

Connecting the Dots to Comprehensive Care

Last Modified on 12/06/2019 2:19 pm EST

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Colorado Springs truly is a military-connected community. With the United States Air Force Academy, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, North American Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and Fort Carson all in the area, just about everyone touches the military in some way. In fact, one in four residents is a former or current member of the military.

To meet the needs of military-connected individuals and families, the Peak Military Care Network (PMCN) works with 32 partner agencies and each of the installations to coordinate streamlined service delivery across multiple organizations.

“What we’ve done is really try to work with community-based organizations holistically. Not around one particular issue but anything that might affect a service member or a family member, whether it’s anything from workforce training for a transitioning veteran or a spouse looking for employment to early care and education,” said Kate Hatten, president and CEO, Peak Military Care Network.

PMCN receives referrals from partner agencies or people find them through their website. Last year, partners made more than 2,100 referrals for service within the network. To help clients access the services they need, PMCN offers navigation support and some case management and follow-up.

In addition, PMCN provides partner agencies training on military culture, which helps military-connected individuals feel more comfortable and also instills confidence in military leaders who refer soldiers to services outside of the installation.

In meeting its goals of fostering collaboration, coordination and communication, PMCN helps change lives. When a woman who was on the brink of losing her home first called Pikes Peak United Way’s 2-1-1 service, she only was looking for help getting food for the month. Through the process of addressing this issue, the 2-1-1 representative learned the woman was a recent widow of a Vietnam-era veteran, and as such, she was eligible for certain benefits. That’s when the coordinated network of partners went into action.

“Through one of our navigation partners at the time, they were able to work with the

bank, and defer some of those payments that she had missed; work with the VA and Social Security to get the benefits so she had income to be able to make those payments so she could stay in her house,” says Hatten. “That’s an example of how it works when it’s working well.”

It’s also worked well for Army veteran Matthew Shaver. He has received services from agencies such as Rocky Mountain Human Services and Goodwill Staffing, which have provided him with job training and placement.

Most important, he was able to talk to people who understood his unique situation while he was experiencing a difficult time. “I think they are doing a grand job because they have informed me of organizations that I did not know about and they understand my frustrations because they are military friendly,” said Shaver.

PMCN saves people valuable time and energy. “The service makes life easier,” Shaver said. At the end of the day, making lives easier is what PMCN is trying to do.

“There are soldiers and airmen in this community, and they’re spending a lot of time in harm’s way. Making sure that they know that their families are taken care of back home was something we wanted to give them — peace of mind and assurances that this community was going to care for their families,” said Hatten.

Are PMCN’s efforts paying off? Shaver would say so. “Thank you [PMCN] for following through and always checking on me,” he said. — WS
