



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 14, 2026

Contact: R. Todd Wright, Public Affairs Officer, Marion VA Health Care System.
Richard.wright9@va.gov (618) 694-6717

Marion VA Health Care System announces new Chief of Behavioral Health



Marion, IL - The Marion VA Health Care System is pleased to announce the selection of Sonja M. Comer, LCSW, as the new Chief of Behavioral Health Services. Ms. Comer will lead a multidisciplinary team of more than 100 clinicians providing comprehensive mental health care to Veterans across Southern Illinois, Southwestern Indiana, and Western Kentucky. Behavioral Health Services operates over fifteen specialized programs that together offer a full continuum of care from integrated primary care to specialized residential treatment.

Ms. Comer has served the Marion VA for more than sixteen years, beginning as a clinician delivering evidence-based treatment for Veterans with addiction disorders. She played an instrumental role in establishing and stabilizing major Behavioral Health programs, including the SUD Intensive Outpatient Program and the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. As Associate Chief beginning in 2019, she helped guide the service through significant cultural and operational transitions while advancing innovative, whole-health approaches to care.

When asked about her selection, Ms. Comer shared, “It is an honor to step into this role, and I am grateful for the opportunity. Having grown up in military culture, with a father who served in Vietnam and a husband who served in Iraq, I’ve always wanted to know that when they, or any Veteran, seek mental health care, the VA will provide the best, most Veteran-specialized care possible. That passion guided my decision to join the Marion VA and continues to shape my commitment to our mission. Behavioral Health at Marion is filled with incredibly caring and skilled providers, and I am grateful for the opportunity to support our team as we deliver high-quality, innovative, and accessible mental health care that promotes the recovery, wellbeing, and dignity of every Veteran we serve.”

Ms. Comer earned her Master of Social Work degree from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with extensive experience in addiction treatment, evidence-based psychotherapy, crisis response, interdisciplinary leadership, and integration of complementary and alternative modalities to support recovery. Prior to joining the VA, she worked in community mental health settings providing residential, outpatient, and youth behavioral health services, developing a broad clinical foundation that continues to support her leadership within Behavioral Health Services.

Follow the Marion VA Health Care System on [Facebook](#) and our [Website](#).