Embedding Lawyers in Veteran Service Provider Organizations

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Veterans’ Legal Needs and the VA:

What is the value of legal services for Veterans?

VA’s annual CHALENG* survey of homeless Veterans, VA staff, and other providers consistently reveals that:

– **5 of homeless Veterans’ top 10 unmet needs are legal needs**
  - eviction/foreclosure issues,
  - child support and family law,
  - outstanding warrants/fines, and
  - restoring driver’s licenses
  - discharge upgrades

* Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education & Networking Groups (CHALENG)
VA’s Medical-Legal Partnerships (MLPs)

- What is an MLP? **It’s more than just a referral.**
  
  *Care delivery collaboration between Medical and Legal practitioners*

  1. VA medical providers work directly with on-site pro bono attorneys and are trained to detect Veterans’ legal needs
  2. Healthcare team refers Veteran to the legal team, whose attorneys provide advice, intervention, and representation
  3. The result? ➔ Improved medical and legal outcomes for Veterans

- Currently, VA has **17** Medical-Legal Partnerships at VA facilities across the country.
Authority for Legal Clinics in VA facilities

- **VHA Directive 2011-034**: VA Medical Centers and staff are *encouraged* to make space available for legal service providers to assist Veterans.
- Currently, 151+ pro bono legal clinics (including 17 Medical Legal Partnerships) serve Veterans in VA facilities operate under this directive’s guidance.
- VA’s Legal Partners vary: legal aid organizations, pro bono attorneys from law firms, state and local bar associations, law school clinics, etc.
- Full list of VA facilities’ legal clinics: [http://www.va.gov/ogc/docs/LegalServices.pdf](http://www.va.gov/ogc/docs/LegalServices.pdf)
- **Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) Social Workers** often coordinate/refer for these legal services.
## VA MLP Expansion Initiative

**VA MLP Pipeline**

### Exploratory
- Potential ripe candidates for MLP pilot (Identified by leadership OR local VA MLP champion OR local Legal Aid org interested in MLPs)
- Activities: Contact VAMC Director or COS to engage on MLP pilot idea
- Raise awareness and support preparing for MOU

### Aspirational
- Local VA MLP Champion AND local Legal Aid org identified
- Commitment from local Legal Aid org to pursue MLP
- Commitment from at least one VAMC/CBOC clinic/department to coordinate with the Legal Aid partner
- Activities: Identifying needs and resources, preparing for MOU

### Operational
- Signed MOU, dedicated MLP resources in place (space in VAMC, IT resources, legal staffing of MLP clinic, etc)
- Trainings completed for clinical and legal staff
- MLP is operating: staffed for casework ≥4 hrs/week OR accepts ≥5 cases/month (avg)

### Mature
- “Operational” for 18 consecutive months OR
- “Operational” for 24 total months OR
- “Operational” with staffing ≥40 hrs/week for 6 months AND
- ≥8 cases closed /month (avg) OR
- Cases closed from ≥5 unique Veterans/month

### Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-MLP</th>
<th>MLP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition</strong></td>
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<td>• Marion, IL</td>
<td>• Viera, FL Outpatient Clinic</td>
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<td>• San Francisco Health System: SF VAMC</td>
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<td>• Fayetteville, AR</td>
<td>• Greater Los Angeles Health System: West Los Angeles VAMC</td>
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<td>• Palo Alto, CA</td>
<td>• New York Harbor Healthcare System (5): Manhattan Campus</td>
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<td>• Miami, FL VAMC</td>
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**VA**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VA MLP Expansion Initiative
Contact Us

➢ Does your facility already have a legal clinic or MLP?
➢ Would you like additional information on how to partner with legal services to be provided on-site at the VA?

Contact the Medical Legal Partnership Taskforce at: VAMLPTaskforce@va.gov
Swords to Plowshares Services

Supportive Housing Programs

Employment & Job Training

Policy and Community Education

Health & Social Services

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Legal Services
Swords to Plowshares’ Impact

**OUR IMPACT: 2016**
Comprehensive, veteran-centered programs that work

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA HOMELESS, LOW-INCOME & AT-RISK VETERANS SERVED**
- 2,869
  - 2 drop-in service centers
  - 7 supportive housing sites
  - 4 ongoing legal clinics
  - 28% enrolled in more than 1 program

**INCREASING INCOME IS KEY TO OUR MISSION**
We help veterans get jobs, secure disability benefits and free healthcare, and manage their finances
- 1,457 were living off less than $1,000/month when they sought help
- Staff and pro bono attorneys secured $11.2 million in disability benefits
- 106 received ongoing money management

Employment program clients increased their income by 45%

**HOUSING IS CRITICAL TO STABILITY**
- 1,408 veterans were homeless upon entry
- 1,020 secured permanent housing
- 207 others avoided eviction
- 236 stabilized their lives at one of our transitional housing programs
- 408 made their home at one of our permanent supportive housing sites
- We provided 923 nights of emergency housing

**AGING VETERANS HAVE COMPLEX HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS**
- 51% served were over 55 years old
- 286 senior veterans live in one of our permanent supportive housing sites
- 33% of employment program clients were over 55

**ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS IS THE FIRST STEP TO REMOVING BARRIERS**
- 747 received ongoing case management
- 271 received mental health assessments
- 40% sought help at our Health and Social Services Drop-in Center

We serve on average 48 new clients monthly

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS INCREASE OUR IMPACT**
- 350 pro bono attorneys from 46 law firms & corporations staffed legal clinics that served 334 veterans
- 121 veteran cases placed with pro bono attorneys
- 2,241 police, clinicians, behavioral health providers, educators & human resource professionals received our unique Combat to Community™ training.
Swords to Plowshares has partnered with the VA to run an MLP and legal clinics at three medical sites:

1. San Francisco VA Medical Center
2. Menlo Park VA Residential Facility
3. Oakland VA Vet Center

These VA sites are markedly different in their delivery of health services:

1. VA Medical Centers are comprehensive medical sites with full hospital services
2. VA Residential Facilities provide recovery programs for veteran residents
3. VA Vet Centers provide behavioral therapy and readjustment counseling
Oakland VA Vet Center MLP

- Swords to Plowshares Oakland Vet Center MLP launched in November 2016. It is the first, and currently only, MLP at a VA Vet Center.

- To qualify for therapy at Vet Centers, veterans must have experienced combat or MST.

- VA Vet Centers are unique: unlike other parts of the VA health system, Vet Centers’ doors are open to veterans with all discharge statuses.

- The weekly onsite Vet Center legal clinics are staffed by a Skadden Fellow/Staff Attorney, whose legal services focus on discharge upgrades.

- Vet Center therapists refer veterans directly to the attorney. They also support legal cases by providing medical evidence on veterans’ service-connected mental illnesses.
MISSION UNITED

Proudly Serving Those Who Have Served

MISSION UNITED is aligning and mobilizing resources to organize a comprehensive system of support.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**: Linking Qualified Veterans to Our Employer Partners
- **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**: Connecting Eligible Veterans with Pro Bono Legal Services
- **EDUCATION**: Creating a Path to a Career
- **FINANCIAL SERVICES**: Providing Access to Financial Resources
- **HEALTH**: Accessing Healthcare After Active Duty
- **HOUSING SUPPORT**: Helping End Veteran Homelessness

954.4.UNITED (954.486.4833) | MISSIONUNITED.ORG
MISSION UNITED

- MISSION UNITED is a grassroots initiative founded in 2013 by the United Way of Broward County for the purpose of connecting veterans to community resources.
- Since then, MISSION UNITED has engaged the community to develop projects where resources were limited or did not exist.
- In November 2016, MISSION UNITED announced national expansion, making it the first local United Way program to be picked up by United Way Worldwide.
- To date, there are 20 United Ways across the country that have implemented (or are in the process of implementing) their own MISSION UNITED.
- By utilizing 2-1-1, MISSION UNITED will have one central contact number available 24/7.
### Employment (HVRP)
- 1576 Veterans Assisted
- 463 Offers of Employment
- 100+ Employer Partners

### Legal
- 4591 Legal Assessments
- 339 Cases Placed
- 407 Pro Bono Attorneys
- 639 Housing Defense
- 390 Handled in-house

### Education/Mentorship
Mission United has a presence on major South Florida campuses and can provide 1 on 1 career mentoring

### Engagement
- 200+ Engagement and Fund Raising Events:
  - Career Bootcamps
  - Restocking Drives
  - Backpacks and Supplies

### Healthcare
- 1930 Veterans assisted through Henderson Behavioral Health & Nova Southeastern University
- Services include dental, PTSD therapy, family counseling, behavioral health

### Housing (SSVF)
- Striving to end Veteran homelessness in Broward County
- 1143 Families Rehoused
- 718 Households Retained
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MISSION UNITED

The challenges that veterans face are too big and complex for any single organization to solve alone.

Highlighting Community Partnerships:

Legal Aid Service of Broward County
Coast to Coast Legal Aid of Broward County
Career Source Broward
Henderson Behavioral Health
Nova Southeastern University
Miami VA Healthcare System
Vet Centers
2-1-1
LegalHealth is the nation’s largest medical-legal partnership; it is housed within the New York Legal Assistance Group.

More than 40 attorneys staff legal clinics in 28 hospitals throughout New York.

Legal services provided: housing, immigration, family, public benefits, VA benefits, discharge upgrades, employment, health insurance, advance planning.

Seven legal clinics at three large VA medical centers in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Northport, Long Island.
LegalHealth’s VA Medical-Legal Partnerships

LegalHealth has established medical-legal partnerships with various departments at VA medical centers:

- 2012 - James J. Peters (Bronx) VA MC and New York Harbor Healthcare System (Manhattan campus) VA MC legal clinics open in behavioral health departments
- 2014 - Legal clinic opens at Northport VA MC on Long Island
- 2016 - Women Veterans Legal Clinic opens in women’s health clinics (NYC only)
- 2017 - Older Veterans Legal Clinic opens in geriatrics clinics (NYC only)

While all clinics provide general legal services, different departments and sites refer veterans who face similar legal issues:

- More family law and MST-related claims in the Women Veterans Legal Clinic
- More Medicaid homecare issues and advance planning in the Older Veterans Legal Clinic
- Significantly more eviction matters in NYC clinics than the Northport clinic
How Our VA Partnerships Work

- Veterans who qualify for VA healthcare are more likely to have service-connected disabilities and lower incomes. Veterans with disabilities and lower incomes are more likely to face legal problems.
- VA MCs are a community hub where many veterans come for healthcare, work (CWT), and to socialize.
- Social workers, HUD/VASH caseworkers, physicians and therapists refer veterans to our clinics.
- Partnerships with various departments allow attorneys to build relationships with providers, effectively coordinate care as a team with other providers, and develop expertise in most common legal challenges affecting veterans served in that department.