

DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL

Veterans, families get free mental health care at new Addison clinic

BILL HETHCOCK
Dallas Business Journal

As North Texas continues to be a hotbed for corporate expansions and job growth, an infrastructure of integrated health care becomes increasingly crucial. That integration includes accessibility to mental health care.

On Monday, a billionaire hedge fund investor, who founded a national network of clinics devoted to veterans mental health issues, toured a clinic that bears his name in Addison, and he liked what he saw.

"I'm really impressed," Steven Cohen told me after the tour. "I like the level of engagement and spirit in the place. Literally, to a person, they're excited to be here, they're connected to the mission, and it's thrilling to witness."

The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Metrocare at 16160 Midway Rd. is a free mental health clinic to help veterans and their families make the transition to a meaningful civilian life. It opened June 8, and is the fifth clinic of its type nationwide. The others are in New York, San Antonio, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Cohen plans to open 25 nationwide by 2020, serving 25,000 people.

Cohen said the Addison clinic will help returning veterans and their families make successful transitions from military life to civilian employment.

Telehealth will be used out of the Addison clinic to reach the entire state of Texas, said Dr. Anthony Hassan, executive director of the Cohen Veterans Network and a former Air Force officer with 30 years of experience in military behavioral health.

The clinics are designed to improve the mental health outcomes for post-9/11 veterans and their families, with a particular emphasis on post-traumatic stress, Hassan said. The Cohen clinics define veterans as anyone who served at least one day in the military, regardless of discharge status, Hassan said.

"That's really important, because there are



Cohen, in blue sweater, and others with Cohen Veterans Network tour the network's new mental health facility in Addison.

many veterans who have bad conduct discharges or less than honorable discharges and are ineligible for the VA," he said. "We're here to fill that gap. But more importantly, family members aren't eligible for VA care by law, so we're really supporting the family."

In most clinics, 30 percent to 40 percent of patients are family members of veterans, Hassan said.

The military teaches leadership, organizational and technical skills that are in high demand by employers, Cohen said.

But often employers don't know how to translate the experience of veterans to the workplace. The clinics are designed to assist employers with that as well, he said.

Companies including AT&T and HP have been to Metrocare clinics and work with the agency to connect veterans with employers, said Amy Williams, clinic director.

"A case manager's job is to look at the whole

person – occupationally, financially, socially, educationally – and to see what holes need to be filled and what gaps are there," Williams said. "Our case management team actively works with what's in the community."

Williams said the new clinic expects to see 800 patients in its first year and grow from there. The Addison clinic employs 22 people.

Cohen, who runs Point72 Asset Management, committed \$275 million to form the national network of clinics. In Addison, Cohen Veterans Network has committed \$12 million to Metrocare Services to fund a wide range of mental health and case management services to veterans and their family members.

Cohen's work with veterans began in part because his son served in the Marine Corps and is now serving in the Reserves. He got involved in veterans' mental health while serving on the Robin Hood Foundation's board in New York.