



NEWS AND INFORMATION

Under Embargo Until

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Americans for the Arts and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Announce National “Blueprint for Action” for Increased Use of The Arts to Meet Challenges of Today’s Military

Action Plan Announced During National Summit on April 10 in Washington, D.C.

Summit Hosted by Walter Reed Bethesda as Part of National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education, and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) today announced a nationwide “Blueprint for Action” designed to make arts programming widely available to service members, veterans, and their families throughout their lifespan, including the continuum of military service. Action items in the areas of research, practice and policy include:

- Build the growing body of knowledge concerning the many powerful benefits of arts and health programming in the military;
- Create mechanisms to inform the expansion of effective, existing programs and the development of new ones; and
- Develop policies to ensure that every service member, veteran and family member has access to the arts.

The announcement was made at Memorial Auditorium at the WRNMMC on April 10 during the **National Summit: Arts, Health and Well-being across the Military Continuum**, a forum at which more than 300 military, nonprofit, government, health practitioners and arts professionals gathered to contribute ideas and join the national effort in support of the health and well-being of service members, veterans, their families and the greater community supporting them.

The event was opened by Rear Admiral Alton L. Stocks, MC, USN, Commander, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, followed by the keynote address from **Rear Admiral Boris D. Lushniak**, M.D., M.P.H., U.S. Public Health Service. Other speakers included, **Mary Beth Bigley**, PhD, MSN, ANP, Acting Director, Office of Science and Communications, Office of the US Surgeon General, US Department of Health and Human Services; **Tracy Gaudet**, MD, Director, Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation, Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration; President and CEO of Americans for the Arts **Robert L. Lynch**; **Joan Shigekawa**, acting chair of National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition, the Summit also featured performances by Iraq veteran and Exit 12 Dance Company Executive Director **Roman Baca** accompanied by **Exit 12 Dance Company**; Musicorps Founder and Director **Arthur Bloom** and **Musicorps Band Members**; **Ron Capps**, veteran and director of Veterans Writing Project; **Thomas Dwyer**, company member of The Dance Exchange; and **Daniel Jones**, intern with *A Backpack Journalist* and US Army Reserve Youth.

“Already, the arts have played an active, meaningful role in addressing the vast array of critical issues facing America’s service members, veterans and their families. Still, there is much more to learn about the healing and transformative power the arts can provide to the military,” said Lynch. “We at Americans for the Arts could not be more delighted to partner with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and a Steering Committee of national arts, health and military organizations to explore the vast potential and benefit the arts and military communities can bring to one another.”

“The challenges service members face are more complex and difficult than any branch of the military, federal agency, or civilian organization can address alone. We have seen first-hand the success and value of creative arts programs and will continue expanding our arts programs through partnerships with artists and arts organizations to ensure those who are in most need have access,” said Stocks.

The National Initiative for Arts & Healing in the Military

The National Summit is the first major event in 2013 of the multi-year **National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military**¹, a national effort designed to create policy

¹ Americans for the Arts and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center co-lead the National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military in partnership with a National Steering Committee comprised of federal agency, military, nonprofit and private sector partners including the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Creative Healing Connections, Foundation for Art & Healing, Global Alliance for Arts & Health, National Center for Creative Aging, National Endowment for the Arts, NY Army National Guard Chaplaincy, Oasis by Design, LLC, Planetree Residential Facilities, Rollins & Associates, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, The Epidaurus Project, USO Metro, Vet Art Project, and VSA, an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.

that supports the wide-spread use of arts-based therapeutic programs and services. It also aims to help build the structure and capacity for such resources within military health care VA and rehabilitative facilities and the community at large. In addition, the Initiative seeks to work across military, government, private and nonprofit sectors to:

- Advance the policy, practice and quality use of arts and creativity as tools for health in the military;
- Raise visibility, understanding and support of arts and health in the military; and
- Make the arts available to all active-duty military, staff, family members and veterans as tools for health and well-being.

The Initiative was conceived in January, 2012 following the success of the first **National Summit: Arts in Healing for Warriors**, which was held in October 2011 at WRNMMC and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE). The 2011 Summit marked the first time various branches of the military collaborated with civilian agencies to discuss how engaging with the arts provides opportunities to meet the key health issues our military faces—from pre-deployment to deployment to homecoming.

In November, 2012, the **Arts & Health in the Military National Roundtable** was convened to recommend a framework for a “blueprint for action” that would ensure the availability of arts interventions for America’s service men and women and their families, and integrate the arts as part of the “Standard of Care” in military clinical (VA and military hospitals) as well as programs in community settings across the country. The result of this gathering of 22 high-level military, government, private sector and nonprofit leaders gathered at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. was the report, *The Arts: A Promising Solution to Meeting the Challenges of Today’s Military*, which outlines the “Arts & Health in the Military Blueprint for Action.”

The Roundtable was co-chaired by **Anita Boles**, then executive director for the Global Alliance for Arts & Health, and **Robert L. Lynch**. It was hosted by VSA Founder, **Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith**, and participants included **Dr. Josephine Briggs**, director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, National Institutes for Health; **Juan Garcia**, assistant secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; **Brigadier General Robert F. Hedelund**, director, Marine and Family Programs, Division, M&RA, HQMC; **Rocco Landesman**, then chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts; Health and Human Services Secretary **Kathleen Sebelius**; and **Rear Admiral Alton L. Stocks**.

Support for the development of the Roundtable summary report and blueprint for action, *The Arts: A Promising Solution to Meeting the Challenges of Today's Military*, is provided in part by the David Rockefeller Fund.

Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

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