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 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.

As a result, the Cohen Veterans Network was established in 2015. The goal of the Cohen Veterans Network is to save lives, save families and save futures. CVN works to improve the quality of life for veterans and their family members by focusing on improving mental health outcomes, especially those associated with post-traumatic stress and related challenges. The primary way that CVN 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).

COHEN CLINICS

Our Cohen Clinics provide a compassionate, individually-tailored, and holistic approach to outpatient mental health treatment for veterans, their family members and the family members of active duty. 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, in some clinic locations, treat) common childhood disorders such as depression, anxiety, family stress, and adjustment issues. Individual clinics may 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 family member clients 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. 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.

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The following sections provide an overview of some of the core components.

Clinic Staffing

Each Cohen Clinic is staffed similarly with a Clinic Director, licensed Clinicians, Outreach Manager, Case Manager, and a variety of administrative staff. The number of staff changes over time, based on the number of clients served, but averages approximately 15 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 clients 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 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 clients 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 Behavioral 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 24 months of opening.

Funding and Sustainment

The Cohen Veterans Network was established through Mr. Cohen’s generous commitment of $275 million dollars. Most of this investment supports 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 8 months prior to opening) during which a facility is leased, the space is renovated, furniture and equipment are purchased, staff is hired, and preparations are made for the grand opening.

In order to extend the impact of Mr. Cohen’s significant founding pledge, CVN is actively working to secure local and national philanthropic support as part of a long-term sustainment strategy. Such support will sustain, advance and endow our Cohen Clinics now and into the future, as we open 25 clinics across the country – and support additional clients in rural areas via CVN Telehealth.
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, 6 and thereafter.

It is important for each clinic to leverage Mr. Cohen’s investment. While our cost per client is 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**

CVN 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 select 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 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 and improve access to mental health care.

"I'm back on track."

**Providing Knowledge Sharing Through Annual Conferences**

As a growing leader in the national effort to improve mental health services for veterans, CVN 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 post-traumatic stress disorder and brain trauma. This 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.
CVN 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.

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. CVN 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, census data, 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.
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.

GROWING THE NETWORK

Cohen Veterans Network is growing across the country in high demand areas. By the end of 2017, seven clinics were opened. By the end of 2018, 12 clinics are planned, and by 2020 all of the proposed 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

Since its beginning, Cohen Clinics have treated over 6,000 patients at no cost to the patient; 56% being veterans and 44% family members. Of the veterans, 26% are female, which is twice the percentage of the female active duty population in the United States. 10% are ineligible for VA care.

The most common diagnosis for veterans and adult family members is depression and post-traumatic stress disorder followed by transition and relationship difficulties. Interestingly, our highest referral source has been the VA, followed by word-of-mouth, and then media/marketing. 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 95% of surveyed clients indicating their first appointment was as soon as they wanted it.

CONCLUSION

By 2021, the Cohen Veterans Network expects to have served more than 35,000 veterans and their family members at Cohen Clinics. Through the 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.
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 as defined by the veteran.

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 any 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.

LOW TO NO COST
All veterans and their families are eligible for care, regardless of insurance or ability to pay.

SAME-DAY INTAKE
The expected wait between first contact and a first appointment at a Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic is less than one week. If someone is in crisis, our Cohen Clinics can schedule an appointment on the same day the client contacts us.

MORE THAN MENTAL HEALTH
We provide support for related needs including unemployment, housing, finance, and education. Telehealth and childcare are offered on a clinic-by-clinic basis.

BENEFITS OVERVIEW

"Without this clinic, I can't say where I'd be right now."
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