

MISSION DIRECT VET

BACKGROUND

Through a federally funded 5-year service grant¹, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), in partnership with investigators at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) and the Veterans Administration (VA), along with numerous state agencies, has developed a court based jail diversion program with priority to veterans: MISSION-DIRECT VET². A pilot service began in the Fall of 2009 in Worcester, the Lawrence site opened in November, 2010 and an additional site will start in Spring, 2011.

BASIC ELEMENTS

Purpose: The jail diversion component of the project seeks to provide services and treatment to veterans as an alternative to incarceration.

Services: For 12 months individuals regularly meet with our treatment team to address mental health and substance abuse issues. Throughout the program our peer specialist and case manager work with the individual to connect them with additional services as needed. These services may include medical and mental health care, substance abuse treatment, veterans' services, vocational programs, transitional residence programs and family support.

Eligibility: To be eligible for our program an individual must have:

- a history of military service (conditions of discharge are not an issue),
- current involvement with the criminal justice system (pending charges),
- mental health problems,
- alcohol and/or substance abuse difficulties,
- and finally, individuals must be able to receive and access services in one of our sites: Worcester or Lawrence.

Contact:

Phone: 1-866-309-3359 (toll free)

Email: mission.direct.vet@umassmed.edu

KEY PERSONNEL:

Debra Pinals, MD, Principal Investigator, Assistant Commissioner, Forensic Mental Health Services, DMH

David Smelson, PsyD, Co-Principal Investigator, Professor & Vice Chair of Clinical Research, Department of Psychiatry, UMMS; Director of Translational Research, Edith Nourse Veterans Administration; Director of Co-Occurring Disorders, VA New England Health Care System (VISN 1)

1. Funding for this project was awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (SM-58804): \$2.1 million over 5 years.

2. MISSION-DIRECT VET stands for Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach and Networking-Diversion and Recovery for Traumatized Veterans