

The Well-Being of Military Families

Committee

Kenneth W. Kizer

Chair

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H. is a distinguished professor and director of the Institute for Population Health Improvement (IPHI) at the University of California, Davis. He is an internationally respected health care leader who has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine and to the National Academy of Public Administration. Among his multiple roles at IPHI, he serves as the chief medical officer for the California Department of Managed Health Care, director of the California Cancer Reporting and Epidemiologic Surveillance Program, and Chief Quality Improvement Consultant for the Medi-Cal Quality Improvement Program. Dr. Kizer is a highly seasoned physician executive whose diverse professional experience includes senior positions in the public and private sectors, academia and philanthropy. Among his previous positions are: founding President and CEO, National Quality Forum; chairman, CEO and president, Medsphere Systems Corporation, a leading commercial provider of open source health information technology; Under Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and chief executive officer of the nation's largest healthcare system, in which capacity he engineered the internationally acclaimed transformation of the Veterans Healthcare System in the late 1990s; Director of the former California Department of Health Services; and Chairman of The California Wellness Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health promotion and population health improvement. He has chaired or served on numerous National Academies' committees. Dr. Kizer is an honors graduate of Stanford University and UCLA, the recipient of two honorary doctorates, and a fellow or distinguished fellow of 12 professional societies. He is board certified in six medical specialties and/or subspecialties, and has authored over 500 original articles, book chapters and other reports. He is a veteran of the US Navy and a former Navy diving medical officer and recognized expert on medicine in wilderness and austere environments.

David L. Albright

Member

David Albright, Ph.D., currently holds the Hill Crest Foundation Endowed Chair in Mental Health at The University of Alabama, with a tenured appointment in the School of Social Work. He is a military veteran and former research fellow with both the Department of Veterans Affairs and the RAND Corporation's Center for Military Health Policy Research. Dr. Albright works to produce research that is useful for communities, health care providers, and policymakers as they work to address and improve health-related determinants and outcomes among military personnel, veterans, and their families and communities.

Stephen J. Cozza

Member

Stephen J. Cozza, M.D., is professor of Psychiatry at the Uniformed Services University where he serves as associate director, Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress. He has served in a variety of positions of responsibility in the Department of Psychiatry at Walter Reed Army Medical Center including chief, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Service, program director of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Program and chief, Department of Psychiatry. He retired from the U.S. Army in 2006 after 25 years of military service. Dr. Cozza's professional interests have been in the areas of clinical and community response to trauma and the impact of deployment and combat injury, illness and death on military service members, their families and their children. Under his leadership, the Walter Reed Department of Psychiatry spearheaded the initiative to provide mental health services, support and follow up to the many injured service members, their families and their children who receive medical treatment. Dr. Cozza is a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in the specialties of General Psychiatry and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Dr. Cozza serves as a scientific advisor to several national organizations that focus on the needs of military children and families. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He received his medical degree from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences and completed his residency in General Psychiatry and fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

Ellen DeVoe

Member

Ellen DeVoe, MSW, Ph.D., is professor and director of the Doctorate Program at the Boston University School of Social Work. Her early scholarship focused on sexual abuse, the impact of domestic and community violence on children and families, and intervention research. Her work has been supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, Centers for Disease Control, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Department of Defense. Since the September 11th attacks, she has been immersed in intervention research concerning parents affected by traumatic stress, including military and veteran parents and families. For the last decade, she has directed a program of research funded by the Department of Defense focused on the development of a parenting intervention program to support military parents throughout cycles of deployment and reintegration. She is currently the principal investigator of a randomized clinical trial study at the Ft. Hood Army installation titled the Strong Families Strong Forces Prevention Project with deploying parents of young children to evaluate the efficacy of an intervention to reduce military family distress across the military deployment cycle. She received her B.A. from Princeton University, a M.S.W. from the University of Denver, and her Ph.D. in social work and social science at the University of Michigan and a NIMH postdoctoral fellowship in Family Violence Research Training at the University of New Hampshire.

Abigail Gewirtz

Member

Abigail Gewirtz, Ph.D., is the John and Nancy Lindahl Leadership Professor in the Department of Family Social Science and the Institute of Child Development, and director of the Institute for Translational Research in Children's Mental Health at the University of Minnesota. Her research focuses on the development, effectiveness testing, and implementation of targeted prevention programs that promote child resilience among highly stressed families including those affected by military deployment, and war. Over more than a decade, her research has been funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Department of Defense. She is principal investigator on two current randomized controlled trials to develop and test a web-enhanced parenting program for military families with parents returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has published and presented widely on parenting, trauma, and child adjustment, extending parent training models for populations affected by traumatic stress, and the role of community sectors of care as portals for family-based prevention. She received her BSc. from University College London, an M.A. in psychology from Tel Aviv University, Israel and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is a licensed psychologist in Minnesota and was previously licensed in Connecticut.

Mary Keller

Member

Mary Keller, Ed.D., serves as the president and CEO of the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). She has been the organization's executive leader since 1998. She was one of the founders of the Military Child Education Coalition, the nation's only non-profit organization that serves military children around the world as they strive to meet the challenges of frequent transitions, parental deployments, loss and trauma. The MCEC was recognized by First Lady Laura Bush in 2004 as the Congressional Club Charity of the Year and, in 2008, was certified America's Best Charity by Independent Charities of America. Mary has served as a teacher and school administrator in several Texas school districts for over 21 years. She served for eight years as assistant superintendent and area superintendent for education services for the Killeen Independent School District, which today serves over 20,000 military connected children and the nation's largest military installation, Fort Hood. Mary received a master's degree in education with a specialization in curriculum and instruction from Wayland Baptist University and earned her doctorate in educational administration at Texas Tech University. She holds professional certification in teaching elementary, as well as history, supervision, mid-management, and superintendency. She was trained in formal mediation and held a certification from the Texas Bar Association.

Patricia Lester

Member

Patricia Lester, M.D., is the Nathanson Family Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Division of Population Behavioral Health, Director of the Nathanson Family Resilience Center, and the Medical Director of the Family STAR (Stress, Trauma and Resilience) service at the UCLA Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. A board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist, her research and clinical work have been dedicated to the development, evaluation, and implementation of family-centered prevention and treatment for children and families facing adversity and trauma. She co-developed the trauma-informed, family-centered preventive intervention FOCUS which was designed to enhance resilience and mitigate stress in families facing adversities such as medical illness and military wartime deployment, injury and loss. She oversees an on-line learning center and evaluation data management system, which utilizes web-based technologies to scale program implementation with fidelity within community, school and health care settings. Over the last decade, she has conducted a number of research studies on the impact of parental deployment on military-connected children and families, and is currently the principal investigator of an NICHD funded randomized trial of a virtually delivered family prevention intervention for military and veteran families with young children. She is well-versed in the scientific and programmatic issues facing military-connected families, and serves as an advisor on the needs of military children and families across military, university and non-profit agencies, including the Millennium Family Cohort Study. She received her M.D. degree from University of California San Francisco, School of Medicine.

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth

Member

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, Ph.D., is professor of human development and family studies at Purdue University, where she is also director of both the Center for Families and the Military Family Research Institute and executive director of the Family Impact Institute. Her primary research interest is in the relationships between work conditions and family life. Over the past 20 years, she has studied differences between small and large workplaces, how adults grow and develop as a result of their work experiences, and how different kinds of organizational policies make it easier or more difficult for workers to be successful at work and at home. As the Director of the Center for Families she conducts research and engagement activities focused on helping individuals and organizations who serve families to do their work more effectively. In 2000, she began to conduct research about and for military families via the Military Family Research Institute. She served on the Institute of Medicine Committee on Readjustment Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans, and their Families and on the Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health. She has also been invited to participate in White House and Department of Defense events related to the military and their families. She is a recipient of the Work Life Legacy Award from the Families and Work Institute and was named a fellow of the National Council on Family Relations. She received a M.S. and a Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies, and a M.B.A. in Management from the Pennsylvania State University.

Laura L. Miller

Member

Laura L. Miller, Ph.D., is a senior military sociologist at the RAND Corporation. For more than 25 years she has studied the lives of military personnel and their families through surveys, observations, discussion groups, one-on-one interviews, and analyses of military policy and personnel data. Research topics include military culture and organization; deployment experiences; gender integration; sexual harassment and sexual assault; social problems; health and well-being; military families; military spouse education and employment; attitudes toward gays and lesbians in the military; unit cohesion and morale; and civil-military relations. To collect primary data, Dr. Miller has traveled to more than 40 stateside installations and to overseas bases and operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, Korea, Kuwait, Macedonia, Qatar, the Serb Republic, and Somalia. She has served on numerous advisory boards and task forces, including as a part of the OSD Independent Review Related to Fort Hood (2009) and the Air Force Follow-On Review Related to Fort Hood (2010); as an advisor on military and sociological aspects of suicide research for the Army Science Board and the Department of the Army (2008-2009); and as member of two commissions investigating sexual misconduct, harassment and violence at the military service academies (2003-2005). Dr. Miller was previously an assistant professor of sociology at UCLA (1997-2002) and a post-doctoral fellow at the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University (1995-1997). She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University, and her B.A. from the University of Redlands.

Tracy Neal-Walden

Member

Tracy Neal-Walden, Ph.D., is Senior Vice President and Director of the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easterseals, a licensed clinical psychologist, and a retired Air Force colonel with more than 25 years of experience in mental health treatment, leadership, outreach and policy. She directs clinical, administrative, financial, and outreach operations for the clinic which is part of the Cohen Veterans Network, providing high-quality, accessible, integrated and no-cost/low-cost mental healthcare to veterans, their families, and caretakers. She specializes in the cognitive-behavioral treatment of insomnia, depression, anxiety, chronic pain and other health related conditions in military and veteran populations. In addition, she is a clinical trainer in integrated behavioral health in primary care, and has trained, supervised and mentored clinicians across the Air Force and Department of Defense in evidenced based treatment at both the pre- and post-doctoral levels. She serves on the American Psychological Association's Continuing Education Committee, and has conducted and published research in the area of suicide prevention. She received a Ph.D in Clinical Psychology from Drexel University-Hahnemann Medical Campus and completed a two year post-doctoral fellowship in clinical health psychology at the Wilford Hall Medical and Surgical Center in San Antonio, TX.

Daniel Perkins

Member

Daniel Perkins, Ph.D., is a professor of family and youth resiliency and policy at the Pennsylvania State University. He is principle scientist and founder of an applied research center, the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State. Dr. Perkins is also interested in hybrid evaluations of preventions and interventions, implementation science, and community-based delivery models. He has been designing and evaluating strengths-based family and youth development programs in 4-H and Cooperative Extension and leading complex projects for more than 20 years. In addition, he is also an affiliate faculty member of the Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development. The Clearinghouse is an interactive, knowledge-based platform for helping professionals supporting military families to support their program implementation and assessment activities. The Clearinghouse is specifically designed to promote and support: (1) the use of research-based decision-making; (2) the selection, dissemination, and implementation of evidence-based programs and practices; (3) the evaluation (process and outcome) of programs and the identification or creation of measures and metrics; and (4) the continued education of professionals assisting military families. He received his Ph.D. in family and child ecology from Michigan State University.

Ashish S. Vazirani

Member

Ashish S. Vazirani, M.E., M.B.A., is the Executive Director and CEO of the National Military Family Association (NMFA) providing strategic and operational oversight of the leading nonprofit dedicated to serving the families who stand behind the uniform. Before joining NMFA, Mr. Vazirani led development and programming at Armed Services YMCA. He was responsible for developing deep and lasting engagement with the donors and ensuring implementation and measurement of standardized programs serving military families. He is also the founder and principal of A2O Strategies, LLC, a consultancy that provides advisory services to high growth companies, with a focus on Go-to-Market strategy and execution. Prior to his service with the ASYMCA and founding A2O, Mr. Vazirani was principal and the leader of the high tech industry practice of ZS Associates, a firm specializing in transforming sales and marketing from art to a science. He has served as a marketing and development advisor to military services organizations such as the USO (2011 – 2014) and Operation Homefront (2014 – 2017), and as a volunteer with the Blinded American Veterans Foundation (2009 – 2017). Before his career in consulting, and sales and marketing management, Mr. Vazirani served in the U.S. Navy as a Submarine Officer from 1986 – 1993. He served aboard the USS Groton from 1988 – 1991, and was an Assignment Officer at the Navy's Bureau of Personnel from 1991 – 1993. He was qualified in Submarines and certified as a Naval Nuclear Engineer. Mr. Vazirani received a B.E. in mechanical engineering (summa cum laude) from Vanderbilt University, a M.E. from the McCormick School of Engineering at Northwestern University, and a M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

Ivan Walks

Member

Ivan Walks, M.D., is the CEO of Ivan Walks & Associates, a health and human services consulting firm. He is a former Chief Health Officer of the District of Columbia and Director of the D.C. Department of Health and has served on the adjunct medical faculty at both George Washington University and Howard University. He was appointed by the Governor of the State of Maryland and served four years as a member of the State of Maryland Board of Education. After the September 11 attacks, he served on a Board for the American Red Cross to oversee health recovery efforts for those impacted by the events at the Pentagon and the Twin Towers in NYC. He was honored by the American Public Health Association as a "Public Health Hero", by Mayor Anthony Williams with The Government of the District of Columbia Distinguished Public Service Award, by Leadership Greater Washington with its Founder's Award for Leadership and Community Service and by the American Federation of Government Employees with its President's Award. He has offered testimony before both the US Senate and US House of Representatives and was a featured presenter at The White House Conference on Mental Health. He has served on the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Board of Trustees; received an APA Presidential Appointment to Chair the APA Committee of Residents and Fellows; and was a member of the Inaugural APA/AMA Joint Board of Trustees Meeting. He attended the University of Southern California and UCLA and completed his Doctor of Medicine at the University of California at Davis. He completed additional training at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, the West LA Veterans Administration, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.