

# NYS Office of Mental Health— Initiatives for Servicemen, Veterans and their Families

Laura Payack, Director  
Community Outreach & Public  
Education Office

MHSC: April 8, 2011

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Primary Difference....Time spent working.
  - National Guard is a component of the Army, but it is not a full time job
    - Active Duty: Full Time Job—40+ hours/week
    - National Guard: 1 weekend per month, 2 weeks per year
  - Guardsmen typically hold regular jobs just like me and you. We call them “Citizen Soldiers”

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Training
  - National Guard and Active Duty Army receive the same basic training and advanced individual training
  - After completion, the active duty soldier is assigned to a Base while the National Guard soldier returns home
- Continued Training
  - Active Duty soldiers live and work with their units and train on a daily basis
  - National Guard soldiers only train during their 1 weekend per month and 2 weeks per year

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Deployments
  - Both will deploy overseas
  - National Guard will also respond to emergencies within their own state (i.e., natural disasters)
    - Active Duty soldiers are not allowed to intervene in these matters unless an executive order is issued by the President of the United States

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Regulations and Standards
  - National Guard and Active Duty serve under the same regulations
    - Must pass same physical fitness tests
    - Wear same uniform with same rules for wear
    - Observe the Uniform Code of Military Justice
    - Must have same proficiency in marksmanship, hazardous materials response, and battle drills

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Command and Structure
  - National Guard and Active Duty Army fall under the same rank structures of Private thru General
  - The Governor of each state is responsible for the state's National Guard units
  - The Army is under the command of the President of the United States

# Difference between the National Guard and Active Duty Army

- Wrap up
  - Biggest difference...time spent working
    - Citizen Soldiers hold regular full time jobs when not deployed
  - Next biggest difference....location, location, location
    - Citizen Soldiers are our neighbors, they live in our communities, they use our services, and their children go to our schools
    - They do not have the ease of a one-stop shop that a Base offers in terms of soldier and family friendly services

# New York National Guard

- **Strength** (approximately)
  - 10,500 Army Guard
  - 6000 Air Guard
    - 800 currently deployed
    - Over 5000 were deployed in the past 2.5 years
    - 2500 will be deployed to Afghanistan in August (27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team)
    - Many are experiencing multiple deployments
  - Army: longer deployment—typically 2 months training and 10 months deployed (1 x q. 3 years)
  - Air: shorter—4-6 months depending on mission

# NYNG Yellow Ribbon Program

- Started in 2008, the Yellow Ribbon Program (YRP) is a Department of Defense effort to help National Guard members and their families connect with local services before, during, and after deployments, especially during the reintegration phase that occurs in the months after the Service member returns home
  - Event timing: Pre-mobilization, mid-deployment (for families), Post-deployment (30 and 60 days)
  - Over 5000 National Guardsmen have been processed through the YRP program to date

# NYNG Yellow Ribbon Program

- YRP attendance is MANDATORY at 30 and 60 days.
  - 30 Day Event: reconnects soldiers and families with each other through workshops and forums geared toward developing a “new normal” post deployment
    - Local, State, and Federal agencies all provide outreach stations to advise soldiers and families of services, benefits, and entitlements
      - 42% Service members don't have a good understanding of benefits
      - 26% don't know how to get their questions answered (NYS Health Foundation/RAND 2011 study)
  - 60 Day Event: Career and educational opportunities are explored and more targeted workshops/briefings are offered on issues that they may be facing at this point in their reintegration
    - Soldiers are screened for Traumatic Brain Injury and readjustment difficulties

# NYNG Yellow Ribbon Program—OMH

- We've been to them all. We provide:
  - Education/information about mental health and various mental illnesses, stress of deployment, anger management, sleep maintenance
  - Referrals to appropriate services...VA, Vet Centers, Clinic Plus, MFLC, MOS, Soldier Project, SOFAR, Cornell tele-group therapy, Rosen Wellness Center, Prime Care, Pediatrician, etc.
  - Assistance linking families who have children with special needs to services if they are moving to a different part of the state or if they are dissatisfied with services
  - On-demand counseling as needed

# NYNG Yellow Ribbon Program—OMH

- A common phrase we hear is that soldiers do not want to receive services at the VA
  - 46% with MH need want care outside VA (NYS Health Foundation/RAND 2011 study)
- Many of our MH partners (non-profits) are at YR events so there are multiple points of contact for soldiers and families to make with providers:
  - Veterans Health Alliance of Long Island
  - Veterans Mental Health Coalition of NYC

# Other OMH Military Initiatives

- Talk, Listen, Connect (phase 1): Helping families cope with military deployment: bi-lingual outreach kit released August 2006
- Talk, Listen, Connect (phase 2): Helping families cope with multiple deployments and when a parent comes home injured: bi-lingual outreach kit released April 2008
- Talk, Listen, Connect (phase 3): When Families Grieve. Helping families cope with the death of a loved one. Released April 2010. Military and civilian versions are available.
  - For all kits, awareness building and dissemination with family serving programs at Fort Drum (on and off Post), National Guard, Reserve, VA system, other State departments, and county mental health
- Unnamed Phase 4 in the works....Focus is resiliency building

# Other OMH Military Initiatives

- Sesame rooms at Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown...to help kids feel comfortable in medical settings where mom or dad may be recovering



This flagship family lounge is at McGuire AFB. It was dedicated in memory of SSgt Jason Keefer. The Keefer Family was featured in the “When Parents are Deployed” PBS special (TLC 1 project).

# Other OMH Military Initiatives

- Partnership with the:
  - National Association of Social Workers, New York State Chapter
  - Medical Society of the State of New York
  - New York State Psychiatric Association
    - To provide free training symposia across the state to enhance community capacity to meet the needs of returning service members and their families.
      - Topics included Military 101, PTSD, TBI, Relationship issues, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Women's Issues, Military Sexual Trauma, Depression, Suicide, Accessing Community Resources, and the Effects of the Deployment Cycle on Children.
    - Trainings occurred from September 2009 to May 2010

# Veterans use OMH Services....

- In any given week, OMH serves 168,000\* people
  - 5,900 have prior Military service
  - Majority are aged 45-64 years of age (62%), followed by 35-44 year olds (15%)
  - 85% male
  - 58% white
  - 65% live in their own home/rooming –house, hotel, or SRO
  - 20% live in OMH or DOH licensed housing

\*Data taken from the 2007 Patient Characteristic Survey, a survey of more than 4000 providers

# OMH Veterans' Characteristics

- Primary Diagnosis
  - Mental Illness: 95%
    - 86% SMI
  - Substance-Related Disorders: 2.5%
- Primary Diagnosis Code
  - Schizophrenia: 39%
  - Mood Disorders (Depression, Bipolar): 34%
  - Anxiety Disorders: 7%

# Where Do They Live?

- Veterans receiving OMH services live in:
  - New York City: 46%
  - Western Region: 18%
  - Hudson River Region: 16%
  - Central NY Region: 12%
  - Long Island Region: 8%
- 13% are Homeless

# What Kinds of OMH Services do Veterans Use?

- Outpatient Programs: 42%
- MH Residential Programs: 26%
- Community Support (nonresidential): 25%
- Inpatient: 6%
- Emergency Departments: 1.5%

Note about totals: clients can be seen in more than one program hence the total is greater than the total number of unique clients which is 5905

# More Specifically....most frequented services

- Clinic Treatment: 29%
- Supported Housing: 8.5%
- Continuing Day Treatment: 7.6%
- Psychosocial Club: 5.7%
- Supported SRO: 5.4%
- IP Psych of a Gen Hosp: 3.6%
- Treatment/Congregate: 3.5%
- Treatment/Apartment: 3%
- Blended Case Management: 2.9%
- Intensive Case Management: 2.7%
- Advocacy/Support Services: 2.2%
- Supportive Case Management: 2.2%
- Community Residence/SRO: 2.1%
- OMH State PC Inpatient: 2%

# My Wounds Are Not For You To See

Frank Ochberg, MD (Clinician and Veteran)

My wounds are not for you to see  
Although I wish you knew  
Without the grief that hollows me  
What holds me back from you

It isn't want of hope or faith  
For these I still possess  
But muted love that lies too deep  
To summon and express

You hear the dreams that end in screams  
And tolerate my pain  
With fortitude you grace the mood  
That I can not restrain

And that same mood can make me brood  
On all that I have lost  
My friends, my youth, my naïve truth  
O what a dreadful cost

I know that I can weather this  
And laugh and love and live  
Without regret. And yet  
I have not much to give

I need to find the voice I lost  
The song I used to asing  
I need to feel the warmth of friends  
And smell the breath of Spring

I will, I know I will  
And we shall share the day  
When this chill thaws and I return  
And I return to stay

# Contact Information

Laura Payack, MA  
New York State Office of Mental Health  
Community Outreach and Public Education Office  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, NY 12229

(518) 474-7585  
(518) 817-2879 (cell)  
[laura.payack@omh.ny.gov](mailto:laura.payack@omh.ny.gov)  
[www.omh.ny.gov](http://www.omh.ny.gov)