

Steps to Assess for Eligibility

The first step to providing VA healthcare to Veterans is to identify them as a Veteran eligible for services through the VA healthcare system.

Please ask: "Have you ever served in the United States Armed Forces or military?" Building this question into your booking, interviewing, arraignment processes, assessment and community reentry programs as soon as possible will help to facilitate eligibility determination for Veterans.

The second step in determining eligibility is connecting the Veteran to the VA eligibility/admissions offices at the West Haven and Newington campuses.

VA clinical staff cannot typically provide information on eligibility regarding determination of benefits. However the VJO can be contacted for additional questions or guidance with this process.

Available Services may include:

- Inpatient and outpatient medical care and/or psychiatric care.
- Nursing home referrals
- Sexual trauma counseling
- Specialized health care for women Veterans
- Homeless assistance and housing referral
- Readjustment counseling
- Mental health recovery & treatment services including: short term alcohol and drug treatment, vocational services, anger management, and PTSD treatment.

Contact Information

Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists

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Veterans Justice Reentry Specialist

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VJO Peer Specialist

James "Patrick" Hayes

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Important Phone Numbers

Eligibility/Admissions Offices

VA Connecticut Healthcare System

West Haven Campus

203-932-5711 ext. 3328

Newington Campus: 860-667-6700

Psychiatric Emergency Room-WH

Carol Sanders, LCSW

203-932-5711 ext. 4345

OEF/OIF Program Manager

Erin Blatchley

203-932-5711 ext. 7975



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VA CT Healthcare System Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO)

VA Connecticut Healthcare Systems'
Errera Community Care Center
114-52 Boston Post Road, 2nd floor
West Haven, CT 06516



The VJO Initiative

“The purpose of the VJO initiative is to avoid unnecessary criminalization of mental illness and extended incarceration among Veterans by ensuring that eligible Veterans in contact with the criminal justice system have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) mental health and substance services.”

Department of Veterans Affairs, April 30, 2009. Under Secretary for Health's Information Letter.



The Connecticut Veteran Justice Outreach program is designed to provide outreach services to eligible Veterans who are involved with the criminal justice system. Justice involved Veterans can be at risk for homelessness and struggling with issues of substance abuse, mental illness and /or physical health problems. The goal of the program is to provide the consultation necessary to facilitate access to VA services by providing the court with a pre-trial treatment plan that could be used as an alternative to incarceration.

Responsibilities of VJO

The VJO is responsible for acting as the clinical liaison between the VA and the criminal justice system to provide outreach, assessment and case management for eligible justice-involved Veterans in Connecticut courts. For eligible Veterans in other court systems the VJO will consult with the DMHAS Jail Diversion staff and/or other criminal justice agencies to facilitate linkage to treatment within the VA System.

The VJO is responsible for providing psycho-educational trainings and consultations to DOC, local law enforcement agencies, the courts and other community agencies on how substance abuse and mental illness including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury and other combat related disorders impact the Veteran's daily functioning and may contribute to court involvement.

Although a Veteran may be mandated by the courts to attend VA treatment as an alternative to incarceration, the VA **cannot** guarantee admission, or "force" treatment if the Veteran is unwilling.



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The VJO Can...

- Serve Veterans who are eligible for VA healthcare.
- Assess Veteran's treatment needs to identify appropriate VA and non-VA services.
- Refer and link Veterans to comprehensive health care services.
- With a valid release of information the VA can communicate with the court in regards to the Veteran's medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment. This may include their program attendance, progress, evaluation, and discharge planning.
- Provide Evidence Based Treatment for court-monitored Veterans

The VJO Cannot...

- Guarantee program acceptance
- Advocate for legislation
- Serve VHA ineligible Veterans
- Perform forensic psychiatric/psychological evaluations for the court
- Accept custody of justice-involved Veterans