

Creative Forces Clinical Research Summit Overview

Creative Forces: NEA Healing Arts Network is a national initiative led by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and state arts agencies. The initiative offers creative arts therapies to military patients and veterans who have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health conditions, including post-traumatic stress.

The Creative Forces collaboration began in 2012 at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence/Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Congressional support enabled the National Endowment for the Arts to expand the partnership in 2017 to 11 DoD and VA clinical sites, and a telehealth program for patients in rural and remote areas.

A core aim of the initiative is to improve our understanding of the biological, psychological, behavioral, and economic impacts of creative arts therapies in integrative care settings for patients with TBI and PTS. In service of this goal, the Creative Forces Clinical Research Summit takes place September 18-19 at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Mrs. Karen Pence, Second Lady of the United States, will host a kick-off breakfast at the vice president's residence on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Observatory.

The NEA is sharing a research synthesis document for attendees prior to the summit. This document will summarize recent and ongoing clinical research projects associated with Creative Forces. It also will analyze data from interviews and scientific literature to highlight progress and gaps in knowledge related to creative arts therapies for the populations, health conditions, and clinical care settings specific to Creative Forces.

Summit attendees will hear keynotes from world-renowned experts in adjacent fields of scientific inquiry and then participate in a series of panels that review the clinical approaches to various creative arts therapies within Creative Forces. These conversations will culminate with ideas for a network-wide, five-year research agenda. Ultimately, that agenda will explore new ways of measuring the impact of creative arts therapies in integrative, team-centered care settings.