

**THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN VETERAN**

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**THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
VETERANS CONFERENCE**

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**Wed**  
**OCT 2**

**Hyatt Regency**  
**Long Beach**

Presented by :

**USC** Suzanne Dworak-Peck  
School of Social Work  
*Military and Veterans Programs*

RAND - USC Epstein Family Foundation Center  
*for Veterans Policy Research*





THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN VETERAN

# THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA VETERANS CONFERENCE

Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024

9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

## **Location**

Hyatt Regency Long Beach, Regency Ballroom  
200 S Pine Ave, Long Beach, CA 90802

## **Check-In**

Check in will open at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 9:55 a.m.  
Program begins at 10:00 a.m.

## **Parking**

Complimentary valet parking is provided. Turn off Pine Avenue into the hotel entrance. Please tell valet you are with the Veterans Conference. A paid parking structure is also available at 18 S Pine next door.

## **Refreshments & Meal**

Refreshments provided throughout the day.  
Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided for attendees.

## **Questions and Comments**

The QR code below will be used for you to submit questions or comments throughout the day. Scan the QR code, tap on the link to open the session, select the chat box, type your question and tap the send icon. The session may also be accessed via the Vevox app, or via any browser at:  
vevox.app Session ID 479-060-623



# AGENDA

**9:30 - 9:55am**

**Check-In & Continental Breakfast**

**10:00 - 10:05am**

**Opening Remarks by *Daniel J. Epstein, Founder ConAm Group***

**10:05 - 10:30am**

**The State of the American Veteran: Key Findings from the Southern California Veterans Study**

*Presented by Sara Kintzle, Research Professor, Military and Veterans Programs, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work*

**10:30 - 11:00am**

**Interview with California Senator Josh Newman**

*Interviewed by Carl Castro, Professor, Director of Military and Veterans Programs, Director of the RAND-USC Epstein Family Foundation Center for Veterans Policy Research, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)*

**11:00 - 11:15am**

**Coffee Break & Networking**

**11:15am - 12:00pm**

**County Initiatives & Leadership Panel**

*Moderated by Aimee Bravo, Director, Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative (LAVC) at SoCal Grantmakers, SMSgt USAF*

*Panelists:*

- *Luke Bergmann, Director, Behavioral Health Services, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency*
- *Veronica Kelley, Director, Orange County Health Care Agency*
- *La Tina Jackson, Deputy Director, Countywide Engagement Division Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health*
- *James Zenner, Director, Military & Veterans Affairs Los Angeles County*

**12:00 - 1:00pm**

**Lunch & Innovations Across Southern California Poster and Networking Session**

# AGENDA

**1:00 - 1:45pm**

## **The Future of Funding for Veteran Organizations Panel**

*Moderated by Nathan Graeser, Director of Veterans Initiatives SoCal Grantmakers, Brigade Chaplain California Army National Guard*

*Panelists:*

- *Erin T. Jackson-Ward, Executive Director Grantmaking and Social Impact, Cedars-Sinai*
- *Jennifer Vanore, President & Chief Operating Officer, The UniHealth Foundation*
- *Waco Hoover, Founder, IMPCT Group*

**1:45 - 2:00pm**

## **Coffee Break & Networking**

**2:00 - 2:55pm**

## **A Conversation with the Experts (Q&A) Panel**

*Moderated by Carl Castro, Professor, Director of Military and Veterans Programs, Director of the RAND-USC Epstein Family Foundation Center for Veterans Policy Research, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)*

*Panelists:*

- *John W. Boerstler, Former Chief Veterans Experience Officer, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*
- *Carrie M. Farmer, Codirector, RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute; Director, Health Care Quality Measurement and Improvement Program; Senior Policy Researcher*
- *Umeka Franklin, Director of BSW Program and Associate Professor, Practicum Education, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work*
- *Stephanie Renno, Vice President, Clinical Practice and Training, Cohen Veterans Network*

**2:55 - 3:00pm**

## **Closing Remarks by Aimee Pila-Bravo, SoCal Grantmakers**



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# **SPEAKERS, PANELISTS & MODERATORS**

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**Luke Bergmann, Ph.D.**  
**Director, Behavioral Health Services, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency**

Luke Bergmann is the Director of Behavioral Health Services for the County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency. Prior to this position, Dr. Bergmann worked for 9 years in New York City. He most recently served as Assistant Vice President over Behavioral Health at NYC Health + Hospitals, the nation's largest public hospital system and before that, as Director of the Office of Program and Policy in the Bureau of Alcohol and Drugs at the NYC Department of Health. Dr. Bergmann has also held a variety of academic research and faculty positions, including at Oregon Health and Science University, The University of Michigan and the City University of New York. Dr. Bergmann was trained at the University of Michigan, where he earned a Ph.D. in Social Work and Cultural Anthropology. He completed post-doctoral fellowships at UC San Francisco's Institute for Health Policy and UC Berkeley's School of Public Health.



**Josh Newman**  
**Senator, California State Senate**

California State Senator Josh Newman represents the 29th Senate District, which is comprised of portions of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties. After graduation from Yale University, he served as an artillery officer in the United States Army, with duty assignments with a nuclear weapons unit in South Korea and a conventional artillery battalion in the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. Following the completion of his active duty military service obligation, he relocated to California from Hawaii. In 2012, Senator Newman went on to found an initiative, ArmedForce2Workforce, to assist young military veterans in the pursuit of rewarding, career-oriented employment after completing their own military service and returning to the Greater Los Angeles/Orange County area. That work coupled with his frustration with the lack of progress and support from various levels of government in doing right by the young men and women who had bravely served, led to his decision to run for public office. In the State Senate, Senator Newman serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Select Committee on Transitioning to a Zero Emission Energy Future, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Transportation; Elections & Constitutional Amendments; Energy, Utilities & Communications; and Budget & Fiscal Review.



**Jennifer Vanore, Ph.D.**  
**President & COO, UniHealth Foundation**

Jen joined UniHealth Foundation in 2015 and was appointed President and COO in 2018. She is responsible for overseeing all grantmaking and the day-to-day functions of the Foundation. In addition, she previously served as a Program Manager for The California Endowment's Center for Healthy Communities, and has worked in clinic, hospital and social service settings. She is a native Angeleno, loves science fiction movies, and loves cooking homemade pasta with her family.





**Umeka Franklin, EdD, LCSW**

**Director of BSW Program and Associate Professor, Practicum Education,  
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**

Umeka Franklin began her career at USC as an adjunct practicum faculty lecturer in the Virtual Academic Center, teaching integrative seminars as well as courses in Military Clinical Experience and Virtual Practicum. Dr. Franklin is currently an associate teaching professor, practicum education in the Department of Children, Youth and Families. As a licensed clinical social worker, she has worked across the lifespan providing services to various populations. She served in a leadership role as a social work coordinator working with military veterans at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. After earning a Veterans Health Administration Mentor Certification, Franklin mentored and supported employees and staff at the VA. She has also worked as a psychiatric social worker for the Los Angeles Unified School District, providing direct clinical services to individuals, families and groups. In addition, she has expertise as a medical social worker with an emphasis on nephrology, as well as working with children and families who have experienced traumatic events. Dr. Franklin received a bachelor's degree in social work and a gerontology certificate from California State University, Los Angeles. She received her Master's degree in Social Work and a Pupil Personnel Services credential from USC. She earned her Doctor of Education at the USC Rossier School of Education.



**Veronica Kelley, DSW, LCSW**

**Director, Orange County Health Care Agency**

Veronica Kelley is the Director of the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA). Dr. Kelley has more than 33 years of experience in the behavioral health field. Previously, she was HCA's Director of Behavioral Health Services, overseeing the public behavioral health system. She also serves as the Alcohol & Drug Administrator for Orange County, which allows the county to receive federal funds to address substance use disorders. Dr. Kelley spent 13 years serving the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, with six years as the Behavioral Health Director. During that time, she led the county's crisis response and recovery efforts following the 2015 terrorist attack. Dr. Kelley remains active at the state level, addressing behavioral health issues as a Board member of NAMI California and the Past President of the County Behavioral Health Directors Association, is an appointee to the Governors No Place Like Home Advisory Committee and a Steering Committee member for the Department of Health Care services Community Mental Health Equity Project. Dr. Kelley earned a Doctor of Social Work from Capella University, Minnesota and a Master of Social Work from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles and is a licensed clinical social worker in the state of California. She is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Loma Linda University Department of Social Work & Social Ecology, and a part time lecturer at CSU Fullerton, School of Social Work.





**John W. Boerstler**  
**Former Chief Veterans Experience Officer**  
**US Department of Veterans Affairs**

John W. Boerstler served as the Chief Veterans Experience Officer at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from February 2021 to September 2024. As Chief Veterans Experience Officer, John led the Veterans Experience Office (VEO), the Secretary's customer experience (CX) insight engine supporting and enabling the Department in providing the highest quality experiences in the delivery of care, benefits, and memorial services to service members, Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. He provided executive oversight of VEO's many innovative projects and programs, working collaboratively within VA's leadership to help achieve greater access, outcomes, and experiences for all VA's customers. Prior to this position, he served as the Chief Executive Officer of Combined Arms, a Community Information Exchange and collaborative technology company whose purpose was to effectively connect customers to thousands of vetted government and non-profit services to address social determinants of health and health-related social needs. John has a distinguished career as a leader in the Veteran services field as a recipient of both the Eisenhower and Marshall Memorial Fellowships, having travelled to Bosnia, Denmark, France, Hungary, Israel, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom to write comparative papers on their military transition systems. As the first Marshall Prize recipient, John recently completed a three-year project in Ukraine to assist in the development of their Ministry of Veterans Affairs—the first of its kind in Europe. John was also honored to be selected in the inaugural cohort of Stand-To Scholars at the George W. Bush Institute's Veteran Leadership Program in 2018. John is a native Texan who served honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1999-2007 as a non-commissioned officer and infantry unit leader, including one combat tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2004-2005 and Operation Natural Fire in the Republic of Kenya in 2006.



**Stephanie Renno, DSW, LCSW**  
**Vice President, Clinical Practice and Training, Cohen Veterans Network**

Dr. Stephanie Renno is the Vice President of Clinical Practice and Training at the Cohen Veterans Network where she oversees the network-wide training of clinical evidence-based practices and processes and works directly to support each clinic in delivering state of the art clinical services to veterans and military families. An expert in treating posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Substance Use Disorders, Dr. Renno has trained clinicians worldwide in Cognitive Processing Therapy and Behavioral Couples Therapy for Substance Use Disorders. She has worked in both government and not-for-profit sectors providing and overseeing mental health services for veterans, service members and their families. Dr. Renno received her DSW in social work from the University of Pennsylvania, her MSW from University of Chicago and her BS from University of Illinois.



**Carrie M. Farmer, Ph.D.**  
**Codirector, RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute, Director, Health Care Quality Measurement and Improvement Program; Senior Policy Researcher**

Carrie M. Farmer is codirector of the RAND Epstein Family Veterans Policy Research Institute, director of the Health Care Quality Measurement and Improvement Program, and a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation. Her areas of research include military and veteran health policy and quality of health care. She has led multiple studies to assess the delivery of health care to veterans and service members, including a study of behavioral health care in the Military Health System, a study of the use of measurement-based care in the treatment of behavioral health conditions in the Veterans Health Administration, and studies to assess the capacity of community providers to meet the health care needs of veterans. Dr. Farmer was the study director for a large, comprehensive assessment of the Veterans Health Administration required by the Veterans, Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014. She was also the codirector for a study of innovative approaches for treating psychological health problems and traumatic brain injury in the Department of Defense and led the largest assessment to date of care received by service members following a mild traumatic brain injury. She received her Ph.D. in health policy from Harvard University and her B.A. in psychobiology from Wellesley College.



**James Zenner, LCSW**  
**Director, Military & Veterans Affairs, Los Angeles County**

James (Jim) Zenner is the Director of Military & Veterans Affairs for the County of Los Angeles. He previously worked for the LA County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) as a Mental Health Program Manager III. In this capacity, Jim implemented and oversaw the Veteran Peer Access Network and was the lead program manager assigned to collaborate with the Veteran Healthcare Administration, Veteran Benefits Administration, CalVet, and other federal and local agencies regarding veteran programming for LACDMH. Mr. Zenner is also responsible for working with the philanthropic sector through a public-private partnership with SoCal Grantmakers to bolster collective impact work through the LAVC to help leverage private funding to expand social service capacity. Jim's prior experience includes working as a Peer Support Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Director of Homeless Veteran Programs/Subject Matter Expert for Vets Advocacy, Associate Director of Community Programs for the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at the University of Southern California, Consultant for the Volunteers of America Incorporated, Assistant Director of Clinical Veteran Services for Volunteers of America Los Angeles, and a Consultant for Vets Advocacy Inc. Mr. Zenner enlisted in the United States Army from April 2004 to April 2008, completed one deployment in support of Iraqi Freedom as an All Source Intelligence Analyst from 2006-2007 with 1-14 Cav, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division "Second to None." Jim went on to serve in the United States Army Reserve from April 2008 to May 2011. He possesses a Master of Social Work from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from St. Martin's University.



**La Tina Jackson, LCSW**  
**Deputy Director, Countywide Engagement Division, Los Angeles County**

Driven by a personal connection and passion, La Tina Jackson, LCSW, has worked in the mental health field for over 25 years. In her current assignment as a Deputy Director of the Countywide Engagement Division for Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Ms. Jackson oversees a number of programs for some of the most vulnerable populations impacted by mental illness in the County (e.g., people experiencing homelessness, veterans, incarcerated individuals with severe mental illness). Her career path has includes: working as a leader in community integration of adults dually diagnosed with severe mental illness and developmental disorders; Deputy Director of the Youth Services Department of the Los Angeles LGBT Center; special education teacher for youth with severe emotional disturbances; and adjunct faculty for the Masters in social Work program at California State University Northridge. During her tenure with the Department of Mental Health Ms. Jackson has actively pursued opportunities to work with adults experiencing the greatest difficulty connecting to mental health treatment including but not limited to: homeless services, psychiatric mobile crisis response, and forensic mental health. Prior to her current assignment Ms. Jackson was responsible for the provision of public mental health services in the largest service planning area in Los Angeles County; provided clinical oversight to multiple emergency response and specialized programs; served as Clinical Director for one of the largest adult outpatient clinics in Los Angeles County; and co-managed the largest intensive field based mental health program in the Department. In the pursuit of expanding access to care and community support for those affected by severe mental illness Ms. Jackson has also taken on additionally noteworthy projects. These include: participation in a collaboration between the mental health professionals and local clergy (i.e. Clergy Roundtable); a local initiative to improve collaboration with mental health, community members and law enforcement to prevent targeted violence; development of a multiagency, multidisciplinary collaborative with Los Angeles City and County libraries to facilitate rapid service provision and housing placement for patrons experiencing homelessness; and most recently advancing the County's mission to implement alternatives to law enforcement response for mental health emergencies.



**Erin Jackson-Ward, DrPH, MPH**  
**Executive Director, Grantmaking and Social Impact, Cedars-Sinai**

Dr. Erin Jackson-Ward is the Executive Director of Grantmaking and Social Impact at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles, with oversight of a philanthropic portfolio that has disbursed over \$150 million since 2018 to over 200 nonprofit, community-based organizations, as well as leadership of Cedars-Sinai's social responsibility efforts across the domains of sustainability, supplier diversity, employee volunteerism, in-kind donations, and impact investing. Under Erin's leadership, Cedars-Sinai launched a multi-year grantmaking initiative focused on health equity that promoted access to care and supported public-private partnerships across clinical and social service organizations throughout Los Angeles County. She has led over \$60 million in grantmaking toward the intersection of housing and health, including projects that help older adults age in place in supportive housing, a collaborative to insert young adult leadership into the youth homelessness system, and an assessment of the preservation needs of board and care facilities that unlocked tens of millions of dollars in capital funds from the state of California. Cedars-Sinai's longstanding commitment to supporting local Federally Qualified Health Centers also expanded under Erin's guidance, with innovative grants to support a diverse workforce, launch telehealth capacity, and support multi-agency partnerships to integrate behavioral health, oral health, housing and access to care. Inspired by personal experiences within the healthcare field, both through her mother's positive patient experience with a rare cancer and amputation contrasted with her Veteran father's difficult experience as a stroke patient in palliative care, Erin's passion for public health, equity, and access was instilled at a young age. Previously, Erin served as an operational leader for the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network, where she played a significant role in Cedars-Sinai's expanding presence in new communities, giving her tremendous perspective on the day-to-day challenges of healthcare management. Prior to joining Cedars-Sinai, Erin was involved with many nonprofit organizations throughout the country, working primarily on the sociomedical needs of pediatric HIV, homeless, veteran, and formerly incarcerated populations. Erin received her DrPH in Health Management and Leadership from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and holds both an MPH from Columbia University and a BA in Psychology and Genetics from UCLA. Inspired by her experience leading a unique and significant philanthropic effort at Cedars-Sinai, Erin's doctoral work focused on establishing practice guidelines for hospitals across the country interested in adopting and/or adapting grantmaking efforts as part of their community benefit requirements to the IRS. Through that work, Erin not only raised awareness of Cedars-Sinai's grantmaking as one of the top philanthropic organizations in Los Angeles, but also serves as a national expert and speaker on community benefit practices.





**Sara Kintzle, PhD, MSW**  
**Research Professor, Military and Veterans Programs, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**

Sara Kintzle is currently a research professor at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. She has focused on building an expertise in the life experiences of individuals who currently or previously served in the United States Armed Forces. Dr. Kintzle's expertise broadly focuses on leading research studies aimed at providing insight into the experience of service members and veterans that include the following topics: diversity and inclusion in the military, the impact of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and sexual identity on the experience of serving, risk and protective factors related to successful military transition, challenges to psychological and physical health, risk for suicide, sexual harassment, stalking and sexual assault, the experience of National Guard and Reserve service members and securing post-service employment and translating scientific findings into program and policy recommendations. In 2023 she published *The State of the American Veteran: The Southern California Veterans Study*, which was the result of the largest and most comprehensive study of veterans in Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego Counties. In 2024, she met with Congressional and Department of Defense staff on how the results from the Southern California Veterans study might impact policy. In 2021, she presented to President Biden's Department of Defense Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military, and represented the United States as an expert on a NATO panel addressing sexual violence in the military in 2017. Dr. Kintzle has over 60 published articles and reports and over 70 accepted conference presentations.



**Daniel J. Epstein**  
**Founder, ConAm Group**

Daniel J. Epstein is the Founder of the ConAm Group headquartered in San Diego. ConAm is among the top privately owned apartment management/ownership firms in the country and presently operates a total of approximately 50,000 apartments throughout the United States. In addition to its management activities, ConAm is developing apartments and mixed-use projects in Seattle and Portland. Dan serves on the USC Board of Trustees and is a member of the Executive Board. He is on the executive committee of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate Development and also serves as chairman of the advisory committee of the USC Viterbi School's Epstein Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering. Recently Dan was awarded the UCSD Chancellor's Medal and USC's Asa V. Call Alumni Achievement Award. In addition, Ernst & Young named him San Diego's Entrepreneur of the Year for the Real Estate Industry. He is currently a director of the National Multi-Housing Council, the UCSD Rady School Dean's Advisory Council, and is on the Board of Trustees of the Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute and the UCSD Foundation. Dan is a member of the Chief Executives Organization (CEO) and the Young Presidents Organization (YPO-G). He graduated from USC in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in Engineering.



**Waco Hoover, MBA**  
**Founder, IMPCT Group**

Waco Hoover is an entrepreneur and investor with over 20 years of experience in venture capital, M&A, entertainment, media and live events. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1997-2001 as an infantry Marine, combat water survival instructor and infantry scout. He served on deployments across Southeast Asia. After separation from the military, Hoover graduated from New York University, cum laude, received his MBA from The Florida State University, and completed Harvard Business School executive education programs. He then became an entrepreneur and investor who now has over 18 years of experience in venture capital, M&A, entertainment, media and live events. He is currently Chair of the Be The One program, focused on brain health and suicide prevention for the American Legion. He is also the Founder of IMPCT Group, advisor to Founders Factory, a London based venture capital firm, founder of MCON, and serves on the board of Grunt Style Foundation, a non-profit preventing veteran suicide. He has advised global brands including MGM Resorts, Informa, Vivendi, and Las Vegas Sands Corp. He was a co-founder and investor in businesses sold to Informa, Emerald, Endeavor Business Media and Onstream Media. Hoover speaks at industry events including VenuesNow, PTTOW!, CEMA, The American Legion, Military Influencer Conference, SXSW, Pollstar, TSE 100, Society for Independent Show Organizers, National Sports Forum and XLIVE. He lives in Southern California with his wife, son and two yellow labs, Tucker and Winnie. In his spare time, he enjoys surfing, diving, and mountaineering as often as possible. He is a member of The American Legion and recently hosted the Be the One Symposium at the 105th American Legion National Convention in New Orleans.



**Aimee Pila-Bravo, MSW**  
**Director, Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative (LAVC) at SoCal Grantmakers, SMSgt USAF**

Aimee Pila-Bravo is Director of the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative (LAVC) at SoCal Grantmakers. Aimee organizes the continuous collaborative efforts of over 2,000 Veteran Service Organizations throughout LA County. This is managed through a monthly meeting and ongoing information sharing among all stakeholders. Through transparent communication and the passion to help Veterans and Military Families, this model is spearheading collective impact. Aimee pursued her higher education at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work with a concentration in Social Change and Innovation (SCI) and Military Social Work. Following in her brother's footsteps, she enlisted into the United States Air Force and has served both Active Duty and in the Reserves for over 13 years. These experiences have given her a deep, personal understanding of the challenges veterans face during their transition from military to civilian life, which fueled her passion to lead and advocate for solutions that improve the lives of veterans and their families.



**Carl A. Castro, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, Director of Military and Veterans Programs & the RAND-USC Epstein Family Foundation Center for Veterans Policy Research, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**  
**Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)**

Carl Castro is a professor and director of the Military and Veteran Programs at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. Before joining the USC, served in the U.S. Army for over 30 years, retiring at the rank of colonel. He served in the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo Campaigns, Operation Northern Watch, and the Iraq War. Castro has chaired numerous NATO and international research groups and is currently co-chair of a NATO group exploring military and veteran radicalization. His current research efforts are broad and include: (a) the exploration of the military culture that leads to acceptance and integration of diverse groups; (b) understanding and ameliorating the effects of military trauma and stress, especially combat and deployment, on service members and their family; (c) the prevention of suicides and violence such as sexual assault and bullying; and (d) evaluating the process of transitioning into the military and transitioning from military service back to civilian life.





**Nathan Graeser, MDiv, LCSW, DSW**  
**Director of Veterans Initiatives at SoCal Grantmakers, Brigade Chaplain**  
**California Army National Guard**

Nathan Graeser is both a Social Worker and an Army Chaplain in the California National Guard. He serves on numerous local and national boards and speak and writes widely on improving funding, policies and programs for supporting servicemembers transitioning out of the military. He has led multiple Veteran initiatives including Warrior Bards, the Los Angeles Veterans Collaborative and most recently with SoCal Grantmakers to build the first county-wide Veteran Peer Access Network. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, he has worked tirelessly to counsel hundreds of veterans and their families who return home from war. He obtained a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, a Masters in Social Work, and a Doctorate in Social Work from the University of Southern California. He has served in uniform in protests in downtown Los Angeles, multiple deployments and just returned home from the Middle East where he served as the division chaplain.



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**INNOVATIONS ACROSS  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
POSTER SESSION**

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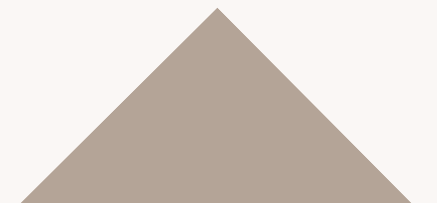
# INNOVATIONS ACROSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POSTER SESSION

## **BrainStim Centers, Inc.**

BrainStim Centers, Inc. is the premier neuromodulation clinic on the West Coast with locations in Calabasas, Valencia, Cancun, and opening soon in Lancaster. We are owned by Neurosurgeon Dr. Mark Liker, who is passionate about the brain and functional medicine. Brainstim Centers uses gentle, noninvasive neuronavigated transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) to strengthen neural pathways in targeted brain regions, which can improve cognition, mood, and various neuropsychological disorders. We incorporate brain anatomy and physiology to target specific brain regions and create individualized treatment protocols. Using up-to-date research, we investigate new opportunities to provide clinical benefit to our patients.

## **Veterans Art Project (VETART)**

The VETART is located in sunny Southern California. We help veterans unleash their inner artists to express their stories in a new light. With a mix of science and heart, we aim to boost veterans wellness and transform how the world sees and supports our heroes.



# INNOVATIONS ACROSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POSTER SESSION

## **Maestro Games, SPC**

Maestro Games, SPC sits at the intersection of neuroscience, behavioral health and the arts. Our mission is to provide a non-pharmaceutical alternative to building and maintaining resiliency for Veterans, Military, Healthcare personnel, and First Responders who are susceptible to PTSD and other forms of distress because of the demands placed upon them.

## **The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinical at VVSD**

The Cohen Clinics at VVSD provide personalized therapy to post-9/11 veterans, service members, and their families, including National Guard / Reserves.

## **Sierra Club Military Outdoors (SCMO)**

Sierra Club Military Outdoors ensures military members, veterans, and their families enjoy the beauty of nature by supporting programs and policies that remove barriers preventing them from experiencing the great outdoors.

## **CalVet Veterans Homes of California West Los Angeles**

The Veterans Homes of California-West Los Angeles is a 369-bed state of the art, long term healthcare facility offering multiple levels of care to California veterans in the greater Los Angeles area and surrounding regions.

# INNOVATIONS ACROSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POSTER SESSION

## **National Veterans Transition Services, Inc. aka REBOOT**

National Veterans Transition Services, Inc. (NVTSI) was established by a group of retired high-ranking Naval and Marine Corps officers, organizational & workforce development professionals, and social scientists, seeking to fill the gaps in the continuum of veteran services. NVTSI is dedicated to assisting veterans in successfully transitioning from military service, adjusting to civilian life, and securing meaningful employment by integrating science-based best-practice social solutions and technologies.

## **Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN)**

The first-ever community-driven support network serving veterans and their families in the U.S., The Veteran Peer Access Network (VPAN) connects County departments, non-profits, the VA and L.A. City Programs. Led by veterans for veterans, VPAN helps you navigate often complicated systems so that you receive the services you deserve. VPAN prioritizes hiring veterans as “battle buddies” and systems navigators to connect their brothers and sisters in need with resources that will help.”

# INNOVATIONS ACROSS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POSTER SESSION

## **Greater Los Angeles VA Food Security Committee**

The Food Security Committee is a multidisciplinary committee dedicated to assisting food-insecure Veterans. The committee focuses on increasing screening rates, collecting data, developing resources, and eliminating obstacles to screening through education and heightened awareness.

## **Veterans Legal Institute (VLI)**

Veterans Legal Institute (VLI) addresses the legal needs of homeless, at risk, disabled and low income current and former service members to eradicate barriers to housing, healthcare, education and employment and foster self-sufficiency. VLI provides pro bono legal services across Southern and Central California to help veterans overcome barriers to essential services, guided by values of outreach, compassion, quality, leadership and empowerment.

## **Veterans Benefit Administration Los Angeles Regional Office (LARO)**

The Los Angeles Regional Office supports seven counties throughout Southern California. Their services and activities include benefits questions, claims assistance, outreach, collaboration, virtual and in person appointments, pop-up claims clinics, LARO Compass newsletter and VSO and Congressional Support.



# NOTES







