousands of concussion lawsuits filed by former players.

The court's action on Monday clears the way for payouts to begin to former players who have been diagnosed brain injuries linked to repeated concussions.

The settlement covers more than 20,000 NFL retirees for the next 65 years. The league estimates that 6,000 former players, or nearly three in 10, could develop Alzheimer's disease or moderate dementia.

Players could receive up to \$5 million each in the case of severe brain trauma. Some former players and relatives of players who have died objected to the settlement.

***MST*: Army: Number of sexual misconduct allegations against senior leaders increases <http://bit.ly/2gZC9gc>**

WASHINGTON — Sexual misconduct and harassment allegations against senior Army leaders increased this year and more were substantiated than in 2015, according to a closely held report by the Army Inspector General.

The memo obtained by The Associated Press also said the most frequent charge lodged against senior officers on active duty, in the National Guard, Reserves and senior executive service in the past budget year was reprisal, with nearly 50 such allegations as of Sept. 30.

The total number of cases is small, but they represent some of the more serious misconduct concerns faced by the military. And they underscore the fact that transgressions are occurring in the higher ranks, not rooted simply in the younger enlisted force.

Sexual misconduct — which includes assault, harassment and improper affairs — and professional reprisals or retaliation have long been identified by the Pentagon as thorny problems with no easy solutions. The Army and the other military services have beefed up training and education across the military and civilian force and have developed a number of new programs aimed at stemming the problems and getting more victims to come forward and seek aid or treatment.

Whether the increase in allegations suggests a growing problem or just that victims are more willing to step forward isn't clear.

Additional resources from my blog

- **RESURRECTING LIVES FOUNDATION** <http://bit.ly/1R9toOV>
- **EVENTS FOR VETERANS & VETERAN SERVICE PROVIDERS** <http://bit.ly/1Gg1nOi>

SUICIDE

VA: New Veterans Crisis Line expansion nearly *doubles suicide prevention staff*
<http://bit.ly/2i71QTI>

Veteran Affairs officials on Tuesday officially open the new Atlanta office for the department's Veteran Crisis Line, nearly doubling the program's capacity to aid suicidal veterans and servicemembers.

The move comes amid growing demand on the service but also scrutiny over its operations. The round-the-clock hotline has fielded more than 2.6 million calls and intervened with emergency services more than 67,000 times in the program's nine-year history, and department leaders are hailing the expansion as a critical need.

. . . The second site for the program -- until recently, all operations were handled through Canandaigua VA Medical Center in New York -- will mean a boost in call responders from 310 to more than 500 and an increase in social service assistants from 43 to nearly 80.

NE: The complicated why of veteran suicide <http://bit.ly/2i7rB43>

The Lincoln Journal Star – Part 2: For many soldiers, the fight isn't over when they return home. Read our special report on veteran suicides and the individuals, groups and agencies working to help those in need.

Research: U.S.A.F. Innovation Shows Promise in Fighting Veteran Suicide and Cancer Mortality While Reducing Sepsis <http://bit.ly/2iJXZKh>

The High Reliability Organization Counsel (HROC) and Sepsis Alliance are partnering to deploy the Military Acuity Model (MAM), which helps save patient lives by reducing task saturation in hospitals.

Studies have shown that MAM reduces the incidents of sepsis, and public-private partnerships that implement MAM may be able to significantly lower veteran suicide and cancer mortality rates.

- [MAM in Fighting VA Suicide/Cancer While Reducing Sepsis \(Learn More\)](#)

Ft. Hood: Veterans service officer brings awareness to suicide, depression
<http://bit.ly/2iK2299>

The holiday season sees an increase in the number of soldiers, veterans and even civilians who either contemplate or attempt to kill themselves, according to veterans service officers and peer network leaders working to bring those numbers down.

"The big thing with suicide — and I deal with this myself — is loneliness," said Coryell County Veterans Service Officer Tony Smith. "These (soldiers) get here and, yeah, they may have made a lot of friends on post, made a lot of friends out in the community, but a lot of those friends are gone at this time of the year on (vacation)."

Smith said he receives more calls from people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts during the holidays, regardless of the holiday.

"I've been to a lot of calls and a lot of suicides," he said. "I get 3 a.m. phone calls, calls at 4 a.m. or 1:30 a.m. In the last few weeks, I've seen at least five (attempted suicides). And (those cases were) because they don't have the money to go home for the holidays. They get to drinking, start thinking about stupid things."

Smith said he's been called to at least 15 suicide attempts since the beginning of November, and those are just the calls he's had for places such as Copperas Cove or Gatesville, the area he primarily serves as a Coryell County VSO. The calls were for both active-duty soldiers and for veterans.

Fort Hood has recorded at least 13 confirmed suicide cases in 2016 before Christmas, with four other cases pending. By March 2016, the total Army, which includes National Guard and Reserve, had already reported 64 suicides, according to Army records.

USA Today: Suicide kills more U.S. troops than ISIL in Middle East

<http://usat.ly/2iOBUDn>

WASHINGTON — Suicide — not combat — is the leading killer of U.S. troops deployed to the Middle East to fight Islamic State militants, according to newly released Pentagon statistics.

U.S. casualties have been relatively low since the U.S.-led war effort began with a bombing campaign in August 2014, reflecting the limited combat exposure for troops. Of the 31 troops who have died as of Dec. 27 in Operation Inherent Resolve, 11 have taken their own lives. Eight died in combat, seven in accidents and four succumbed to illness or injury. The cause of one death is under investigation.

The reasons suicide ranks as the No. 1 cause of troop deaths are complex and poorly understood, according to experts on military suicide. They likely include mental illnesses that enlistees brought with them to boot camp, post-traumatic stress, multiple combat deployments and heightened anxiety in a military at war for 16 years.

"I don't think there's one single cause for it," said Rajeev Ramchand, a senior behavioral scientist at the Rand Corp. who has studied military suicide. "There are a multitude of factors. They are also picking up on a trend toward more suicide in the U.S. population as a whole. Maybe there's a universal stress on everyone in the military that affects them in profound ways."

Canada: Rise in *first-responder suicides* leads to calls for better WorkSafe BC coverage

<https://goo.gl/oJA00c>

She waited until Boxing Day to update the grim tally she keeps on a [website](#) devoted to first responders struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder. Then, with a quick keystroke, 18 suicides in 2016 became 19.

Jennings, a former paramedic, began tracking suicides by B.C. first responders last year after a fire chief called to tell her about one at his hall. Before that, the Victoria woman maintained her website, [You Are Not Alone PTSD BC](#), to provide support and resources to first responders, as well as to draw attention to what she sees as inadequate workers' compensation laws that make it tough to get help.

B.C.'s suicide rate among first responders, which rose from 14 last year, is higher than any other province, according to the [Tema Conter Memorial Trust](#). It strengthened Jennings' belief that it should be easier for such staff to make a mental illness claim with [WorkSafeBC](#).

**ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE NEWS IS POSTED IN
THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SECTION BELOW**

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Think college, think health care, think VA <http://bit.ly/2i7nNzK>

The New Year is the perfect time to take stock of your future and your career path. If you are considering a new direction, there are several health care occupations that are always looking for talented professionals.

VA is the largest employer of health care workers in the country, committed to hiring Veterans. If you are transitioning from the military, a current Veteran, an active Reserve or National Guard member, we invite you to explore the benefits of a career at VA.

VA offers numerous benefits, resources, and services to help Veterans transition from military to civilian jobs and enhance their education, skills, and careers, including providing [education and training assistance](#), [vocational and employment counseling](#), and [job-seeking tools](#). These are in addition to benefits already earned via the GI Bill.

If you are a VA employee interested in transitioning into a health care position, it likely will entail education to earn a certification, license or degree. From tuition assistance to loan repayment programs, VA may support you by helping build the skills that can grow careers.

We encourage VA employees and trainees to pursue continuous education by offering one of the most [comprehensive education support programs](#) in the Nation. Continuous learning is essential to health care professionals' ability to provide top-notch patient care. Ask your manager about opportunities that may be available for you.

Baylor University/George Mason University: U.S. Supreme Court Brief: Opening a Door to Malpractice Suits Against the Veterans Administration (Subscription)

<http://bit.ly/2iJUKfg>

When veteran Richard Milbauer sued the government for medical negligence, a federal court ruled it did not have jurisdiction to hear the case.

That decision could leave all veterans without a way to obtain judicial review of their malpractice claims against Veterans Administration hospitals, a petition for certiorari in *Milbauer v. United States* warns.

Reed Smith filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of two law school clinics: the Antonin Scalia Law School Mason Veterans and Servicemembers Legal Clinic and the Baylor Law School Veterans' Assistance Clinic.

Harvard Business Review: A Transformation Is Underway at U.S. Veterans Affairs. We Got an Inside Look. <http://bit.ly/2iOGU1L>

. . . A [Harvard Business School case study](#) that Robert Huckman, Sam Travers, and I wrote earlier this year documents what came next. "Organizations are perfectly designed to get the results they get," notes McDonald. "If you don't like the results you are getting, then you need to change the design of the organization."

In this case, McDonald set out to transform the design of VA to help the organization better achieve its mission for veterans.

McDonald and his team's approach was heavily influenced by [John Kotter's eight steps for effective organizational change](#). Although the transformation remains ongoing, they have made considerable progress after two and a half years: [Pending claims at VA have fallen by more than 90%](#); [VA healthcare now performs better than the private sector on 96% of outpatient measures](#), according to RAND; and [by the end of the year, all VA hospitals will offer same-day access to care](#), relative to none in 2014. In a survey conducted last month,

75% of veterans reported that VA effectively delivers care and services, up from 65% just a year ago.

During a recent visit to the [Managing Service Operations course I teach to MBA students at Harvard Business School](#), McDonald reflected on the lessons he had learned at VA and their significance for service transformation both inside and outside the public sector.

University of London Research: Hypothermia Raises Survival Chances In Traumatic Brain Injury <http://bit.ly/2hy7oPK>

Lowering the body temperature in people who have suffered a [traumatic brain injury](#) (TBI), as soon as possible after the trauma, may significantly improve chances of survival in adults, suggests research from Royal Holloway College, University of London.

Purposely lowering the body temperature, known as therapeutic hypothermia (TH), involves reducing the body temperature of a person to protect [neurons](#) from being killed off or damaged.

[Professor Pankaj Sharma](#), Director of the Institute of Cardiovascular Research at Royal Holloway, said:

“Lowering the body temperature to treat people with TBI is a controversial treatment, but one that our latest research has shown to reduce deaths and long-term injury. We have undertaken the largest such analysis of data on the use of therapeutic hypothermia and have found that patients have an 18% better chance of surviving and a 35% improvement in neurological outcome if they are given this treatment.”

Northwestern University Research: Auditory Response is a Biomarker for Concussion <http://bit.ly/2iOwdfw>

Summary: Researchers note distinct patterns of neural activity as a response to auditory stimuli in patients with concussion.

The secret to reliably diagnosing concussions lies in the brain’s ability to process sound, according to a new study by researchers from Northwestern University’s Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory.

Widely considered a crisis in professional sports and youth athletic programs, sports-related concussions have had devastating neurological, physical, social and emotional consequences for millions of athletes. Still, no single test has been developed to reliably and objectively diagnose concussions.

The groundbreaking research, published in the journal Nature, Scientific Reports, has found a biological marker in the auditory system that could take the ambiguity and controversy out of diagnosing concussions and tracking recovery.

“This biomarker could take the guesswork out of concussion diagnosis and management,” said lead author Nina Kraus, the Hugh Knowles Professor in the School of Communication and director of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory. “Our hope is this discovery will enable clinicians, parents and coaches to better manage athlete health, because playing sports is one of the best things you can do.”

State College of Florida Venice receives donations for veteran scholarships <http://bit.ly/2imuLzY>

[The State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota](#) has received donations for veteran scholarships.

- **SCF Venice receives donations for veteran scholarships**
- **Student veterans provided with \$1,000 scholarships**

•
The money will be used to provide SCF Venice student veterans with individual \$1,000 scholarships.

For the second year in a row, the Venice American Legion is donating its proceeds from its annual golf tournament to the school. The tournament raised \$7,300.

That amount combined with the previous donations from the legion will sustain the veterans' scholarships for more than six years.

SCF Venice serves about 300 student veterans and their dependents.

For more information, [click here](#).

Several *WNY colleges* ranked as best colleges for veterans <http://bit.ly/2imDLFa>

Military Times has ranked several Western New York colleges as best colleges for vets in 2017.

Among four-year colleges and universities, D'Youville College was ranked as the 5th best in the country. Niagara University earned a ranking as the 44th best and the University at Buffalo as the 77th best out of 130 schools that won honors.

Niagara Community College was ranked 21st in the country for two-year colleges. In that category, only 25 colleges were honored.

GENERAL NEWS

2017 Agenda For *Florida Women Veterans* <http://bit.ly/2imD6Uy>

With the New Year comes a new [women veterans' coordinator](#) for the state of Florida, Army veteran Darlene Scully, and an ambitious agenda for 2017.

In addition to her job reviewing veterans' claims, Scully took on the position two months ago to be a voice for women vets who currently make up 10 percent of the 1.6 million veterans in Florida.

"I really want to get more involved in outreach, more involved in what's going on at the VA and what they're offering as far as women veterans' health issues," Scully said.

That includes mental health. Scully has a graduate degree in forensic psychology and is working on a masters' degree in mental health counseling. She's particularly interested in helping women vets dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or military sexual trauma (MST).

Fewer ex-soldiers collecting *unemployment* <http://bit.ly/2hpepIT>

FORT KNOX, Ky. - The Army closed out Fiscal Year 2016 with the lowest amount of unemployment compensation for ex-service members in 13 years at \$172.8 million, according to the Department of Labor.

Fiscal Year 2016 is the first time unemployment compensation for ex-service members has dipped below the \$200 million mark since 2003, where it closed out at \$152 million. The decrease in unemployment compensation is encouraging to transitioning soldiers and Army veterans looking to find employment, pursue education, or access other civilian opportunities.

. . . "We are excited to see that more Army veterans are finding careers after they transition off of active duty service and fewer are having to file for unemployment compensation," said retired Col. Walter Herd, director of the Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program, based at Fort Knox, Ky.

In the past few years, the Army has placed substantial efforts in assisting soldiers with developing civilian career skills during their transition through a remodeled Army transition program. SFL-TAP is required to be completed by all soldiers with at least 180 days of continuous active-duty service.

The program teaches soldiers career skills such as resumé writing, financial planning, benefits education, job application preparation, military skills translation and more, which has resulted in soldiers becoming more prepared for civilian life.

LA Times Investigation: *Child abuse in the military: Failing those most in need*

<http://lat.ms/2iK5FvV>

. . . The Pentagon has struggled to deal with a little-noticed cascade of child abuse and neglect cases in military families in the years since America went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, a Times investigation has found.

Previously unreleased reports by the Army, Navy and Air Force reveal numerous cases where military officials knew or suspected that child abuse or neglect was occurring — but failed to intervene or to alert the Family Advocacy Program or state child welfare agencies, The Times found.

In many cases, the reports blamed military personnel for failing to report cases of abuse and neglect to FAP officials.

FAP "is not accessing those most in need due to ... failure on the part of others to report concerns or maltreatment incidents," warned an internal 2014 report on 27 deaths in Army families.

Michigan companies, state agencies *hiring more vets* <http://on.freep.com/2iOKvNI>

LANSING — With state encouragement, Michigan companies — and state agencies — are stepping up to hire more veterans.

According to data on the state's website, the unemployment rate for Michigan veterans has dropped from a peak of 15.9% in 2010 to below 5% today.

Gov. Rick Snyder said some of the credit for that decline belongs with the Veteran-Friendly Employer program, sponsored by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. Michigan employers participating in the program hired more than 2,700 veterans in 2016, Snyder said.

'America loves you': *Jay Leno* surprises wounded veteran with new car

<http://on.today.com/2htPPQS> (Today Show Video)

Behind every salute and every handshake from a soldier, there's a great story. Jay Leno set out to share one of those stories, and went above and beyond to show his appreciation for their service — by giving a soldier a brand new car.

Additional resources from my blog

- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS** <http://bit.ly/1Gg21LH>
- **EVENTS FOR VETERANS & VETERANS SERVICE PROVIDERS** <http://bit.ly/1Gg1nOi>
- **VETERANS JOB LISTINGS AND HIRING FAIRS WEBSITES** <http://bit.ly/19Dz2ay>
- **NEWSLETTERS & BLOG FOR VETERANS** <http://bit.ly/1GQzKjf>

"VETERANS IN JUSTICE" LinkedIn Professional Group (VIJ)

Please join us on LinkedIn or Facebook for networking and discussions on the issues regarding veterans in the criminal justice system. This group's mission is to connect professionals and advocates who work with and for justice-involved veterans and to share ideas and practices for assisting those veterans -- from the conditions that lead to justice involvement, through initial police contact, arrest, criminal case processing, conviction, sentencing, incarceration, and release. Access our group at <http://linkd.in/1947vfS> Facebook: www.facebook.com/veteransinjustice

Join The National Discussion - 1,336 Professionals in VIJ Group

Active Topics

- [Tips for discussing one's conviction record in a way that makes a positive impression on employers](#)
- [NYC Highlights AmericaServes](#)
- [Interview with Hector Barajas](#)
- [Interview with Penny Coleman](#)
- [Interview with Jimmie Lee Coulthard](#)
- [VA Not Responding to Suicide Calls from Vets](#)
- More . . .

LINKEDIN GROUPS

[Military and Veteran Benefit Forum](#)

Veteran Mentor Network <http://linkd.in/1fOlgOt> 28,933 members

Institute for Veteran Cultural Studies <http://linkd.in/1cz3gq1>

NAMI <http://linkd.in/1cz3Gg7>

BI-IFEA (Brain injury-Ideas for Education & Advocacy) <http://linkd.in/1cz4e5V>

Military-Civilian: Hot Jobs and Careers for Veterans and Their Families <http://linkd.in/1c59DkM>

VETERANS IN JUSTICE GROUP <http://linkd.in/12APdMS>

Cuyahoga County Ohio Veterans and Supporters (Bryan A. McGown "Gunny") <http://linkd.in/Zxwx1f>

Veteran Employment Representatives <http://linkd.in/ZxwUcc>

MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS POST DEPLOYMENT FOR PROVIDERS, COMBAT VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES

<http://bit.ly/1RVPLFI>

Midwest Military Outreach, Inc. <http://linkd.in/1eiMTkJ>

Military Veteran Job Fairs & Hiring Conferences <http://linkd.in/Zxx4jS>

Wounded Warrior Resources <http://linkd.in/17TMNhJ>

The Value of a Veteran <http://linkd.in/15vD7H4>

MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS POST DEPLOYMENT FOR PROVIDERS, COMBAT VETERANS & THEIR FAMILIES

<http://linkd.in/1fkOLA8>

(Please email us other groups that you find and think would be informative and useful for our audience)

VETERANS IN THE COURTS INITIATIVE BLOG

estrattonconsulting.wordpress.com

To focus this newsletter on veterans-related criminal justice and mental illness issues and to shorten it to a more manageable size, we have moved our tables & lists of reference materials and other longer term information to retired Justice Stratton's blog. Please follow the links below for that information.

Operation Legal Help Ohio http://bit.ly/1Gq0HbK	National Legal Assistance http://bit.ly/19DC5zu	VA Town Halls & Events http://bit.ly/1Gg1DN6
Jobs & Hiring Fairs Listings http://bit.ly/19Dz2ay	Events: Conferences, Webinars, etc. http://bit.ly/1Gg1nOi	Additional Resources http://bit.ly/1Gg21LH
Current Newsletter http://bit.ly/19ovER5	2015 Newsletters http://bit.ly/1FKASAC	Ohio Resources For Veterans http://bit.ly/19ouWn0

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Editor's Note: Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations that provide articles for these news clips every week. I would especially like to thank and urge you to follow:

- **USMC 1stLt Andrew T. Bolla**, PIO at the USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment, publisher of *WWR In the News, DoD Morning News of Note*
- **Lily Casura**, journalist, author and founder of Healing Combat Trauma - the award-winning, first website to address the issue of combat veterans and PTSD (established February 2006)
- **U.S. Army Colonel (Ret.) Wayne Gatewood**, of Quality Support Inc. Wayne disseminates a daily Veterans News e-mail to an international audience
- **Dr. Ingrid Herrera-Yee**, Project Manager, Military Spouse Mental Health Pipeline, National Military Family Association. Dr. Herrera-Yee is currently a Board Member for the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Military Spouses of Strength, Military Mental Health Project and the National Guard Suicide and Resiliency Council among others. She has also been a special contributor to NBC News, Military Times, Air Force Times, Military Spouse Magazine and BuzzFeed. She spends her free time mentoring spouses through eMentor and Joining Forces. Dr. Herrera-Yee received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and was a Clinical Fellow at Harvard University.
- **U.S. Army Colonel (Ret.) James Hutton**, Director of Media Relations at the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- **Justice for Vets**, Justice For Vets is a professional services division of the National Association of Drug Court professionals, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Alexandria, VA. Justice for Vets believes that no veteran or military service member should suffer from gaps in service, or the judicial system when they return to their communities. As the stewards of the Veterans Treatment Court movement
- **Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren**, Pioneer, America's first mental health court dedicated to the decriminalization of people with mental illness
- **Mary Ellen Salzano**, founder facilitator of the CA Statewide Collaborative for our Military and Families
- **Patrick W. Welch, PhD**, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret), Veterans Advocate & Educator, Buffalo Veterans Treatment Court - Senior Mentor

HOW TO JOIN OUR NEWSLETTER

There are three ways to join my newsletter:

- Join my *Veterans In The Courts* Initiative Google Group at <http://bit.ly/1DZ3esD> or,
- Subscribe to my *Veterans In The Courts Initiative* Blog for immediate news and for my weekly newsletter at <http://bit.ly/1DP1TCi> or,
- Please contact my editor Pete Miller at cruzen@gmail.com and request to be added.

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