



2020 Cities Thrive Mental Health Coalition Monthly Call Series

Tuesday, November 17th

2:15-3:15pm/Eastern Time

“Serving those who Served: Local Initiatives to Assist our Veterans and Military Families”

Call-In: 347-719-7789 (No Pin)

PARTICIPANTS

City of New York, NY – Vets ThriveNYC and Mission Vet Check

Presenters: Jason Hansman, Director of Health and Social Services Initiatives, Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC; Jason Loughran, Associate Director of Special Programs & Initiatives, and Cassandra Alvarez, Associate Commissioner of Public-Private Partnerships, NYC Department of Veterans' Services

Description: During the COVID-19 crisis, veterans are making supportive check-in calls to other veterans through Mission: VetCheck. A collaboration between the NYC Department of Veterans' Services, the Mayor's Office of ThriveNYC, and veteran-serving organizations, these calls provide veterans with information about how to access vital public services, including free meals, COVID-19 test sites locations, and mental health resources.

Houston/Harris County, TX - Veterans Behavioral Health Initiative

Presenter: Christy Chatham, Director, Veterans Behavioral Health

Description: Over 200,000 veterans of military service live and work in Houston/Harris County, making it home to one of the largest populations of military service members and families in the nation. Credits for this are due to the many available jobs, affordable housing and access to many institutions of higher learning. Since 2007, the Houston-Harris County Veterans Behavioral Health Initiative (VBHI) has employed strategic and collaborative community engagement and trainings in support of Greater Houston's overall goal of shaping the mental health of people and communities. The VBHI impacts the community on numerous levels and strives to ensure that our veterans behavioral health needs are met. As the Regional Coordinator for the State of Texas' Military Veteran Peer Network (MVPN), our mission is to connect service members, veterans and their families to local, state and national resources. As the mentoring arm for Harris County Veterans Treatment Courts we engage justice involved veterans with peer to peer support, health and wellness and activities and connect them to supportive services through our dedicated and highly trained volunteers. In addition to serving our local courts, the VBHI provides behavioral health education to volunteer veteran court mentors statewide through its Veterans Court Advocacy and Mentoring Program (VCAMP) in order to better serve Harris County veterans and increase capacity for veteran treatment courts across the state.

Los Angeles County, CA - Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN)

Presenter: Jim Zenner LCSW, CPS, Mental Health Program Manager, Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN)

Description: Led by veterans for veterans, VPAN helps veterans navigate often complicated systems to help them receive the services they deserve. The first-ever community-driven support network serving veterans and their families in the U.S., the Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN) connects County departments, non-



profits, the VA and LA City programs. The network embodies the #YouMatter ideal – that veterans deserve hope, well-being and a greater quality of life as valued members of the LA County community. Resources available include: Mental Health – Treatment for trauma from combat exposure, military sexual trauma, relationship and intimacy issues; Substance Misuse Support – Treatment for substance use disorders, including misuse of alcohol, prescription medication and other drugs; Housing – Temporary and permanent housing for veterans and their families, help locating housing; Workforce Development and Employment – Help with developing interview skills, resume creation, job coaching, plus volunteer and job opportunities; Healthcare – Enrollment into VA healthcare, transportation to appointments, ensuring access to prescription medications; Education – Support with school enrollment, vocational training, tuition assistance; Miscellaneous – Food, childcare, transportation, financial assistance and more; Legal Services – Help with eviction prevention, discharge upgrade, applying for VA benefits, etc.; and Social Connection/Recreation – Opportunities to connect with other veterans in a variety of settings.