



Veteran Call Coordination Pilot Project

April through July 2016

Final Report - August 30, 2016

Overview

This past year, the TVCA Health, Wellness and Family Support Workgroup determined that uncoordinated responses for Veteran emergency assistance requests were a top priority for system improvement. The existing coordinated veteran response partners included United Way 211, the Community OneSource operated by Easter Seals Tristate, and the TVCA VIP Center. Last year, United Way 211 assisted 1,087 veteran calls, an average of 3 per day. To improve coordination, these key veteran EA providers undertook a four-month pilot project to test ways to take advantage of opportunities to serve more veterans, more deeply. Components of the pilot included:

- After hours staffing by Easter Seals Community OneSource
- Additional screening and direct connections to OneSource of veterans calling United Way 211
- Provision access to emergency assistance funds, if needed
- Additional tracking of callers including a post-pilot survey of callers

United Way 211 instituted a simple screening of callers to identify our target population for a warm handoff to Easter Seals OneSource: veterans who were in need of more than basic services (including possible navigation and follow up), but not in behavioral health crisis or literally homeless. The pilot project extended from April through July of 2016. A preliminary budget of \$6,000 was expected.

Key findings

- Easter Seals Community OneSource experienced a 70% increase in veteran calls (+30 calls/month)
- System changes were completed at essentially **no cost** to the partner organizations.
- The rate of transfer was much higher for both younger (52%) and senior veterans (67%), key target populations.
- 91% of surveyed callers were likely or extremely likely to refer veterans to 211 for service. 59% of callers surveyed report that the initial issue is no longer a problem

Recommendations

Based on the data collected below, the project partners recommend the following actions:

- Continue process: Continue to screen and directly connect eligible veterans from United Way 211 to Easter Seals Community OneSource. Continue on-call access for OneSource staff on weekends and after hours.
- Expand referrals: Expand the number of veteran callers deemed eligible to be referred to OneSource, including those needing to access veteran benefits (representing 73% of callers).

- Explore collaborative marketing: Only 14% of the veteran callers to United Way 211 fall between the ages of 18 and 44, including most of the Post 9/11 generation. Partners should consider targeted marketing efforts for Post 9/11 veterans advocating 211 with direct connection to OneSource as a solution.
- Evaluate text option: Related to the above issue, consider targeting the new United Way 211 text options to younger veterans.

Pilot Project Caller Demographics

	<i>United Way 211</i>		<i>Calls Transferred to Easter Seals</i>		<i>Transfer Rate</i>
Total Calls	177	100%	92	100%	54%
Warm handoffs	--	--	65	71%	
Demographics					
65 years and over	33	19%	22	24%	67%
45-65 years old	106	60%	38	41%	36%
18-44 years old	25	14%	13	14%	52%
Post 9/11 veterans	--	--	10	11%	--
Family members	99	56%	3	3%	3%
Referral need(s)					
Rent/Housing	34	19%	13	14%	38%
Utilities	109	62%	47	51%	43%
Transportation	5	3%	4	4%	80%
Veteran benefits	129	73%	1	1%	0%
Other	115	88%	19	21%	17%

Timing of Handoffs: The vast majority (88%) of handoffs occurred during work hours. Only 8% occurred during weekend hours and no calls transferred during evening hours.

Results of Post-Project Survey of Callers

Volunteers contacted all the participants in the pilot project to administer a brief post-project survey. Of 86 total participants with numbers, our response rate was 26% (22). Of those responding, the median discharge year was 1982. 39% separated prior to 1974 and 11% separated after 2001. Of those with phone numbers listed, 18% (17) of them were no longer correct or disconnected. A summary of the responses to our survey question is listed below.

<i>Question</i>	<i>Responses</i>
You called 211 with a particular need or concern. Is that need or concern still a problem?	59% - Minor or not at all a problem 27% - Still major or serious problem
During the call to 211, were you connected to a veteran call specialist? If so, how responsible was that handoff to your issue resolution?	68% - Completely or mostly responsible
How quickly did 211 or the veteran call	77% - Quickly or very quickly

specialist work to respond to your issue?	
How likely are you to recommend that other veterans call 211 for assistance?	91% - Likely or extremely likely

Among those who received a warm handoff, 66% of those reported that their issues posed a minor or no problem. For those who did not, 25% reported similar status.

Evaluation Outcomes

<i>Programmatic decisions</i>	<i>Evaluation Questions</i>	<i>Findings</i>
After hours staffing: Should after hours OneSource staffing be continued? If so, during which hours?	Volume/ timing/ demographics: What is the call volume of veterans seeking emergency assistance? When do veterans tend to call? Do demographic factors impact this choice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 92 calls were transferred, 88% of which occurred during business hours. • While the volume does not show after hours staffing as necessary, the minimal resources needed may justify continuation.
Warm handoff/criteria: Should warm hand offs for veterans from 211 to OneSource be continued? For emergency assistance only? Do the criteria for transfer need to be expanded or reduced?	Participation/engagement : Will veterans calling 211 agree to participate in basic case management services? Does having a veteran answering the call make a difference?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 92 calls reflected a 70% (+30/month) increase in volume for OneSource. The top need by far was utility assistance (51%). • Of those callers surveyed, two-thirds (66%) had issues resolved if they received a warm handoff compared to 25% who did not. • These outcomes suggest that warm handoffs be continued and the criteria be expanded to other areas (especially veteran benefits, representing 73% of 211 calls).
Veteran experience: Does it make sense to continue to build a coordinated pipeline for veteran referrals?	Satisfaction: Are we getting an indication that veteran EA callers prefer this approach? Is it more effective in the long run?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% of callers surveyed are likely or extremely likely to recommend that veterans call 211 for assistance. 68% identify the handoff as mostly or completely responsible for resolution.