



The Augusta Model: Focusing on Unique Assets, Increasing Information Flow and Coordination and Reintegrating Warriors after Combat

The CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project is focused on utilizing Augusta's unique warrior care assets, increasing information flow and coordination among agencies, communities, and individuals, and bringing our troops all the way home after combat. We have created an Augusta model of public-private partnerships that can serve other communities as they look for ways to tap into that "Sea of Goodwill" noted by Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are thousands of resources available to wounded warriors, returning service members, veterans and their families. What the Augusta model offers is a community-based structure for coordinating those resources. Most experts agree that warrior reintegration must be based in local communities.

These principles guide our work with the CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project:

- Augusta's resources are underutilized: The Active Duty Rehab Unit is ideally located to play a larger role in caring for America's wounded warriors than it already does and has the capacity to do so, Eisenhower Army Medical Center is ideally located to treat service members from the southeastern United States closer to home and has developed both behavioral health, traumatic brain injury and substance abuse treatment expertise, and the Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing has a master's prepared nursing program that could train Federal Recovery Coordinators to care for wounded warriors and their families.
- Augusta is the best place for innovation to succeed: Innovators include the Active Duty Rehab Unit, the nation's only unit of its kind located within a VA facility, the Army's only inpatient substance abuse treatment facility (located at Eisenhower AMC), the DoD's first validated TBI treatment center (also located at Eisenhower AMC), the Veterans Curation Project (the nation's first training and employment program for wounded warriors) with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the Veterans Education Coordinator to help our troops use those GI Bill benefits they've earned at Augusta's colleges and universities.
- Augusta is the best place for families to live during the healing phase: Augusta ranks among the lowest cost housing in America and has available both temporary and permanent employment opportunities for spouses and family members as well as multiple colleges, universities, and technical schools for educational advancement.
- Augusta is a model destination for both warrior care and community and family reintegration. When taken together, our resources (including Fort Gordon, Eisenhower Army Medical Center, the Charlie Norwood VAMC, and others) and programs (including employment and training opportunities such as the Veterans Curation Project and the marriage enrichment curriculum offered by both Army and VA chaplains) combine to provide the continuum of care our service members and their families need to successfully transition after deployment. This is the community reintegration piece that is so critical to helping our service members and their families have the best outcomes possible.

Best practices and innovation in warrior care and reintegration take place in Augusta because we harness resources, increase coordination and information flow among agencies and with the community, creating on-the-ground programs that meet the needs of our service members, veterans and their families to reintegrate them after combat.

Increasing the flow of information and coordination:

- Formed a Transition Round Table, where Army, VA, Department of Labor and community organizations and agencies network and streamline efforts to benefit returning service members and their families (an initiative of the CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project).
- Formed a Medical Research Consortium, providing the platform for networking for researchers from the Charlie Norwood VAMC, Eisenhower AMC, the Medical College of Georgia, Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center-South, and Savannah River National Laboratory (an initiative of the CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project).
- Formed a partnership through the CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project with the state of Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to host a January 2010 statewide collaborative summit on warrior care: From Front Lines to Front Lawns. This two-day conference featured participation and input from the Army and other Department of Defense entities, Warrior Transition Battalions, the VA, the Department of Labor, state and local agencies, nonprofits, service members, veterans, families, and veterans service organizations to streamline statewide warrior care efforts and develop a statewide action plan to harness resources, simplify the process of reintegration into the community after combat, eliminate or reduce the tendency of agencies to stove pipe, and to develop cross state and cross agency connectivity.

Reintegrating Warriors and Families after Combat:

- Started the nation's first Veterans Curation Project, an award-winning employment and training program for Iraq and Afghanistan returnees (in collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers, Warrior Transition Battalion, the Charlie Norwood VAMC, Department of Labor and CSRA Wounded Warrior Care Project).
- Launched an initiative with Augusta State University, Augusta Technical College, and Paine College to hire and support a Veterans Education Coordinator to conduct outreach, recruiting and retention of active duty personnel and veterans in higher education programs.
- Started Marriage Enrichment Retreats with both Army and VA chaplains to help improve communication skills of combat-returnees and their spouses.

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<http://www.projectaugusta.org>

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