

TATRC's VHSO Continues to Help Others Achieve Army's Goal of Providing VH Capabilities Anywhere, at Any Time

Dr. Francis McVeigh, TATRC's Virtual Health Support Office (VHSO) Lead and Science Director, traveled to Regional Health Command-Europe (RHC-E) to participate in a meeting that focused on virtual health (VH) for building their VH Campaign Support Plan in Europe. Following the discussion, Dr. McVeigh visited the 4ID MCE at Poznan, and Role I sites at AMSC Powiadz, Poland, Torun and Bemowo Piskie Training Area (BPTA) Poland, which are part of the Atlantic Resolve mission.

During this site visit he observed that some of the providers were not using VH at all and that others were using a wide spectrum of VH modalities and programs such as telephones, personal laptops and cell phones, older Medical Communications for Combat Casualty Care (MC4) version laptops, 'Telehealth-In-A-Bag' kits, communicating through NIPR, SIPR, and local Wi-Fi modalities. BPTA personnel were using PATH/HELP and synchronous tele-Behavioral Health, but experiencing latency challenges. BPTA's regimental surgeon suggested that they begin to use the Advanced Operational Support for Operational Forces (ADVISOR) Program, which at that time had not been officially inculcated across the AMEDD. Some of the challenges observed included reliable connectivity, limited bandwidth, latency issues and lack of knowledge and training of available VH options.

Following his visit, Dr. McVeigh documented and disseminated his findings and made the following recommendations which include: 1) write an information

paper discussing VH options, training, challenges and solutions to be developed and disseminated by the Joint Surgeon to all COCOM Surgeon Offices; 2) pre-deployment training in similar deployment environments be developed and exercised; 3) MC4 reach out to these sites to provide assistance; and that RHC-E, who has demonstrated that they are the leaders in delivering VH in operational environments and are several years ahead of the Office of the Surgeon General VH projected glide path be funded to continue to deliver and expand VH.

MC4 has since reached out to RHC-E and Europe's Army Surgeon's Office and made recommendations, as well as made plans to visit Role I and II sites. TATRC's VHSO team has created a dashboard to keep track of ongoing pilots and demonstration initiatives in the deployed environments and has created one page instruction sheets on how to use selected VH capabilities such as, Army email teleconsultation, PATH/HELP, TH in a Bag and ADVISOR.

Dr. McVeigh stated that this visit identified similar issues and challenges as those that were discovered during the visit to the CENTCOM Area of Operations in February 2017. Some of the similar findings were that the providers and others were not trained and/or informed of the types of VH capabilities that exist, nor made aware of the challenging connectivity issues. "It is only by identifying and addressing these issues that virtual health usage will increase," Dr. McVeigh concluded. ■■■