

Needs Assessment Survey of Guard Families in North Carolina

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**NORTH CAROLINA
NATIONAL GUARD**



Governor's Institute
on Substance Abuse



nc department
of health and
human services



Needs Assessment of Guard Families

Collaboration:

- NC National Guard Family Program;
- NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse Services;
- NC Military One Source; and
- Governor's Institute on Substance Abuse

First Step: Focus Groups

- Asheville (6 participants)
- Hickory (8 participants)
- Raleigh (5 participants)
- Winston-Salem (2 participants)

Challenges Identified by Focus Groups

- Stigma related to seeking psychological services.
- Difficulty identifying resources when they are needed and navigating the system.
- Unemployment and underemployment.
- Need for more collaboration with the schools and churches.
- Need for support network/groups.

Second Step: Review of Blue Star Families 2014 Survey Results

Top 5 issues ranked by most concerning (identified by military spouses):

- Military pay/benefits (73%)
 - Change in retirement (63%)
 - Military spouse employment (43%)
 - Deployment impact on children (42%)
 - Military lifestyle uncertainty (32%)
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- Infographic: <https://www.bluestarfam.org/resources/2014-military-family-lifestyle-survey>
 - Executive summary: https://www.bluestarfam.org/sites/default/files/docs/final_executive_summary.pdf

Look at Institute of Medicine Studies

- Results of focus groups and Blue Star Families survey confirm what the Institute of Medicine found in their 2013 study, Returning Home from Iraq and Afghanistan: Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Veterans, Service Members, and their Families (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13499/returning-home-from-iraq-and-afghanistan-assessment-of-readjustment-needs>)
- 2014 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Study, Preventing Psychological Disorders in Service Members and their Families: An Assessment of Programs (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18597/preventing-psychological-disorders-in-service-members-and-their-families-an>)
 - Programs being implemented for military personnel and their families often do not often have evidence of effectiveness.
 - Few programs are being monitored to determine whether they are making a difference.

Third Step: Developing and Administering the Survey

- Initial survey developed by collaborating partners
- Online survey through www.surveymethods.com
- Launched January 14, closed February 28
- Announced through NC National Guard Family Program and through newsletters and websites of the Governor's Working Group on Veterans, Service Members, and their Families and the NC Practice Improvement Collaborative

Final Step: Data Analysis and Reporting

59 respondents

- 31 Veterans, 11 spouses, 3 parents, 1 friend
- Majority were white (32), male (26), and between the ages of 20-64 ($\bar{x}=38.16$ years)
- Majority served in Gulf War II, Army National Guard (31), and were enlisted (36)

Agencies Providing Services

- NC National Guard Family Program (53)
- Military or Army One Source (42)
- NC National Guard behavioral health line (37)
- Community Care of North Carolina (22)

Services that Families are Willing to Pay For, in Whole or in Part

- Weekend retreats (21)
- Alternative therapies (e.g., yoga, meditation, acupuncture, massage, exercise) (14)
- Programming for children (e.g., camps, weekend activities, support groups) (12)
- Behavioral health services (11)
- Other support services (e.g., education/ career counseling, financial management counseling, legal services) (11)
- Girls Night Out with child care (10)
- Programming for teens (e.g., camps, weekend retreats, support groups, teen activities) (9)
- Services for child with special needs including respite care (8)

Payors of Health/Behavioral Health Services

- TRICARE (29)
- Private insurance (12)
- VA (3)
- Medicaid (2)

Challenges

- Not fully understanding benefits from the VA (14)
- Difficulty signing up for VA benefits (9)
- Difficulty navigating the various systems (e.g., federal, state) (9)
- Stigma associated with mental illness and/or substance use disorder (8)
- Waiting for services (8)
- Lack of services in area (8)
- Wait time related to the Veteran receiving the disability rating (7)
- Feeling like the civilian community understands and supports military families (7)
- Unemployment or underemployment (7)

What Respondents Hope will Improve

- Improved access to quality behavioral health care for Veterans and their families.
- Continued funding for services and supports.
- Education about behavioral health issues—for providers, the military, and the civilian community.
- Information on the services and resources available for each community in the State.

Contact Us

- For information about NC National Guard Family Program services, visit <http://www.nc.ngb.army.mil/SS/FP/Pages/Contact.aspx> or call 800/621-4136 and ask for Family Programs.
- For information about the NC Practice Improvement Collaborative, visit <http://ncpic.net/category/meetings> or email wei.li.fang@governorsinstitute.org.