

TESTIMONY OF

KIMBERLY EVANS LOGIE

LMFT and MILITARY SPOUSE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**An Examination of Veteran Access to Traditional and
Alternative Forms of Mental Health Therapy**

February 20, 2014

I am Kim Evans Logie, Military Spouse and licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. My husband has served 24 years in the military, been to multiple combat deployments as an active duty and reservist. We recently spent almost two years getting his rating and enrolled with VA . I am one of the leading mental health experts in the state of CA in regards to Military and Veteran mental health. I have trained over 1300 CA mental health professionals on military mental health issues and have briefed over 8000 service members and their loved ones on pre and post deployment issues.

I have worked extensively with Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve components as a TriWest embedded therapist, Joint Family Support Assistant Program (JFSAP) Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC), Director of Psychological Health (DPH) for the Air National Guard and Purple Camp Therapist to name a few. Last year I spent 4 weeks at Lackland Air Force Base under federal subpoena as a defense witness FORCED to testify against one of my Airmen who had been sexually assaulted. I am currently the Coordinator for the Ventura County Superior Court Veterans Treatment Court and the Director of Ventura County Military Collaborative. I have had the distinct pleasure of serving the men and women of the US military both pre and post deployment and know well the mental health issues associated with combat service and military sexual trauma.

In Ventura County we use a combination of inpatient, outpatient, alternative treatments and homegrown community based support to help our veterans.

For outpatient clinics and services we utilize:

- The Ventura Vet Center for combat, substance abuse and MST veterans
- The VA contracted clinic in Oxnard for psychiatric and mental health treatment
- The VA at Sepulveda
- The Vet Center at Sepulveda VA

For inpatient services we utilize:

- The Domiciliary, Haven, New Directions etc. at West LA VA
- The Pathway Home at Yountville: a privately funded facility, which does phenomenal work and is free for veterans.
- We do have a PTSD unit at a local psychiatric hospital. Aurora Vista Del Mar just received a VA contract but we are being told that intake and referral will have to come through West LA VA. This may make the use of our local facility prohibitive. Most of our veterans would not be able to drive to LA for intake, due to transportation and/or medical issues.

The alternative forms of treatment in our local area are:

- The Soldiers Project which provides free military mental health
- Reins of Hope a leader in equine assisted therapy
- Healing in America using energy healing to help veterans
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for our local law enforcement officers in dealing with military and veteran issues.
- Ventura County Military Collaborative which has over 140 agencies (government, non-profit and VA contracted) working together to create a safety net of care for military, veterans and their families through a variety of modalities.
- Ventura County Veterans Treatment Court providing wrap around services and treatment vs incarceration and is making profound strides in helping veterans by utilizing local agencies through the Collaborative.

These services are funded primarily through grants. The Ventura County Military Collaborative operates without any funding at all relying on volunteers, donated meeting space and a community that doesn't hesitate to support it. In addition, the Collaborative produces the MilVet Expo, a free yearly event focused on bringing services to active duty, national guard, reservists, veterans, retirees and their loved ones. This event is produced with zero dollars and the gracious support of community partners.

The role traditional and alternative forms of therapy play in veterans recovery process:

Without proper and coordinated mental health care I have no doubt that the men and women who serve our great nation would end up in situations much worse than we are currently seeing. Our service members and their families are tired, they are

scared and they are proud. Consistency, training and knowledge of community resources are imperative for all clinicians working with veterans. Consistency is essential to building trust, which is a hallmark of successful mental health treatment. This is the bare minimum needed to aid those men and women who have given so much.

I would like to point out that the VA is doing some great things:

- We have Paul Gaines, our local homeless outreach representative, who I believe never sleeps. He is everywhere in Ventura county interfacing with many community agencies and law enforcement to help find veterans in need of shelter and mental health/substance abuse treatment. He takes these veterans to West LA VA for inpatient services.
- Greg Cain is our Jail Outreach Coordinator and a key player at the Ventura County Veterans Treatment Court. He works 24/7 to get our local Vets into beds at West LA VA. He speaks with family members, public defenders, district attorneys and anyone else who will listen about the wide array of services for veterans.
- Charles Green is the face of VA for many of our National Guard and Reservists. He arranges clinics and briefings to help enroll our local service members and answer their questions while they are still in the military.

The obstacles we face:

- Lengthy waits at our local clinic for psychiatric and mental health services. I had to refer an Airman back to San Francisco VA for a medication refill as the wait was over 4 months to see a Psychiatrist at the Oxnard clinic.
- No outreach from our local VA clinic. All outreach and support comes from West LA VA.
- Veterans completing an inpatient program at West LA VA with no apparent coordination of care for their return to Ventura County.
- The need for more localized services through grant funding and/or support from the VA.
- Creating a sense of community with our local vets when their treatment may involve multiple facilities at multiple locations.

Having been involved with military mental health since 2003 I am so impressed with what we have accomplished. The stigma that was so prevalent when I first started has disappeared in most units, especially those who have embraced an embedded therapist model. I am proud of the work that we have done and it has made a difference! We are saving lives.

I thank you for your time and for your caring about those who have given so much.