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# Press Release

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## **JHQVAMC Doctors Publish Alcohol Addiction Study**

MOUNTAIN HOME, TN— Doctors at the James H. Quillen VA Medical Center and faculty at the University of Tennessee Knoxville were published November 8, 2021, in the *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* for their work in combatting alcohol use disorders.

Dr. Benjamin Garland, Program Manager for the Post-9/11 Military2VA (M2VA) Case Management Program at JHQVAMC, who has been with the medical center as a social worker since 2015, and Dr. Jill McCarley, a psychiatrist with JHQVAMC since 2014, worked on a study to add to the existing literature regarding the role of efficient continuity of care in post-detoxification residential treatment admission for clients with primary alcohol use disorders.

“It is studies like this that can show how we can best target our resources to help Veterans,” said McCarley. “This information can help us make changes that can really matter to the health and wellbeing of our patients. Dr. Garland’s research will make a positive difference for so many veterans now and in the future.”

The results of the study support previous research that outlines the relationship between efficient post-detoxification continuity of care and increased positive outcomes, she said.

Alcohol use disorders are highly prevalent, comorbid, and disabling conditions that are often untreated, according to Garland. Many detoxification discharges for substance use disorders are not followed by transfer to treatment. The role of proactive, supportive discharge, and aftercare planning are prominently tied to improved clinical outcomes.

Garland became interested in the transition from inpatient to residential care as an intern in the inpatient psychiatry unit at JHQVAMC. After a stint in the U.S. Air Force from 2012-2015 as a social worker, he returned to work at JHQVAMC. He launched the study in 2020, during his doctoral study in social work at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, to evaluate the domiciliary’s same-day admission policy change that began in 2019.

“I wanted to support that effort by finding out if it improved outcomes for our Veterans,” said Garland.

Garland works with Veterans at the medical center and said it is particularly exciting to see how this could affect our Veteran patient population.

“Working on the inpatient unit, I noticed that we often saw people who needed to come back. I wanted to know if the work the domiciliary was doing to expedite care was a protective factor for those Veterans and we found that the policy did correlate with decreased readmissions and improved wait times.”

The full author listing, study, and published materials in the *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* are available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1533256X.2021.1996839>.

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*Note: One-on-one media interviews with Dr. Garland are welcomed and can be arranged by contacting the Public Affairs Officer at 926-1171 ext. 7126 or [Joshua.Higgins@va.gov](mailto:Joshua.Higgins@va.gov).*



MOUNTAIN HOME, TN— Dr. Benjamin H. Garland (right), Program Manager for the Post-9/11 Military2VA (M2VA) Case Management Program at JHQVAMC, and Dr. Jill McCarley, a psychiatrist with JHQVAMC, were published November 8, 2021, in the *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions* for their work in combatting alcohol use disorders.