

Resources from the Veteran Health Needs in the Pandemic: Moving Toward Innovative Solutions

- ***Presented by Military, Veterans, & Families Initiative (MVFI) and NOVA Veterans Association***

Date: Tuesday February 16, 2021

Disclaimer: Thank you for joining us for this MVFI & NOVA Vet's webinar. Our session today, Veteran Health Needs in the Pandemic: Moving Toward Innovative Solutions will be recorded for both the MVFI and NovaVets website.

Please note, this event **will be recorded** for the sponsoring organizations website. We encourage interaction but do note if your camera is on you may be recorded. We ask that all participants who plan to participate with their video on to please fill out [THIS Consent Form](#). Thanks for your support in sharing our important series with others who may benefit from our discussion. Please feel free to view

MVFI Archival recordings, Available on the [MVFI Recorded Event Site](#).

To join future events presented by our host organizations, check out their event links, [NOVA Vets Events](#) and [MVFI Events](#).

Presenters/Guest Panelist Sites:

- [The Military, Veterans, & Families Initiative](#)
 - [Newsletter Sign up](#)
- [NOVA Veterans Association](#)
 - [Community Network Sign up](#)
- [Q Integrative Healthcare LLC.](#)
- [Virginia Department of Veterans Services](#)
 - [Family Support Website](#)
 - [Appointment Request Form](#)
- [Combined Arms](#)

Additional Resources:

- [AFCPE Financial Counseling](#)
- [Humana representative \(Jonathan Shinkle\)](#)
 - Offers comprehensive dental and vision benefits for Medicare-eligible veterans at no additional cost to them
- [Humana](#)

Presenter Bios:



Melissa Dargis (Director of Services, Northern Virginia Veterans Association): *Melissa Dargis is the Director of Services at the Northern Virginia Veterans Association where she oversees the Support Services and Membership Departments. She is a non-profit professional with diverse experience in project management, administration, human services, impact analysis and community outreach.*

Melissa provides mission-focused comprehensive veteran support and advocacy. She is dedicated to fostering collaboration between individuals, businesses, government, and community organizations to support veterans and their families. She especially enjoys working directly with veteran clients to connect them with the resources they need.

Melissa earned her Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from Shenandoah University. She also holds a Bachelor of Art in Speech Communication from the University of Illinois. Melissa is the wife of a Navy veteran and the daughter of an Army veteran. Her personal knowledge of military life brings a compassionate perspective of the needs in the veteran community.



Bryan Escobedo (Systems Director (National), Combined Arms): *Bryan Escobedo was born and raised in Houston, Texas. On September 11th, 2001, he witnessed 9/11 from a TV screen in his 10th-grade classroom. It was then that Bryan decided he would dedicate himself to becoming a Marine. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps right out of High School in 2003 and served 5 years honorably as a Sergeant and Combat Engineer where he specialized in explosives. Bryan is a Purple Heart recipient, with three back-to-back tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005-2007. He earned the Purple Heart for multiple blast injuries while in the Al-Anbar Province of Iraq.*

Bryan returned to Houston, Texas to pursue a B.A. in Communication Studies, with two Minors in Philosophy and Psychology. From his former career, he developed a profound commitment to excellence, dynamic problem solving, and an ability to thrive in high-pressure situations. While in college, he began to create and run nonprofit programs for military veterans. He began by establishing an employment and veteran-peer-to-peer mentoring program. Seeking to apply his military leadership to his local community needs, Bryan became deeply immersed in volunteer leadership. After testifying before the Texas State Congress, Bryan was inspired to teach civics in high schools through the Joe Foss Institute. He then wrote a 9-step transition workshop to help veterans define their “post-military identity” and lectured for 2-years. He served as a suicide prevention mentor, mentored adults, and youth, facilitated mediations and public deliberations, served as a platoon leader with the Mission Continues focusing on long-term-hunger relief in impoverished neighborhoods, and established a supply drive for refugees of the Syrian Civil War.

Bryan was invited to start the Combined Arms team in 2016. He helped grow the organization from 7-120 agencies while writing the handbook for systems approach collaboration. Bryan created a method of collective problem solving which he named the “Collaboration Committees” and founded 7 committees on mental health, social services, diversity and inclusion, volunteerism, education, employment, and special immigrant visas. Bryan currently leads the Combined Arms technology team and runs their expansion efforts as an advisor to other cities

seeking to establish a data-driven collaborative model. Most recently, Bryan completed three leadership courses at Rice University, LDR Leadership, and Leadership Houston Class XXXVIII. Bryan is also an avid public speaker and gave the Veterans Day keynote address to a global audience of 14,000 for P66 in November 2020. Bryan is a subject matter expert in veteran transition and a thought leader in the nonprofit industry. [Linked in profile](#)



John Maxwell (Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services):

John Maxwell is a 28-year Navy veteran with experience in private industry and a wide variety of aviation, shipboard, and program management assignments.

Trained as a P-3C Naval Flight Officer, John guided teams of all sizes in a variety of missions and environments. Early in his career, he directed crews flying maritime patrol missions. John advanced into more complex positions leading squadron operations, directing training, and he navigated an amphibious assault ship. In senior leadership roles, John commanded a maritime patrol squadron, was the navigator in an aircraft carrier, and led a post-graduate school for military and civilian national security professionals. John culminated his career as a Navy Captain while serving as a Carrier Strike Group Chief of Staff. After leaving the Navy in 2019, John joined a third-party logistics company and then began his service with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services in February 2020.

John is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics and holds a Master of Business Administration degree from Auburn University.



Angela H. McConnell, Ph.D., M.PA.(Owner/CEO Q Integrative Healthcare Consulting and President/CEO Northern Virginia Veterans Association): MAJ Angela H. McConnell, USA/USAFR (RET) Ph.D., Owner and CEO of Q Integrative Healthcare Consulting, served over 22 years in the U.S. Military, active duty and reserve, in both the enlisted ranks and officer corps. In January 2015 she founded and is currently President and

CEO of the Northern Virginia Veterans Association (NOVA Veterans Association) 501(c)3 Nonprofit providing comprehensive services to the underserved veteran population. She continues her impact in integrative medicine and health care through consulting and educating students/physicians as an adjunct professor at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences where she also develops innovative courses and curriculum. Her dissertation and career focus centers on the improvement of one's quality of life to promote a healthier happier community and world.