

# Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Institute for Excellence in Education

## Signature Programs

### Warrior Centric Healthcare Interprofessional Educational Program

#### Addressing the White House's "Joining Forces" Call to Action

**Joining Forces** is an initiative sponsored by the White House to serve military personnel and their families. In 2011, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) joined the initiative and received pledges from over 100 medical schools to dedicate patient care, research and educational resources to advance the goals of Joining Forces.

As written in Stars and Stripes 2012, "The goal is to ensure that young medical professionals are familiar with the signature wounds of war, and able to more effectively treat the millions of Veterans who will struggle with those issues for decades to come. More than half of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans receiving treatment for mental health issues do not rely on the Military Health System or Department of Veterans Affairs, but instead on private civilian medical practices.

Dr. John Prescott, director of academic affairs for the AAMC, said that "while many of the schools touch on military health topics, most don't have them as a core competency for graduates." This next generation of health care providers will care for the 15 million of 23 million veterans who seek their care in the community rather than in the Veterans Administration system.

Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) is among the first medical schools in the country to participate in the Joining Forces national initiative. Collaborating partners include: the Steptoe Group LLC, the Rutgers' Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, College of Nursing, School of Health Related Professions, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, and School of Social Work, and the JFK Medical Center.

**The Rutgers RWJMS-Warrior Centric Healthcare Training (WCHT) Interprofessional Education Program (adapted from the Steptoe Group WCHT™ Program)** taps the resources of multiple disciplines to train health and mental health professionals in caring for active duty military patients, veterans, and their families. The program employs the combined skills of faculty and learners involved in: Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Allied Health, Social Work, Psychology, Rehabilitative Medicine, and Physician Assistantship.

Our intensive half-day workshop builds upon the RWJMS longitudinal Patient-Centered Medicine curriculum and makes use of lectures, clinical case studies, videos, panel discussions, first-hand accounts, and interactive group discussions. The content emphasizes the importance of:

- understanding the diversity of military culture and the importance of eliciting a military health history;
- eliciting the personal stories and experience of warriors, veterans, and their families;
- becoming knowledgeable about the epidemiology, neurobiology, diagnosis, and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI);
- improving health communication and interviewing skills;
- engaging in effective biopsychosocial assessment and interdisciplinary collaborative care planning; and
- preventing behavioral health problems such as suicide and other comorbid conditions by addressing stigma, fostering resilience, and mobilizing community resources.

Interprofessional training has been successfully provided to more than 400 participants annually since 2013. We have been gratified to receive very positive feedback and press/media coverage.

<http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Rutgers-University-Takes-Unique-Approach-to-Veteran-Care-283388381.html>

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/robert-wood-johnson-medical-school-puts-focus-on-veterans-needs-1.1184797>

Our educational training program can be customized, and we look forward to offering it to other interested academic medical centers, hospitals, health care organizations, and professional medical societies.

The Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School thanks all of our active military service members, veterans, and families for their service to the Nation!

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