**The Stages of Moving a Veterans Treatment Court
to Providing Services to Children of Veterans**

Once a VTC has expressed an interest in adding a children's component to a VTC, the three-stage process we have outlined would go into effect in a technical assistance project, pursuing definition and development of

- The numbers needed to document the population that is targeted
- The needs among these children that have arisen as a result of their parents' deployment
- The networks that are needed to provide services to these children and their families.

In each of these stages of technical assistance, it is possible to outline more detailed steps that would be pursued working with the site team. In some sites, this process can be undertaken with existing resources. In others, it may be necessary to develop funding proposals to add resources needed to carry out this planning effort.

Numbers

1. Develop an estimate of the total number of children of veterans in the jurisdiction, using census methods (attached) and any available state or local data
2. Using national data on the percentage of veterans with children, combined with available state or local data on children per veteran family (2 is the number most often used nationally), develop an estimate of children likely to be affected by their parents' trauma and/or substance use disorders (we have used 30% as the benchmark, based on national studies of active duty and veteran families)
3. Gather any available local data on children already served by VA-funded programs such as the 100-plus Supportive Services (Section 304) grants and those Veterans Service Centers that have child therapists, combined with any non-VA programs such as FOCUS at UCLA, the Child Guidance Center in Orange County and other similar programs where they exist.

Need

4. Consult with participating agencies on screening tools they have used for children affected by parents' deployment. Our default screening tool is the abbreviated version of the Family Services Needs Survey.
5. Using a small sample of children referred from the VTC caseload, screen these children with parents' permission and determine what types and dosage of services they appear to need. Review these results to determine whether the tool is adequate to be used as a basis for referring children to services.
6. Compile a data base on the veterans, their demographics, their children, the results of screening and assessments, referrals to services, and the outcomes of services. (It may be

possible to use a standardized database developed specifically for use by VTCs that have agreed to serve children of veterans.)

Networks

7. Develop a resource inventory of services for children or use existing ones where they exist (or where 211 referral services have adequate information on services for children).
8. Conduct a brief online or phone survey of these agencies to determine their current services capacity for children of veterans and their willingness to seek training for work with veterans and their families
9. Convene a working-level collaborative and a senior executive-level advisory body to provide operational and policy oversight for the project.
10. Review available training tools that address the cultural competencies needed to serve veterans and their families and determine which one seems most appropriate for local agencies.
11. Select the agencies most able and willing to provide services to children of veterans and negotiate with them for specific allocation of slots in their programs that would be set aside for children of veterans needing medical, mental health, educational, and other services.
12. Review funding options for these services, including the potential segment of lower-income veterans who might gain access to health insurance coverage under new Affordable Care Act programs (a separate outreach effort to increased enrollments is under way on a trial basis in Orange County).
13. Develop a timeline for project operations
14. Arrange for a network of agencies able to provide information and resources for an evaluation of the project.
15. Launch the project.

We would also point out that these steps have significant parallels with military efforts, in that they require clarification of mission, reconnaissance of the targets, review of resources needed, execution of the mission, and after-action reports including evaluations of lessons learned.

Draft 2.11.14