INFORMATION GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTNERSHIP
"As a veteran and mental health professional, it is my honor to lead this organization and support you. No veteran or family member should suffer alone. We are here to help."

- Anthony Hassan, Ed.D, LCSW
President & CEO, Cohen Veterans Network
INTRODUCTION

Steven A. Cohen, the Founder and Chairman of the Cohen Veterans Network (CVN), is deeply committed to veterans’ issues, and has made major investments over the years to improve veterans’ mental health. Mr. Cohen’s work with veterans began in part because of personal connections – his son served in the United States Marine Corps, and he has had a long-standing relationship with the Robin Hood Foundation and their Veterans Initiative.

It is well-known that, despite the sacrifices veterans and their families have made in service to the nation, the mental health services provided to them by the Veterans Health Administration (VA) and civilian providers are often inaccessible or inadequate to meet the critical mental health needs that have emerged in recent years. Moreover, there are many veterans and family members who don’t qualify for VA care, and the VA Choice program has been unsuccessful at addressing the issues with access and quality.

As a result, the Cohen Veterans Network was established in 2015. The mission of the Cohen Veterans Network is to improve the quality of life for post-9/11 veterans and their families by focusing on improving mental health outcomes, especially those associated with post-traumatic stress and related challenges. The primary way that the Cohen Veterans Network does this is through the direct provision of mental health care. Direct care is provided through a national network of Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinics (Cohen Clinics) for veterans and family members dealing with post-traumatic stress and other mental health conditions.

CVN defines a veteran as any individual who has served in the Armed Services (including the National Guard and Reserves) in any capacity, regardless of role or discharge status.

COHEN CLINICS

Our Cohen Clinics provide a compassionate, individually-tailored, and holistic approach to outpatient mental health treatment for veterans and their family members. CVN defines a veteran as any individual who has served in the Armed Services (including the National Guard and Reserves) in any capacity, regardless of role or discharge status. Our clinics specialize in time-limited, evidence-based care. Grounded in the culture of veterans and military families, our clinics build trusting, confidential relationships with patients and maintain strong ethical and legal commitments to privacy and confidentiality.

The core areas of adult treatment for all Cohen Clinics are post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, substance abuse, bereavement, transition and reintegration issues, and family/couple discord. The clinics are also equipped to assess for (and, in some clinic locations, treat) mild traumatic brain injury. For children, Cohen Clinics provide diagnostic assessment, and treatment for common childhood disorders such as depression, anxiety, family stress, and adjustment issues. Individual clinics also provide specialized treatment in other areas beyond the identified core. CVN strongly advocates the use of evidence-based and evidence-informed treatments.
The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinics are not intended to be long-term care providers, but rather to support short- to medium-term outpatient mental health care needs. Cohen Clinics also help connect veterans and their families to additional supports (e.g., housing programs, long-term care, acute or emergency care) through case management services. Our clinics complement care provided by the Veterans Administration (VA), particularly for three specific underserved groups:

1. Veterans who do not receive mental health care in the VA system, whether for reasons of limited accessibility or other factors (including personal preference);
2. Veterans who are ineligible for care in the VA system (e.g., due to discharge status, conditions that are not service-connected);
3. Veteran family members, as defined by the veteran, including parents, siblings, spouses/significant others, children, and others living in the veteran’s household. These family members are not eligible for mental health care within the VA.

**THE CVN CLINIC MODEL**

The CVN clinic model is comprised of a set of essential, interdependent components which together ensure high-quality care. CVN relies on the use of real-time data, research, clinician training and internships, and innovation to continuously improve service delivery.

For each component of the model, there are core expectations and standards for all clinics within the network that are described in detail within the CVN Clinic Guidebook. The following sections provide an overview of some of the core components.

**Clinic Staffing**

Each Cohen Clinic is staffed similarly with a Clinic Director, Clinicians, Outreach Managers, Case Managers, and a variety of administrative staff. The number of staff changes over time, based on the number of patients served, but averages approximately 20 to 25 staff per clinic. Clinic Directors are only hired with the pre-approval and screening of the CVN central office. All Clinicians are trained and supervised to deliver core evidence-based treatments. Clinics are strongly encouraged to hire staff who are veterans or have relevant experience with the military community.

**Clinic Facility**

The prototypical Cohen Clinic is a free-standing, community-based clinic ideally located to provide the best access to care for military families and veteran patients in the area. The facility’s size is approximately 10,000 square feet with ample free parking. The interior of the facility is designed to provide a welcoming, non-medical atmosphere, with private waiting areas and well-furnished clinic offices. Every clinic has a family waiting area suitable for children of all ages. Ideally, there is also a private waiting area to accommodate special circumstances.
All clinics are equipped with a duress system in the event of an emergency. If possible, the interior lighting is adjustable to accommodate patients who are sensitive to bright lighting. CVN accommodates graduate student internships, and therefore, every clinic has at least one clinic office space with the necessary monitoring system (i.e., audio, video, 1-way mirror) to aid their experiential learning.

**Referrals and Appointments Management**

A clinic’s ability to grow and successfully serve as many patients as possible largely depends on its ability to build strong local relationships and a robust patient referral pipeline. All Cohen Clinic Outreach staff and Clinic Directors establish referral relationships with the VA and other key partners including local veteran service organizations, multi-service organizations, schools, faith-based organizations, higher education, and spousal support communities.

**Clinical Practices**

Each clinic sees families and individuals with a variety of mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, grief and loss, family conflicts, relationship problems, children’s behavioral or academic problems, and other concerns. Use of time-limited, evidence-based treatments (e.g., Cognitive Processing Therapy) is required at each clinic.

**Clinic Performance Metrics**

A real-time data monitoring and reporting system is used to track mental illness prevalence, service access, quality and efficiency of care, financials, and clinic outcomes for patients and clinics.

A common set of multi-pronged metrics are tracked across all clinics through an electronic health record and cloud-based data warehouse. Data dashboards are used for ongoing review of core metrics. These advanced clinic reviews and data analytics will ultimately be used to improve treatment quality and outcome.

**Reporting and Accreditation**

All clinics provide the CVN central office with monthly reports that show current budgets and clinic performance. In addition, clinics submit mid-year and annual reports. All clinics are required to become CARF accredited within 18 months of opening.

**Funding and Sustainment**

Through Mr. Cohen’s generous commitment of $275 million dollars, the Cohen Veterans Network has been established for its first five years. Most of this investment is for clinic costs, which are sensitive to patient volume, clinician diversity, and productivity. All clinics are fully funded for their first three years, in addition to year 0 (the first 6 months) during which the startup clinics must secure a facility lease, renovate the space, purchase furniture and equipment, hire staff, and prepare for the grand opening. However, even with good stewardship of the money, the Cohen Clinics cannot last forever on this gift.

The CVN sustainment plan beyond the initial investment is to create opportunities to raise an increasing percentage of external funding. We anticipate this external funding will largely come from a combination of local philanthropy, public and private insurance revenue (e.g., commercial insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, VA, TRICARE), and other sources of local, state, and federal government funding.
Clinic partners are required to join in this fundraising effort as part of their contractual agreement, which assumes that the partners will contribute to clinic operating costs at 25%, 35%, and 50% respectively during years 4, 5, and 6.

It is important for each clinic to leverage Mr. Cohen’s investment. While our cost per patient is much higher than the federal reimbursement rates to accommodate for immediate access and high quality care, we are always looking to offset this cost through insurance reimbursement. The more reimbursement and philanthropy we can accumulate, the more CVN can build clinics in high-need areas.

ADVANCING THE FIELD

The Cohen Veterans Network will advance the field of mental health through its funded education and research initiatives, and will use its learning mental health system to ensure that a feedback loop exists between practice and research to improve care within the network. The network seeks research-practice partnerships with various organizations to leverage collective investments and research infrastructure, and to learn from one another’s experiences.

CVN will use clinic sites to test new models of service delivery that extend beyond traditional care systems. CVN uses advanced tools to better reach the veteran population and deliver immediate and appropriate care (e.g., via telehealth, home-based care, and satellite clinics) and supplemental therapies and supports (e.g., peer initiatives, wearable devices, web-based applications, etc.). Beyond research, CVN will disseminate knowledge, advance the clinician pipeline, and work to reduce stigma around mental health care.

Providing Thought Leadership Through Annual Conferences

As a growing leader in the national effort to improve mental health services for veterans, the Cohen Veterans Network hosts forums and conferences to facilitate knowledge sharing, policy development, and collaboration. One such conference is the annual Cohen Veterans Care Summit, which is co-hosted by CVN and its sister organization, Cohen Veterans Bioscience (CVB), whose mission is to develop diagnostic biomarkers and personalized therapeutics for veterans and civilians who suffer the devastating effects of PTSD and brain trauma. This invite-only event brings together members of academia, the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health, the VA and influential leaders from foundations and industry, to accelerate the mental health agenda for veterans and their families.

Strengthening the Clinician Pipeline

There is currently a shortage of high-quality mental health professionals who are equipped to serve our target population. To address this issue, CVN provides training to its clinicians and interns in evidence-based therapies for post-traumatic stress and other comorbid conditions. The Cohen Veterans Network also incentivizes new clinicians to join the network, by offering the Steven A. Cohen Prize to high-performing graduate students and graduates from top clinical social work/psychology programs who go on to intern and/or work in a CVN clinic. Recipients receive an intern stipend of $6,000 annually and/or $10,000 hiring incentive annually for up to 3 years while they work within the Cohen Clinics.
**Raising Public Awareness**

To truly change a veteran family’s experience with post-traumatic stress, the family and its community must be able to recognize and understand the condition, including early warning signs and resources available. To that end, the Cohen Veterans Network team has invested heavily in targeted media to promote awareness of post-traumatic stress and Cohen Clinic services and to de-stigmatize seeking mental health care. The Cohen Veterans Network will also explore other avenues to influence broader public awareness and policy.

**THE COHEN CLINIC CITY AND PARTNER SELECTION**

The development of a new Cohen Clinic starts with the selection of a city and community organization partner. In choosing a city, CVN uses current VA data on mental health access and continuity of care, along with other reports on the post-9/11 veteran population in the area. Once a city is identified, CVN conducts a thorough landscape analysis of the community, which includes identifying government officials, formal and informal leaders, philanthropy, military leadership, veterans and military families, mental health agencies, and other relevant areas. Through one-on-one interviews, veteran and military family member focus groups, and in-depth agency interviews, CVN assesses whether a clinic is warranted in the city, and if so, which community organization would make the best partner.

Once the city and the community organization partner is selected, the partnership process begins with a legal document called a master agreement. This master agreement defines the relationship between CVN (grantor and partner) and the community partner organization (grantee and partner). We use the word partner because this relationship is a business-type relationship that is funded through philanthropy. Whereby, the business partner operates the clinic within the guidelines specified by CVN with strict adherence to the network’s defined goals and deliverables, reports, and quality assurances. The partner is also required to use the CVN electronic health record system in its clinic and maintain strict data accountability and protections of personal health information. All Cohen Clinics within the network follow a clinic model comprised of common core components to ensure high-quality care is consistently provided across the entire CVN. While CVN brings the advantages of a network to the clinic, the clinic brings local knowledge and resources to the network.

CVN’s partnership paradigm resembles a franchisor-franchisee relationship. Simply stated, CVN grants the partner the right and financial resources to use a developed concept (the CVN clinic model), including CVN trademarks and brand names, production, service and marketing methods, and the entire business operation model to enable them to deliver high-quality care. The partner, in-turn, provides the clinic with sound management, fiscal responsibility, and unwavering commitment to protect the CVN brand and deliver quality mental health care, to ensure a thriving business in the form of a respected mental health clinic under the CVN umbrella.
CONCLUSION

By 2021, the Cohen Veterans Network expects to have served more than 50,000 veterans and their family members at Cohen Clinics. Moreover, CVN is poised to be part of the VA’s new integrated public/private system of care solution to serve many more veterans. Through this premiere private community-based model, the Cohen Veterans Network will continue to advance toward its ultimate vision of ensuring that every veteran and family member can access high-quality, effective mental health care.

GROWING THE NETWORK

CVN is growing across the country in high demand areas. In 2016, its first year, 5 pilot clinics were opened. By the end of 2017, 11 clinics will have launched, and by 2020 all of the planned 25 clinics will be established. The remaining clinic locations will be chosen based on current demand, opportunity, and finding a community organization partner.

EARLY RESULTS

In the first year, CVN’s pilot clinics treated over 3,000 patients at no cost to the patient; 62% being veterans and 38% family members. Of the veterans, 24% are female, 13% are ineligible for VA care, and 20% came directly from the local VA hospital or VA community-based clinic. The most common diagnosis for veterans and adult family members is depression and PTSD, followed by transition and relationship difficulties. Interestingly, our highest referral source has been the VA, followed by media/marketing, and then word-of-mouth. CVN makes every attempt to remove barriers to care through the use of telehealth and onsite childcare. Cohen Clinics have ensured access to care with 90% of patients being seen within 7 days and 75% of those patients seen on the same day of referral.

MOST COMMON DIAGNOSES

1. Depression and PTSD
2. Transitional issues
3. Relationship difficulties
OUR CARE AT A GLANCE

WHO’S ELIGIBLE?

Veterans
Post-9/11 veterans who served in the United States Armed Services, including the National Guard and Reserves, regardless of role while in uniform, discharge status, or combat experience.

Family
Parents, siblings, spouses or partners, children, caretakers, and others.

HOW WE WORK

What we treat
A variety of mental health issues including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, adjustment issues, anger, grief and loss, family issues, transition challenges, relationship problems, and children’s behavioral problems.

Guaranteed confidentiality
We will not share your confidential information with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or other public, private, or government entities unless required by law. We comply with federal guidelines set by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Genuine care
Our skilled clinicians and staff have been trained to work specifically with veterans and their families, and some are veterans themselves. We build the trusting and confidential relationships necessary to provide excellent, personalized care.

BENEFITS OVERVIEW

Low or no cost
All veterans and their families are eligible for care, regardless of insurance or ability to pay.

Same-day intake
The same day you contact a Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic, you complete an intake screening. The expected wait time between an intake screening and a first appointment is one week.

More than mental health
We provide support for related needs including unemployment, housing, finance, and education. In-home services, telehealth, and childcare are offered on a clinic-by-clinic basis.