



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## **Nurse case managers support WTB Soldiers along their health care journey**

By: Stacy Neumann, Medical Department Activity Public Affairs

Think of Susan Reynolds as a quarterback on the health care field. She's ready to receive any information and can execute a care plan precisely. Such is the nature of her job as a nurse case manager at the Fort Carson Warrior Transition Battalion.

"My goal is to decrease their stress," explained the HHC nurse case manager. "They have a lot of appointments and I help keep the balls in the air for them. Whether it's a physical, a behavioral health visit or something else, I want them to have a good return to duty or transition as a successful veteran."

Since first fielding the position in 2007, the number of nurse case managers embedded in the WTB has grown to 22. Each one works with 10 to 25 Soldiers at any given time. Each of their clients may have multiple medical appointments each week. The nurse case manager is part of the Soldier's Triad of Care and also includes the primary care manager and squad leader.

Maj. Yvette Concina coordinates the WTB managers and said she has found that the position is imperative. "The nurse case manager is the hub of information. That person is a key liaison between Soldiers, the commander, the doctor and Family members. They consolidate information to help each person make decisions about the best possible resources to help the Soldier transition."

In a typical day, the nurse case manager will see five to seven scheduled Soldiers. They may meet with more if someone is considered high risk or an emergency occurs. Then, once a week, the nurse case manager sits down for an administrative meeting, bringing together the commander, the squad leader, social workers and other professionals dedicated to helping the Soldier heal and transition. Each one of their client's cases is reviewed, ensuring his or her physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are being met. The goal is to be proactive and make sure military leadership and medical providers are communicating clearly.



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To prepare, Reynolds noted that they ask the Soldier plenty of questions, like “Do you feel like we are taking care of you? Do we have you at the right providers? Have you gotten your initial VA appointments?”

Beyond simply coordinating medical care, the nurse case managers also talk with troops about their Families, hobbies and hopes for the future.

“They are challenged when they arrive in our unit. Either figuratively or literally from things like disease, shrapnel and bombs,” said Concina. “We help them find a new normal. You have to be aware of the loss they encountered.”

In addition, because each case is unique, Concina said they sometimes have to “color outside the lines and be creative with our care” to ensure the Soldier’s needs are met. But when these health care professionals hear a Soldier talk about strapping on a prosthesis and running three miles, they say any extra work is well worth it.

Reynolds smiled, “We love those stories.”