



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OKLAHOMA

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OKBHMC>

Webpage: <https://ok.ng.mil/Family-Programs/Building-Healthy-Military-Communities/>

Unite Oklahoma Information Session

TUESDAY, June 22, 2021 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

BHMC Oklahoma has partnered with Unite Oklahoma to promote this coordinated network across Oklahoma. Unite Oklahoma connects health and social service organizations through a shared technology platform, Unite Us, to send and receive trackable referrals. The platform allows participating organizations to easily connect their clients to a wealth of services, track their clients' journey across the community, and report on tangible outcomes across a range of services and sectors. It is completely free for any community-based organization to participate in the network. The purpose of this information session is to introduce the Unite Oklahoma network. You will learn about Unite Us, see a quick software demonstration, and share next steps on how to join the network.

Learn more about the process at <https://oklahoma.uniteus.com/about/>. The network contains partners who provide a broad range of services such as housing, food assistance, employment, behavioral health, utilities, and more. The network also creates a community-wide data set to better understand the needs of community members and gaps in service availability to address those needs.

To sign up for the information session, visit <https://uniteus.zoom.us/j/6451111111>.



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If you have any questions, reach out to our team! You can find your contact by using the county of the main location of your organization.

Easily refer and connect your clients to local services they need in the community.	Improve your clients' health and well-being through strengthened collaboration with partners offering a wide array of services.	Track the outcomes of all referrals and services delivered for your clients.	Measure the impact of your organization and the services you deliver.	Improve organizational capacity through accurate referrals and access to a wealth of data on local service delivery.
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JULY 2021

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BHMCM OKLAHOMA FACEBOOK



BHMCM OKLAHOMA WEBPAGE

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How to Raise Financially Responsible Children

Teach your kids about financial responsibility by getting them involved in your family spending plan and applying an allowance system. It's never too early to help them develop good habits for a more secure financial future.

For additional information, visit <https://finred.usalearning.gov/Trending/Blog/KidsMoney>.



Youth Action for Health Leadership

A program of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) will empower Oklahoma youth to improve health outcomes for themselves and future generations through the second phase of the TSET Healthy Youth Initiative. Teens in Oklahoma will have an opportunity to directly impact nutrition, active living and tobacco use through the four-year youth advocacy and education program, Youth Action for Health Leadership (YAHL). Currently recruiting youth groups for a statewide program launch this fall.

For additional information, visit <https://www.yahlok.org/>.



EAT HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL

Oily and sugary foods can make you feel gross instead of good. Choose the right foods to help you feel refreshed and energized.



TSET Healthy Youth Initiative

Visit SwapUpOK.com for more tips.

Summer Meal Program

The Summer Meal Program provides nutritious meals and snack to children 18 years or under during the summer months. This program provides children the same high-quality meals that they would get during the school year. Persons with disabilities of any age who participate in school programs for people with physical or mental disabilities can also receive a no-cost meal and snack.

Find a meal pick-up location near you: <https://meals4kidsok.org/>.





1 STEP TODAY

to start feeling better

Ten Ideas to Get Started

Explore these ideas - things you can start doing today that have helped many veterans jump start their recovery. Trying at least one suggestion from this list can make a difference in your health and well-being.

For ideas to get started, visit <https://www.maketheconnection.net/mhm>.

MAKE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH a priority. One step today can improve well-being in the future.



We Want to Hear From You!

We are looking to better understand ways that we can serve our community. This is your chance to tell us what you think a healthy community looks like. Your participation will help shape the community's health improvement plan and help us address the needs of the community.

Central Oklahoma Health Impact Team



Spouse Patriot Award

As military members, our Spouses are an integral part of the success of our careers. They are the "single parent" when we are deployed or away for training. Many times their own employers and co-workers are supportive allowing greater flexibility in schedules, or even pitching in with the kids or household chores. Did you know that Spouses can nominate their supervisor for a Spouse Patriot Award to recognize their support? For additional information or to nominate your supervisor, visit <https://esgr.mil/Employer-Awards/Spouse-Patriot-Award>.

Questions? Contact the Oklahoma ESGR Committee at (405) 664-8831.



Drinking Too Much

How Alcohol Affects Your Brain and Body

Ever wonder what happens to your brain and body when you drink too much alcohol? Find out what drinking too much looks like versus drinking responsibly so that you can protect yourself and have a good time the next time you're out.

Check out and share this new video on what drinking too much looks like at <https://www.ownyourlimits.org/responsible-drinking/what-is-too-much/drinking-too-much-video/>.





Small Steps for Sun Safety

Keep yourself and those you love safe from the sun's harmful rays! Access free sun safety resources for parents & educators at <https://letsgo.catch.org/bundles/sun-safety>.



Address That Stress

Stress less and live better. Whatever's weighing on you, you can talk it out with an expert. Tap into free and confidential support for service members and military families. From financial issues to relationships to caregiving, we're here to help.

For additional information, visit <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-onesource/military-counseling-for-stress/>.



Looking for Employment?

The Employment Coordination Program offers Civilian Employment Assistance for Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses. You'll also find resources to help you: match your military skills and experiences to civilian careers; search for jobs in your local area or across the United States; and learn about and access other benefits for veterans.

For assistance, contact Michael Laird, Oklahoma Military Department, Employment Coordination Program at (405) 475-1996 or howard.m.laird.nfg@mail.mil.



OKLAHOMA MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FAMILY PROGRAMS OFFICE
EMPLOYMENT COORDINATION PROGRAM

OK Women Veterans

OK Sisters in Service Legacy Project

Professional photographer at regional locations in the state. Free digital image released to the veteran.

Walk a Mile in Her Boots - OSU Art Project

Military Boots Display decorated to reflect women veteran service. OSU Stillwater campus display on 2021 Veterans Day.

State of Oklahoma Veteran Registry

Check Yes, I Served! Register your service with the Oklahoma Veteran Registry.

For additional information, contact the ODVA Women Veterans at (405) 523-4020, (405) 523-4023, or visit <https://oklahoma.gov/veterans/veterans-services/women-veterans.html>.





Nutritional Health Coaches

**FREE
VIRTUAL
HEALTH
COACHING
SESSIONS**

[CLICK HERE](#) to
schedule a session.



Cherokee Nation COVID Relief

The Cherokee Nation will be hosting a series of drive-thru application assistance events that will be focused primarily on helping with applying for the tribe's \$2,000 COVID-19 assistance payment.

MON June 21, 5pm, 903 W Main St. Collinsville, OK
WED June 23, 5pm, 116 N Cincinnati Ave. Sperry, OK
TUE June 29, 11am, 322 N Greenwood Ave. Tulsa, OK

Cherokee Nation staff will be on hand to assist citizens that do not have an active email address or access to technology to apply.

For additional information, contact Kristi Whitaker, Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa at (918) 588-1900 x2261.



**HEAT ACCLIMATIZATION
to Prevent Heat Illness**



**WHAT IS HEAT
ACCLIMATIZATION?**

Heat acclimatization is the process of adjusting to the outside environment to improve your heat tolerance and help prevent heat illness.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Reduces the risk of serious heat illness.
- Reduces physiological strain (e.g., lowered heart rate and body temperatures).
- Improves sweating, fluid balance, comfort, and exercise capacities.



ACCLIMATIZATION STRATEGIES

- 1** Start early! Full acclimatization can take up to one month to develop.
- 2** Mimic the hot environment. Use a climate controlled room or outdoor heat.
- 3** Aim for 90-120 minutes of daily exercise for 10-14 days. Increase intensity and duration of exercise as tolerance permits.
- 4** Fluid replacement needs will increase with heat acclimatization. Make sure you're consuming enough water!
- 5** One day of exercise in the heat per week is enough to maintain full acclimatization.



**Military Spouse Employment
Opportunities**

We have some immediate hiring needs and these are FULL REMOTE / WORK FROM HOME positions!

For additional information, send email to RecruitVets@cognosante.com.



Eastern Oklahoma
2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.
COMMUNITY SERVICE COUNCIL

**When you don't know
where to turn, we're here.**





ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENT?

Build the knowledge to understand the challenges faced by student veterans and be better prepared to support them.

Veterans on Campus for Faculty & Staff

Be prepared to lead real-life conversations with student veterans struggling to adjust to college life.



Access Simulation

1. Visit kognitocampus.com
2. Log in or create a new account
3. If creating a new account, use your university/college email to enroll
4. Launch Veterans on Campus for Faculty & Staff



CDC FUNDING IN ACTION

OKLAHOMA MILITARY COMMUNITIES GET HELP TO QUIT TOBACCO USE

New Network Connects Service Members, Veterans to Resources



Challenge

The Surgeons General of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and the United States declared the use of tobacco products a health threat to uniformed Service members. Tobacco use is linked to higher dropout rates during basic training, higher rates of early separation from service, and increased risk of injuries. Oklahoma is home to about 34,800 Service members (including active duty, National Guard, and Reserves) and 343,000 veterans. The public health community in Oklahoma offers resources to help residents quit using tobacco products. However, until recently, it did not have a reliable way to share information about these resources to military populations.



Approach

Building Healthy Military Communities (BHMC) is a program piloted in seven states in 2017 to address pressing health and social issues affecting the readiness of military Service members. The BHMC State Coordinator for Oklahoma developed a network of military and civilian partners to share information and resources and supported the network with a website, Facebook page, and online newsletter. In April 2020, the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline asked callers, "Are you an active Service member or a veteran of/retired from any branch of the US military, including the National Guard or the Reserves?" to establish a baseline and monitor future use of the Helpline by Service members and veterans.



Results

From February 2018 to April 2020, the network promoted tobacco prevention and cessation resources at more than 400 meetings and events. As a result, the website received more than 3,500 views, the Facebook page almost 5,600 followers, and the newsletter over 11,400 subscribers. The question added to the Tobacco Helpline intake form will allow the network to monitor its future success in reaching Service members. Oklahoma's BHMC, Tobacco Helpline, and military recruiting stations are now working to identify potential recruits who use tobacco and help them quit before they enter military service.



At A Glance

Service members in Oklahoma now have several ways to receive information about tobacco cessation resources, thanks to Oklahoma's Building Healthy Military Communities (BHMC) pilot program. BHMC created a communication network so public health agencies can educate Service members in the state about these resources. The partnership between military stakeholders and public health partners also led to the addition of a new Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline intake question to determine callers' current or former military status. The new question will allow BHMC partners to monitor results of this effort.

Contact: info@chronicdisease.org or visit <https://chronicdisease.org/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Project Funding: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) CSTLTS - NU38OT000286, administered by the [Office on Smoking and Health](#)



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

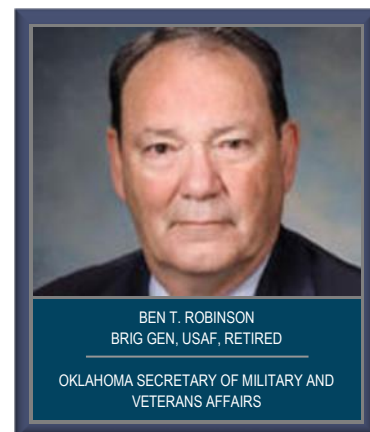
[@CDCChronic](#) | www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease

Secretary's Quarterly Connection

Thank you Building Healthy Military Communities (BHMC) for the opportunity and honor of writing about the efforts, initiatives and programs we have in Oklahoma to serve and support our military (active duty, national guard, and reserve), veterans and their families. You are about to find out that not only do I speak a lot, but I can also write a lot.

I must acknowledge upfront and before giving updates, the credit goes to Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) Executive Director Joel Kintsel and Deputy Director Sarah Lane, and the magnificent staff at ODVA for motivating us all toward doing the best we can for our military and veterans. Additionally, I must acknowledge the role of the Veteran's Commission in supporting our veterans. We have the best support in the nation. Finally, those hundreds of volunteers across the state that continuously give their time in support and service. These people ask questions like how can I help you recover from incarceration, how can I help you get a job, how can I help you get your benefits, how can I help you get your GI Bill, how can I give you an alternative to taking your life. It is so very good to be associated with such people and organizations. It certainly beats retirement!

Before I get into our updates, I would like to say a few words about what it is that motivates us. I certainly consider myself a motivated person. Have been all my life. All the people I have met, working with Service Members, Veterans and their Families are also motivated people. I have certainly been with other organizations that motivation was not something that I would describe as the organizational culture. It was more about being satisfied. Big difference. We have all been in organizations that believe in and live for TGIF. These organizations do not see the value in simply helping others. This unique characteristic is Servant Leadership. Something I truly believe in. But what exactly is it. Good question. I taught leadership at OSU for seven years as an adjunct professor. One block was on Servant Leadership. When I taught this block, I would start by asking the class how many want to be successful. As you can imagine, most all hands went up. I then asked what actually success is. Setting goals for oneself, working hard to meet those goals, having a fine home, a fine automobile, going on good vacations, sending your children to fine schools, enjoying life. I am sure you are not surprised at these answers. I then offered another word to think about, significance. Blank looks. What is significance I asked? Not as many offered answers to this question. They really did not get it. I asked if a person could be successful without being significant. Yes. Can a person be significant without being successful? Lots of thought went into this one. I then offered a quote I once saw, but do not know who said it even though it is a good one.



"A person's success is best measured by that person's significance in the lives of others"

I really like it. I tell them that success is like looking in the mirror. You see a reflection of yourself. You may very well like what you see and that is fine. At my age, I avoid looking into mirrors. Now think about what you see if you look out the window. Is it different? Do you see people that you have helped or is the image in the mirror the only thing you can visualize? I believe we all agree seeing those we have helped out our window are far more rewarding than that reflection in the mirror. The two images are vastly different. Success can be like knowing where you were born, while significance can be knowing why you were born. The question that the Servant Leader is first to ask is, "How can I help you?" The Servant Leader is about making other's goals more important than their own. The Servant Leader is a mentor, a teacher. The Servant Leader is an advocate for, a participant in, and joyful about volunteerism. The Servant Leaders is a role model by the values they hold dear. That is how I feel about the people I have met since becoming the Secretary. It is one of the best jobs, maybe the best job I have had. In fact, it hardly seems like a job at all. To think I could simply retire, play golf, give museum tours and get fat just has no appeal to me. Being a Servant Leader, being around other Servant Leaders and helping others is a very good reward indeed.

Continued on next page.

Secretary's Quarterly Connection

Now what about the updates in our three main areas of interest: the transition of Service Members, Veterans and their Families (SMVF), the operations and modernization of our veterans centers, and caring for and honoring our SMVF.

Transition

The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) Executive Director Joel Kintsel, Deputy Director Sarah Lane, and staff are working hard to create new and innovative ways to support the transition of our nearly 3300 Service members that separate from some form of military service each year across the state. ODVA will soon roll out two new programs to support a more inclusive transition and employment process. So I don't get out in front of ODVA, let me just say they are focused more on transition skills and a better way to match veterans looking for employment to employers looking for veterans. Two of ODVA's finest professionals will be leading these programs.

Veteran Centers

All good news on operating, maintaining and modernizing our veteran centers. The construction of the new center in Sallisaw is coming along very well and plans to open in 2022. It will be a state of the art center. There are other modernization initiatives in the works which you will all hear about soon. We will be doing another resident survey this summer, probably July timeframe. We did not do a survey in 2020 as COVID would have given us results that were shaped by the shutdown of the centers. Our satisfaction goal in 2019 was 75%. Overall we exceeded that goal. We have set 85% as our new goal for 2021.

New View Oklahoma

In caring for our veterans, we do have a very good update. This is a first-time update on a very interesting new initiative moving forward with Sarah Lane and New View Oklahoma (NVO). This is in the very early stages so some information may not be in full detail. I am a big fan of NVO and have been on their board for several years. NVO has a great veteran program for services, support, and employment. NVO gets numerous referrals every year from the VA hospitals, our VCRs and healthcare providers. One center doing referrals to NVO is the Norman Veterans Center. Over 60% of residents in extended care facilities suffer from some form of sight impairment. Yet only a small percentage of those suffering from sight impairment actually get help. We have to assume we have many in our veteran centers with sight impairment. In mid-April, Sarah and the NVO CEO, Lauren Branch, met to discuss how NVO and ODVA can team up to better serve our veteran residents. This includes, but is not limited to on-site evaluations of veterans, assisting the centers on creating a safer environment for sight impaired residents and training the residents themselves on how to live with sight impairment. A great initiative. Thanks Sarah.

Suicide Prevention

In talking to Aaron Ashworth, ODVA Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Programs Administrator on his plan for suicide prevention, we see three things in the suicide prevention program he is leading; create awareness, build partnerships, take action. One step is to create awareness of the situation, the causes and the pressure relievers for stress. Awareness needs to be on a grand scale across the entire problem set and awareness at the individual level. "My friend is very stressed and I need to get him or her help." Everyone dealing with veteran issues needs to know the warning signs. Building partnerships is another step. Aaron has a strong group of partners behind him and the Governor's/Mayor's Challenges. These partners are a diverse group of individuals from all areas of healthcare, mental healthcare, caregivers, political leaders, veteran service organizations, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations, demonstrating leadership and subject matter experts of all kinds. Finally, we have committed and informed people (our volunteers, service representatives, healthcare providers) that can bring solutions to situations and saves lives, forming a pathway to hope. I have seen this in action on several occasions since becoming the Secretary.

Continued on next page.

Secretary's Quarterly Connection

Suicide Data

Understanding data is vital to understanding suicide. Our data on veterans' suicides is months if not years old so saying we had X numbers of suicides in 2019 and in 2020 the suicides were down by 10% is difficult to achieve. But we were not actively working on 2020 issues; we are looking at 2021 and beyond. I believe our very best goal is one that says we will have a diverse set of partners bringing their very best to the effort, we will make all aware of the human tragedy of suicide and the signs of potential suicides and a willingness to get involved in actions to save lives.

We do that by working together. God bless this effort for it is indeed God's work.

One suicide is too many, and zero is our goal.

VA Health Care System

Caring for the health of our veterans and their families is very important to us. As many of you know, the old Veteran Preference Program in which veterans could use local providers was not a real big success. It was replaced with the VA Community Care Network (CCN) through the Mission Act late last year. One of the concerns we voiced with the previous Veteran Preference Program was the lack of Oklahoma involvement in its execution and results. We have made significant progress in this area with the Mission Act. Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) Executive Director Joel Kintsel and Oklahoma City VA Health Care System Executive Director Wade Vlosich have formed a great relationship on sharing information. Joel meets with Wade monthly to review results from the Mission Act. In addition, Joel reports those results to the Veteran Commission each month. This is better than it has ever been. Thanks Joel.

Joel would want me to mention the outstanding support he received from the VA and Wade during the pandemic. According to Joel, Wade and the VA saved numerous lives. Thanks to Wade.

Ardmore Cemetery Project

Families honoring their veteran family members does not end with the playing of the bugle and folding of the flag. It goes on for as long as a family member or a friend wants to pay their respect and honor those veterans they have lost. With the new Oklahoma veteran cemetery opening this year in Ardmore, we can honor our veterans in a beautiful and respectful setting. Procedures have been working out for internment with an anticipated opening of fall of 2021.

Military Spouse Employment

We started a series of initiatives in all of our Oklahoma military communities focused on employment for military spouses. Being a military spouse has for years been a disadvantage, we want to make it an advantage. Who else in the nation is faced with moving to a new community numerous times, taking kids out of school and into a new school, joining the PTA, setting up new utility accounts, packing and unpacking household goods and a hundred other things? The military spouse. That experience should be worth something. We also learned a lot about working remote during COVID. We intend to provide skills training to our military spouses with the intent of assisting in gaining employment in current communities and having that employment remain during the next PCS move. This employment is best suited by remote operations. Altus recently donated a classroom and funding for the first class of military spouses. Altus has now graduated their first class and the Governor attended the ceremony and cut the ribbon on the new classroom. Expect to hear more in the future on this initiative.

I told you I can write like I talk. Get the hook. Thanks for all you are doing to be good Servant Leaders for our Service members, veterans and their families.