

February 5, 2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Governor of South Carolina  
1205 Pendelton Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor Haley:

SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is pleased to invite you and South Carolina's relevant civilian and military leaders to participate in a leadership briefing as part of our new 2016 Policy Academy: Interagency Leadership Initiative. The SMVF TA Center is also offering to facilitate a strategic planning session as part of this initiative. During this session, we will provide technical assistance to your interagency team on developing, refining, and implementing a state-wide SMVF behavioral health strategic plan.

Since 2008, SAMHSA has partnered with states and territories to strengthen the behavioral health systems serving SMVF. Through SAMHSA's Policy Academy initiative, states and territories formed interagency teams to work on critical veterans' issues like suicide prevention and substance use disorders. Please see the attached profile outlining some of your team's work with us. This profile is intended as a brief history. The proposed governor's briefing will provide an opportunity to receive additional information regarding your team's accomplishments and outcomes.

By partnering with SAMHSA and its SMVF TA Center, you will be reinvesting in an interagency team that will do important work for SMVF. Through the team's strategic plan, South Carolina can implement best policies and practices. We are dedicated to assisting you in achieving your vision for the provision of behavioral health services to SMVF within South Carolina.

We sincerely hope that South Carolina is able to take advantage of this opportunity. Governor's leadership briefings and interagency strategic planning sessions will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis. To accept or decline this invitation and appoint a member of your staff as a point-of-contact, please complete the online form located at <http://bit.ly/SAMHSAsmvf> by **March 1, 2016**.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the SMVF TA Center Assistant Director, Angela Wright, by phone at 518-439-7415 ext. 5258 or by email at [awright@prainc.com](mailto:awright@prainc.com).

Thank you for your continuing commitment to meeting the needs of our nation's SMVF.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Kathryn Power". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A. Kathryn Power, M.Ed.  
Regional Administrator, Region I  
Senior Lead for SAMHSA's Service Members,  
Veterans, and their Families Population Focus

Enclosures: State Profile, Investment Sheet, and SMVF TA Center Fact Sheet

cc (via email):

Major General Robert Livingston, Jr., Adjutant General, South Carolina National Guard  
John Magill, M.D., State Director, South Carolina Department of Mental Health  
Stephanie McCladdie, Regional Administrator, Region IV, SAMHSA  
Sergeant Major Howard Metcalf, USA, Ret., Director, South Carolina Division of  
Veterans' Affairs  
Robert Toomey, Director, South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse  
Services

# SOUTH CAROLINA

Team Lead

Governor appointment of a team lead needed.

SMVF Policy Academy Attended  
2008

SMVF Conferences Attended  
2011: Annual Conference  
2014: Workforce Development Conference

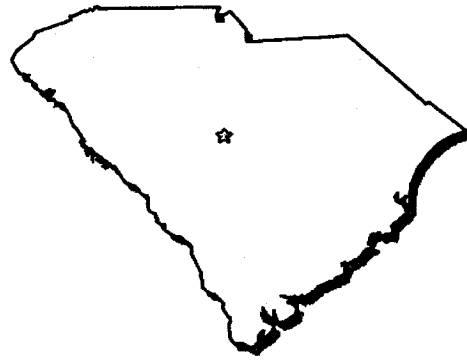
## History and Highlights

South Carolina has partnered with SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and their Families, (SMVF) Technical Assistance (TA) Center for 8 years.

South Carolina first convened an interagency team in 2008 to address the need to increase access to behavioral health services for SMVF. Under the leadership of the governor appointed team leader, John H. Magill, State Director of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, the team developed a strategic plan to help communities prepare for returning SMVF and to strengthen the behavioral health service system for SMVF of all eras.

The team's top priorities were to establish a policy-level military and civilian coordinating group to better coordinate services and share data for addressing SMVF needs. The group focused on:

- Increasing SMVF employment
- Preventing SMVF homelessness
- Strengthening the capacity of the provider workforce with military culture training
- Developing SMVF peer support



Although the state team's collaboration with the SMVF Technical Assistance Center has lost momentum, the Policy Academy Phase III: Interagency Leadership Initiative is an excellent opportunity to ensure that the team's interagency nature, leadership, and strategic plan are aligned with the governor's priorities and the current environment.

## SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center Contact

Sarah Degnan

Project Assistant

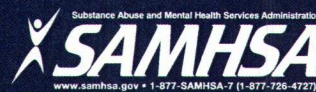
[sdegnan@prainc.com](mailto:sdegnan@prainc.com)

518-439-7415 ext. 5272



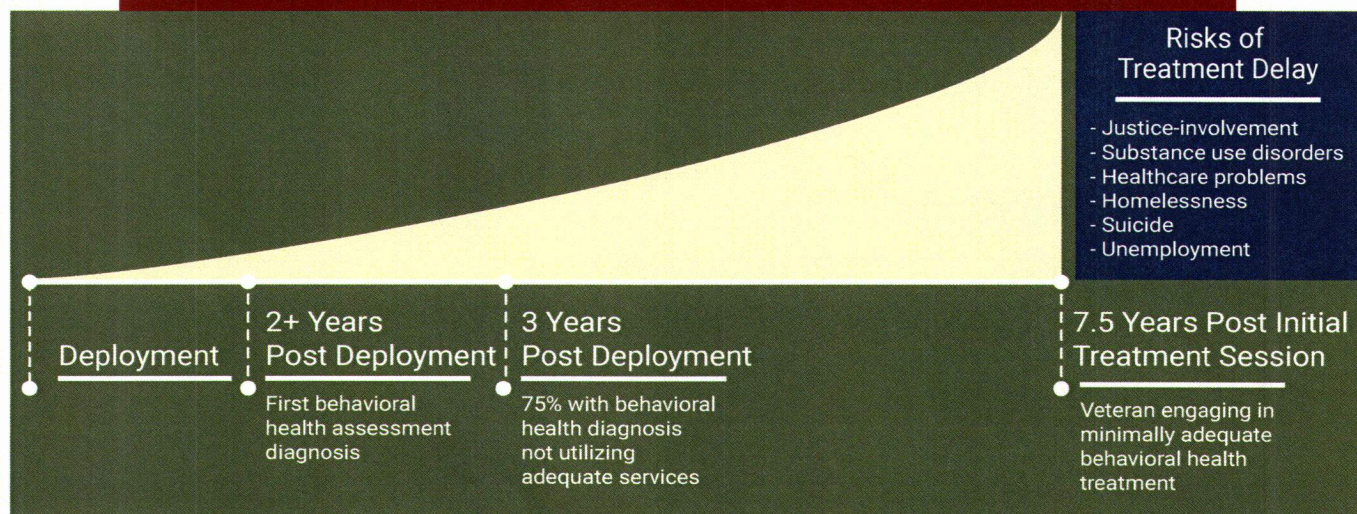


# Leverage Your Investment in SMVF Behavioral Health Services



More than ever, there is a need to leverage your state's investment in behavioral health services for service members, veterans, and their families (SMVF). SAMHSA's SMVF Technical Assistance (TA) Center can help states and communities advance system preparedness to meet current and future needs.

## Post-Deployment Delays in Treatment Timeline



## Community Providers

### Factors Contributing to Veterans Seeking Assistance from Community Providers

80% of veterans have healthcare coverage outside of the VA

Veterans' preference

Barriers to accessing VA services (eligibility and proximity of services)

## Advancing System Preparedness



Increase collaboration across agencies



Leverage investment in our partnership



Work with SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center to access technical assistance resources



# Scaling Up the Focus on the SMVF Population



## **The Problem**

We are only at the tip of the iceberg.

## **The Solution**

Bring key agencies together.

## **The Strategy**

Improve collaboration and set direction.

## **The Process**

- 1** Accept the invitation by March 1, 2016
- 2** Attend the kickoff meeting
- 3** Convene the governor's leadership briefing
- 4** Participate in a strategic planning session
- 5** Receive follow-up technical assistance for implementation



## **SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance Center**

### **SMVF TA Center Fact Sheet**

SAMHSA's Service Members, Veterans, and their Families Technical Assistance (SMVF TA) Center works with states and territories to strengthen their behavioral health systems serving service members, veterans, and their families (SMVF). This initiative provides support through the provision of technical assistance and the promotion of ongoing interagency collaboration.

This initiative builds on SAMHSA's 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 SMVF Policy Academies, through which 47 states, 4 territories, and the District of Columbia have established operational, interagency teams that (1) developed strategic plans to accomplish the above goal and (2) committed to sustaining and expanding the teams and implementing and enhancing the plan. Since 2011, the SMVF TA Center has provided technical assistance to the 51 Policy Academy graduates, facilitating plan implementation, interagency collaboration within teams, and state-to-state information exchange. The SMVF TA Center works with the Policy Academy state and territory team, as well as with states and territories that are interested and engaged in receiving support for this work.

The target audiences for SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center are state and territory interagency teams that have graduated from one of SAMHSA's SMVF Policy Academies. Within those teams are senior-level representatives from governors' offices and tribal leaders; senior-level representatives from state/territory/tribal agencies responsible for mental health, substance abuse, veterans affairs, housing, labor/employment, Medicaid and/or Social Security, and criminal justice; the National Guard; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; statewide initiatives (e.g., Joining Community Forces, Community Forces, and Community Blueprint); and other stakeholders (including, but not limited to, veteran service organizations, military and veteran family support organizations, and providers) who are working with states, territories, and tribes to improve behavioral health systems for SMVF.

Key objectives for the SMVF TA Center include the following:

- Providing a centralized mechanism for states and territories to utilize when they have questions about strengthening their behavioral health systems for SMVF;
- Increasing awareness of and promoting integrated responses to the behavioral health needs of SMVF among agencies, providers, and stakeholders in the states and territories receiving technical assistance;
- Increasing awareness of and access to resources and programs that strengthen behavioral health care systems for SMVF;
- Increasing the number of states and territories that implement promising, best, and evidence-based practices in suicide prevention, mental health, substance use treatment, peer recovery support services, homelessness prevention, and employment;

- Strengthening ongoing collaboration at the state and territory level among key public and private agencies and stakeholders concerned with the behavioral health needs of SMVF; These include agencies responsible for and experts in mental health, substance use, emergency and crisis services, primary care, veterans affairs, labor/employment, housing/homelessness, children and families, and criminal justice; National Guard and Reserves; Medicaid and/or Social Security benefits; the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN); veterans service organizations; and veterans (including Reserve components) and their families; and
- Providing a platform for state and territory behavioral health systems to learn, connect, and share with experts and peers.

The SMVF TA Center facilitates peer consultation and supports peer involvement in technical assistance activities, such as: promoting the adoption of promising, best, and evidence-based practices in suicide prevention, mental health, and substance use treatment; veteran jail diversion; homelessness prevention; workplace/employment; interagency data sharing; telepsychiatry; outreach to the National Guard and Reserves; coordinating diverse public and private organizations that are reaching out to SMVF; optimizing financing mechanisms to increase system capacity; improving data-sharing across agencies; training community behavioral health providers in military culture and evidence-based, trauma-informed care; and other critical issues related to the behavioral health needs of SMVF.

The SMVF TA Center provides training and technical assistance to states, territories, and tribes, and supports state-to-state peer sharing and knowledge transfer through activities such as:

- Webinars
- Learning communities
- Telephone and on-site individualized consultation, technical assistance, and/or training
- Policy Academies
- Resource provision (e.g., publications, fact sheets, etc.)

For more information, contact:  
 SAMHSA's SMVF TA Center  
 345 Delaware Avenue  
 Delmar, NY 12054  
 Phone: 518-439-7415, option 6  
 Email: [smvftacenter@prainc.com](mailto:smvftacenter@prainc.com)