



Civilian Medical Resources Network

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December 18, 2016

Dear Friend,

Long ago we decided to send only one fund raising message a year, and this is it.

A brief summary of our request

We'd really appreciate your supporting our work financially to whatever extent you feel able to do so.

Our website (<http://civilianmedicalresources.net>) presents information about our efforts and includes a place to make tax-deductible donations.

If you prefer, you can send a check to the above address. (If you do send a check, please make it out to the Allende Program in Social Medicine, the 501C3 organization that processes donations, and indicate that the contribution should go to the Civilian Medical Resources Network.)

More information

Will the strange change in U.S. political leadership usher in a new era of peace? Will we be able to take a break from our often arduous and scary volunteer work in support of active duty GIs and veterans who can't get the medical and mental health services they need in the military sector?

We doubt that the spectacle of U.S. politics will include this potentiality. Why? The main reason, we believe, is that our fragile world economic system, while it lasts, requires perpetual war to fuel its productive capacity and its ability to sustain adequate rates of profit for the tiny proportion of the population that benefits financially from military conflict.

As the tumultuous year of 2016 comes to an end and the United States gears up for even more military interventions at home and abroad, we hope to strengthen our work on behalf of service members who can't get their needs met in the military or Veterans Administration.

Contributions, including sustaining donations from a number of us who provide services, help us hire veterans and family members of veterans to do outreach for active-duty GIs. Our current coordinator is the partner of an Iraq veteran. They and many of us professionals who are volunteering collaborate actively with Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, and other key organizations working for peace.

During the last 12 years, CMRN has offered medical and mental health services for active-duty GIs and veterans – one of very few non-military affiliated organizations to do so. We do this work because military health and mental health services often remain inaccessible or unresponsive to service members' needs. Our work has proven helpful and sometimes even life-saving for those who feel they have nowhere else to turn. We are staffed with health care professionals working as volunteers who provide services without charge. As in previous years, about half of our clients are Absent Without Leave (AWOL) so they are ineligible for any military health services or insurance benefits. This year we served more clients than in previous years. We continue to help three to four new clients a week, and we usually provide services to them over several months and sometimes for more than a year.

As the United States continues its military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and elsewhere, the epidemic of physical and mental health problems and suicides among our active duty service members and veterans continues to increase. The constant state of war dehumanizes and separates service members from the rest of humanity, keeping them from finding a fulfilling community to return to once they are no longer in combat. Increased militarization of private police and security forces at home further enforces the warlike attitude of Us versus Them. Continued polarization of politics forces hardships on many affected by outdated policies when government fails to function. For these and other reasons, we believe the need for civilian-sector services will continue to grow.

Suicides continue to occur at a very high rate among GIs and vets. Currently an average of at least one active duty service member and over 20 veterans commit suicide every day. In current wars, more service members will die from suicide than from combat. To our knowledge, during 12 years there has been only one death among our clients – a very unfortunate situation when a mentally ill client was killed by local police who had received inadequate training. In our follow up efforts, we know of no suicide that has occurred among our clients, despite a high rate of suicidality when clients are referred to us.

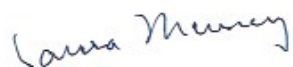
Recently we have received referrals of more active duty women and men who have experienced military sexual trauma. These clients usually suffer from depression, suicidality, PTSD, and other serious mental and physical health problems. In addition to many women clients, during the last few months we have responded to an increased number of men who have experienced sexual abuse by male superiors. We expect that our efforts focusing on military sexual trauma, unfortunately, will continue to grow.

Because we have been able to help GIs with such grave problems, we continue to find our work very gratifying. By offering a different outlook for underserved GIs, we see our work as a step toward peace with justice.

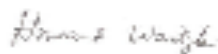
Thank you very much for your support and consideration.

Good wishes for the holiday season, the new year, and beyond, as well as hopes for our mutual support, which we'll need.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Muncy".

Laura Muncy
Coordinator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard Waitzkin".

Howard Waitzkin
Director, Civilian Medical Resources Network
Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico