



Medical Society
Of the State of
New York



New York State
Psychiatric
Association

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Mental Health Professionals to Address Veterans' Mental Health Need at Niagara Falls, NY

NIAGARA FALLS, NY - The New York State Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the Medical Society of the State of New York, and the New York State Psychiatric Association are hosting the Veterans Mental Health Training Initiative (VMHTI) regional training on Friday, February 5, at The Niagara Falls Conference and Event Center.

This is the fourth round of trainings sponsored by the VMHTI, a multi-year comprehensive training project aimed at increasing the number of community health and mental health professionals clinically trained in the assessment and treatment of mental health issues specific to veterans and their families.

Chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health, Senator Robert Ort (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) will present opening remarks to the conference attendees.

“The number of veteran suicides is alarming. An estimated 22 soldiers returning home from combat commit suicide every single day nationwide. One life lost is one too many,” said Ort. “Vital outreach services for our veterans are essential. As I continue to push for more veterans services in Albany, initiatives like the Veterans Mental Health Training offer our vets a network of information to jumpstart the process of seeking help.”

The conference will feature a morning panel discussion of *“The Post Deployment Experience”* featuring veterans, military service family members, and clinicians. Workshop topics include working with veterans with traumatic brain injury, psychopharmacology for post-traumatic stress disorder, military families and domestic family violence, and assessing technology trends in treating veterans.

The conference is one of three VMHTI regional trainings being offered across the state in 2016. Other training locations include Syracuse and Long Island. Service agencies and institutions in Western New York will be exhibiting to provide information about the programs and services they offer for veterans.

Since the initial launch of the VMHTI in 2009, over 2000 mental health and human service providers have been trained, however the need for additional and more advanced clinical training remains strong.

“The VMHTI will continue its efforts to eliminate the barriers to accessing quality mental health care for veterans and military families by building the capacity of the health and mental health workforce to better meet their unique needs,” said Ron Bunce, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers – New York State Chapter (NASW-NYS).

“Now more than ever, the Veterans Mental Health Training Initiative is an important endeavor seeking to build a network of providers who have completed the training and are available in the community to care for the visible and invisible wounds of war impacting our veterans,” said Richard Gallo, on behalf of the New York State Psychiatric Association (NYSPA).

The 2015-2016 Veterans Mental Health Training Initiative is supported by a grant from the New York State Legislature as part of their efforts to address the unmet mental health needs of returning Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans and their families.

“We are very pleased that the state has given us the opportunity to develop clinical training to make sure needed care is provided to our returning veterans,” said Elizabeth Dears-Kent, Senior Vice President Legislative & Regulatory Affairs of the Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY).

For more information about the VMHTI, go to: <https://naswnys.org/practice-and-professional-development/veterans-mental-health-training-institute/>

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About MSSNY

The Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) is an organization of approximately 30,000 licensed physicians, medical residents, and medical students in New York State. Members participate in both the state society and in their local county medical societies. MSSNY is a non-profit organization committed to representing the medical profession as a whole and advocating health related rights, responsibilities, and issues.

About NASW-NYS

The National Association of Social Workers – New York State Chapter (NASW-NYS) is a membership organization of professional social workers, one of the largest chapters of NASW in the United States with 9,000 members. NASW-NYS works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

About NYSPA

The New York Psychiatric Association (NYSPA) is the professional medical specialty organization of psychiatrist practicing in New York. NYSPA’s goal is to promote quality mental health care in New York State.