

## SAMUELI INSTITUTE VP KEVIN BERRY ON LEADERSHIP

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U.S. Navy Captain (retired) Kevin Berry, MD, head of military medical research at Samueli Institute, stood before more than 200 attendees and shared the experience of his 30 year career as a military officer as he discussed how to integrate mind-body medicine into existing military medical practices. Through personal anecdote Dr. Berry illustrated for the assembled group of current military leaders that getting results is easier than it appears.

“You don't always have to wait for leadership to institute change from the top down. Remember, things get done when you do them!”

Reminiscing on his earlier years as a doctor of pediatrics at the Naval Medical Center- San Diego (NMCS D), Dr. Berry admitted to being among the many physicians waiting for change from above and was frustrated with not being able to influence existing powers. But wanting to be a part of the solution, an optimistic Berry, with his team, decided not to wait. Instead they made positive changes by innovating and using the resources and policies that were already at hand. His speech at NMCS D was an advisory for other clinic leaders in military medicine. Dr. Berry's consistent advice throughout his presentation was to accept the imperfections that come along with the job and make a difference anyway.

“In leadership, don't wait until it's perfect, you might miss the moment. Making many small changes can be easier than making one big change. Just make them one after another as fast as you can”

Dr. Berry highlighted on the present challenges in military medicine, which mirror the challenges mentioned by other keynotes, such as the over reliance on prescription medications like opioids for chronic pain and the insufficient usage of no or low cost, non-pharmacological self-care. In military and veteran clinics across the country, clinical leaders are already taking the initiative to integrate mind-body therapies that encourage self-care. Dr. Berry motivates for a more rapid process.

“We need to get to where people are and do what they need now!”

The current focus of military medicine is on the disease, but as many expert researchers and clinicians know, many diseases are preventable, and have their roots and solutions in people's everyday lives. Dr. Berry calls for reform on defense health care practices, stating that, “we need to diagnose and treat disease and we cannot waste any opportunity to talk to our patients about health more globally.”

Dr. Berry is not alone in his concern. Last week, leaders from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), met in the nation's capital to discuss defense healthcare reform which based on their recommendations includes collaborations, readiness, and wellness promotion; all topics also mentioned by Dr. Kevin Berry and other keynote speakers at the Military and Veteran Resiliency Medicine Summit.

During an open discussion, Dr. Berry was asked about the most effective approach for influencing stakeholders on military medicine reformation. Dr. Berry's advice was to translate the information into words “that make sense for them.” Dr. Berry left the intrigued audience with one last key component to being a great military medical leader—legacy, or the words of Dr. Berry, “plant seeds for the next generation.”

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