

## AIBHR Executive Director Proposes Mobile Solution for Rural Nexus/DBQ Assessment Needs to ADVA Commissioner



John M. Duffey, Executive Director for the Alabama Institute, has officially submitted a proposal to RADML Kent Davis, Commissioner for ADVA, that offers a solution to helping Alabama Veterans living in rural areas with access to professional non USVA mental health professionals who can perform disability assessments and complete Nexus Letters and/or VA DBQ forms. “After listening to RADML Davis’ address to the American Legion at the Department of Alabama Annual Conference I realized that there

was a solution to helping and supporting our veterans in rural areas of the state,” Duffey said.

The plan is to have a vehicle travel, by appointment, to ADVA rural locations to perform mental health assessments and documentation for disability cases being handled for veterans by the ADVA. The outcome of this program is to enhance support and documentation availability to disabled veterans with pending claims. Call: 888-268-0308.

## AIHBR Offers Forensic Mental Health Assessments

The Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health and Research offers thorough forensic mental health assessments to the Alabama Community and Legal Community. These assessments are thorough biological, psychological, and Social evaluations useful in criminal and civil cases. Assessment is important for determining a defendant’s ability to stand trial and in determining pre-sentencing information for criminal courts. Parenting and custodial determinations by family court also benefits from FMHA for the parents.

We offer a number of specialized Mental Health Assessments that examine and answer key legal and mental health questions in a broad spectrum of civil and criminal cases. Both the defense and prosecution/plaintiff teams can benefit significantly from a deeper understanding of the mental health status and history of their clients and parties to a dispute/ action.

There are very few counselors and psychologists willing to complete forensic assessments and to be available to testify about them. AIBHR has professionally trained and experienced evaluators.

Call: 888-268-0308

## The Alabama Institute Proudly Supports the American Legion and its Members

John Duffey, the Executive Director for the Alabama Institute, is also the 24th District Chaplain and the Chaplain for the Fletcher-McCollister Post 135 (Phenix City, AL) and is active in supporting the spiritual and mental health needs of American Legion members. As a part of both Americanism and fraternal support for fellow veteran members he has ordered a reduced rate for American Legion Members who seek services for counseling and mental health assessments for VA disability benefits claims.

On average a full mental health assessment costs at or above \$1,200.00 and per session rates for counseling can be as high as \$150.00 for the uninsured and a co-pay as high as \$50.00 for the insured in many cases. This makes mental health resources difficult to access by many veterans who are then stuck with either no service support at all or the VA where counselors are overwhelmed and counseling is difficult to book. Additionally, VA providers refuse to complete NEXUS statements and DBQ’s for veterans seeking VA disability benefits.

Not so for American Legion Members inside the State of Alabama. AIBHR provides significantly reduced rates for Department of Alabama Members. VA Assessments for Disability Claims are only \$200.00 and individual counseling sessions are only \$40.00 flat - No insurance needed!!! You must be a resident of Alabama to receive tele-health services.

We offer in-person services at the clinic in Phenix City, AL and tele-health services from any location within Alabama.

Call: 334-540-5538

# AIBHR's Latest Published Research for Veterans

## **Integral Collaborative Work Across Public and Private Sectors: Combining Conventional and Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Suicide Prevention and Management. [J. of Military Medicine]**

This is a combined research effort by the Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health and Research and Auburn University's Graduate School for Nurse Practice that examined the effectiveness of using the whole medicine approach to healing and maintain the good health of both active duty service members and veterans alike. Additionally, it examines and exposes a lack of communication between the DoD and the VA when service members are transitioning out of active and reserve service to VA care as it regards mental health.

This study discovered that many service members with significant and critical mental health conditions were transitioning from the DoD to the VA care systems without record and information sharing with the VA by the DoD. This has had tragic consequences and has been contributory to the VA's failure to intervene in time to prevent a substantial number of veteran suicides.

## **Sleep Health Intervention and Outcomes for Veterans experiencing PTSD Symptoms. [Journal of Holistic Medicine]**

Another joint study by the Alabama Institute and Auburn University's Graduate School for Nurse Practice that was supported by the Fletcher-McCollister Post 135 (Phenix City) of the American Legion and the Department of Alabama.

This quasi-experimental designed study tested the idea that mindfulness techniques can be employed by veterans with PTSD who suffer from chronic insomnia or disruptive sleep to increase quality sleep and the amount of quality sleep they get. The results of this research indicates a high success rate for the participating veterans. Thus, a new, non-pharmaceutical approach has been uncovered to treat insomnia and disrupted sleep patterns in veterans with PTSD.

## **Insomnia in the Veteran Population: A Sleep Health and Wellness Intervention. [Journal of Military Medicine]**

This was a follow-on presentation before the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) Convention based on the results of the sleep health study. Mr. John Duffey, MACMHC, NCC, ALC (AIBHR), Dr. Joy Debellis, DNP, NP-C, (AU) and Dr. Libba McMillan, PhD, NP-C (AU) presented.

## **Veterans and Suicide: An Integrative Review of Risk Factors and Suicide Reduction Services. [J. Special Operations Medicine pending]**

This study was conducted jointly between Mr. John Duffey, MACMHC, NCC, ALC, Executive Director for AIBHR, and Dr. Sherrionda Crawford, PhD, LPC/S, Chair of the Counseling Dept for Troy University, and Dr. Kanessa Doss, PhD, LPC/S, Professor of Counselor Education at Troy University. It examined the risk factors affecting today's military veterans and active duty service members regarding suicide and suicide rates. In addition to the examination of contributing factors it also examined supportive and resiliency factors and U.S. agency communications and lack of communication that allows veterans to fall through the cracks in mental health care as they transition from active and reserve component service to civilian life under VA care venues.

The results support previous findings in published research literature and Congressional Hearings that indicate a communication flaw by and between the DoD and VA that presents a significantly high risk and failure to treat those exiting the military with severe mental health issues.



## From the Founder and Executive Director

By: John M. Duffey, MACMHC, NCC, ALC, Executive Director

Being a combat veteran myself I have experienced the long waits, long lines, and disappointing quality of services offered by the VA healthcare system. This is especially so for the Central Alabama Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS) operated out of Montgomery, Alabama. I went through the same circus every other veteran goes through to get healthcare in the VA system - a month out appointment for a simple sniffle that results in an ER visit for pneumonia that doesn't get billed or paid timely and ends up a nightmare to resolve with the hospital and the VA. One ER visit took me four years to get resolved with the VA and in the meantime my credit was being shredded! I'm not alone in that, either. Tens of thousands of veterans are stuck in the same cycle of apathy and incompetence that costs them dearly in health and finance.

These experiences, especially when I applied for disability benefits for PTSD and back injuries, are what led me to found the Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health and Research. As a licensed counselor and veteran I understand what the needs of the veteran community are much better than non-veteran counselors and psychologists. It takes true understanding, respect, equality in consideration, empathy, and a knowledge of what it is like to be in combat boots to fully connect with and help veterans pull themselves out of the hole that traumatic combat experience puts them in.

"It's alright. I've been there, brother/sister. Let it out cause I got your back - I know how you feel," goes a very long way for veterans when it comes from a veteran. That's why I founded the Institute - Veteran Counselors helping veterans. Being available when others aren't.

Alabama Institute for Behavioral Health & Research  
1211 7th Avenue, Suite A  
Phenix City, AL 36867

888-268-0308  
[www.alabamainstitute.com](http://www.alabamainstitute.com)

