



# Operation Re-Entry North Carolina: Veteran Resiliency and Reintegration through Technology (ORNC: R&R)

East Carolina University

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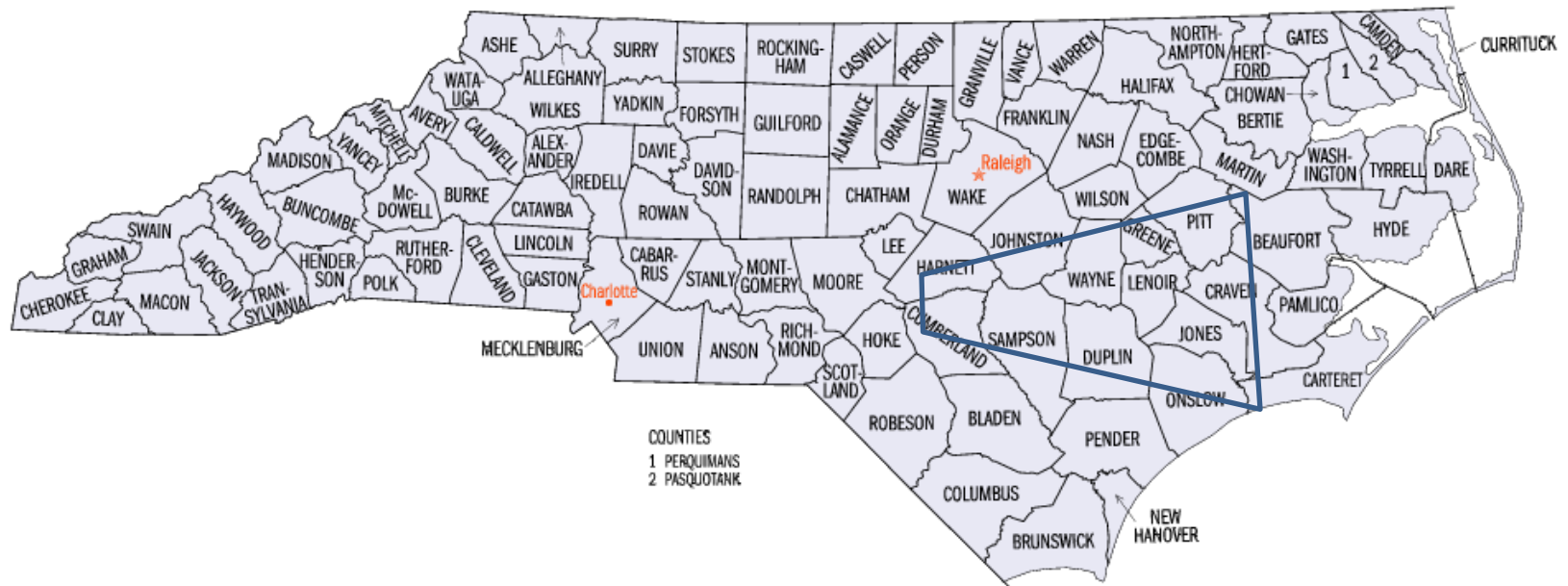
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# NC: A Military State

- 800,000 Veterans reside in NC
  - Psychosocial issues
    - Homelessness
    - Unemployment
    - Behavioral/mental health
    - Ethnic/gender/sexual orientation minorities at higher risk
- Eastern NC (i.e., east of I-95)
  - Military corridor
    - Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune
    - Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and New River
    - Pope & Seymour Johnson AFBs
    - Fort Bragg Army Base
  - Rural and Poor: Health, employment, etc. disparities
    - Rural Veterans at increased risk for suicide than urban counterparts.

# Catchment Area



# Our Mission & Objectives

- Mission: Strengthen the resiliency and facilitate the reintegration of homeless and underserved Veterans and their families through innovative uses of technology.
- Objectives:
  - increasing the number of rural, eastern NC homeless and underserved veterans and their families who access medical, psychiatric, and behavioral health services,
  - reducing substance use and symptoms of co-occurring mental health disorders (e.g., suicide, post-traumatic stress, depression, etc.),
  - reducing the number of veterans and their families experiencing a homeless episode,
  - increasing their social and vocational functioning, and
  - measuring the impact of the use of technology-based delivery systems on these objectives.

# Our Team

- East Carolina University
  - 4 Departments/4 Clinics across 4 Colleges
- Community
  - VA, Shelters, Soup Kitchens, Local Providers, Law Enforcement, etc., etc.
- Intra & Interdisciplinary
  - Addictions Counselors
  - Marriage & Family Therapists
  - Psychiatrists
  - Biofeedback Technicians
  - Vocational Counselors

# Our Technology

- Rover
- Texting
- Email
- Telephone
- Biofeedback\*
- Polycom\*
- A-CHESS\*
- EHR☹
- Guiding principles
  - A little tech at a time
  - Contact between contacts

# Rover



# Typical Mission

- Team members
  - Doctoral students – masters students at various levels of training
- Team location description
  - Determining sites with most “hits”
  - Consistent scheduling/communication
- Mission goals
  - “Evaluation as engagement”
  - Enrolling for clinical services
- Mission relationships
  - Communication with participants and with agency staff
  - Reminder slips



# Typical Mission Outline

- Departure preparation
- Departure
- Arrival and Rover deployment
- Participant engagement
  - Varying levels
- Return trip preparation
  - Preparation begins now
- Mission hand-off

# *What we've done (so far...)*

- 90 Missions
- Enrolled 155 in some level of service
- Text message blasts:
  - 90 mission location blasts,
  - Over 200 “monthly check-in” contacts by various means,
  - Over 100 “who’s hiring” blasts by county.
- Enhanced clinical encounters:
  - 40 email counseling sessions,
  - 35 phone counseling sessions,
  - 62 face-to-face sessions,
  - 5 feedback sessions.

# How we've done (so far..)

- GPRA 6-month follow-up
  - 47.8% follow-up rate (11 of 23)
  - Substance use increased 16.7%\*
  - Social connectedness decreased 12.5%
  - Crime decreased 10%\*
  - Employment increased 100% (18% to 36%)
  - Bio/Behavioral Consequences decreased 10%
  - Stable housing increased 150% (18% to 45%)
- Focus interview: Frequency of technology use

	Not at all	Little	Some	A lot
Cell Phone	16	22	28	74
Email	75	16	14	35
Tablet/ iPad	119	4	4	12
Text Messaging	59	23	15	41
Web Sites	67	18	14	39

# Intra- and Interdisciplinary Strengths and Challenges

- Benefit of learning from one another
  - Informal teaching/van conversations
  - Formal training opportunities
- Multiple services available to clientele.
- Assumptions and the importance of the hallway conversation.

# Lessons learned (so far...)

- Benefits of simple technology
  - Polycom
  - Absence of smartphones
  - Satellite
- Regular meetings and communication.
- Processing different roles for clinically trained students.
- Relational work difficult.

# Thank you.

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