

## A Jail Diversion Program for Veterans with Co-occurring Disorders: MISSION – DIRECT VET

An estimated 18.5% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have an active mental health condition<sup>1</sup> and over half have two or more mental health diagnoses.<sup>2</sup> Growing concern over criminal justice system involvement is stemming from evidence that approximately three of every four Vietnam veterans experience co-occurring disorders<sup>3</sup> and that individuals with co-occurring mental illness/substance use disorders are disproportionately represented in jails and prisons.<sup>4</sup>

Addressing these concerns is MISSION DIRECT VET, (Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach, and Networking Diversion & Recovery for Traumatized Veterans, “MDV”) a study funded by a grant from SAMHSA to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) being conducted by the UMass Medical School, UMass Boston, Veterans Administration, DMH, and other state agencies. This court-based diversion program serves Massachusetts veterans with trauma-related mental health and substance use problems. MDV seeks to:

- reduce criminal justice involvement
- treat mental health, substance abuse and other trauma related symptoms
- use a systematic wrap-around model
- provide care coordination, and peer support and trauma informed services
- develop interagency partnerships

### STUDY GOALS

- Identify veteran criminal defendants with Axis I Disorders and/or trauma history and substance use disorders prior to sentencing
- Propose services and treatment options as alternatives to incarceration
- Coordinate services between treatment providers and the courts, attorneys, jails, probation officers, and houses of correction

### INTERVENTION DESIGN

MDV is court-based, diverting veterans post-adjudication. Inclusion criteria are:

- >18 years old
- Veteran status
- Trauma history or other Axis I psychiatric disorder
- Substance abuse or dependence
- Criminal charge(s)

Once eligibility has been determined, MDV personnel conduct a clinical assessment and present a treatment plan to defense counsel, who may present the MDV option to the court in lieu of incarceration. Criminal justice personnel and public defenders receive training on the mental health needs of returning veterans and on the MDV program. MDV clinical teams, consisting of Case Managers and Peer Support Specialists, receive training in veteran-focused trauma-informed care.

### MDV participants receive 12 months of:

- Critical Time Intervention case management (time intensive intervention promoting community services engagement and supports)
- Dual Recovery Therapy (counseling for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders involving the teaching and reinforcement of self-management skills)
- Peer support role modeling of recovery behaviors reinforcing treatment engagement
- Manualized MISSION approach:
  1. Care coordination and wraparound model
  2. Integrated Dual Recovery Therapy, Critical Time Intervention, and Peer Support
  3. Treatment manual and consumer workbook<sup>5,6</sup>
  4. Trauma-informed care



**Additional wraparound services include referrals and linkages to services as needed.**

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