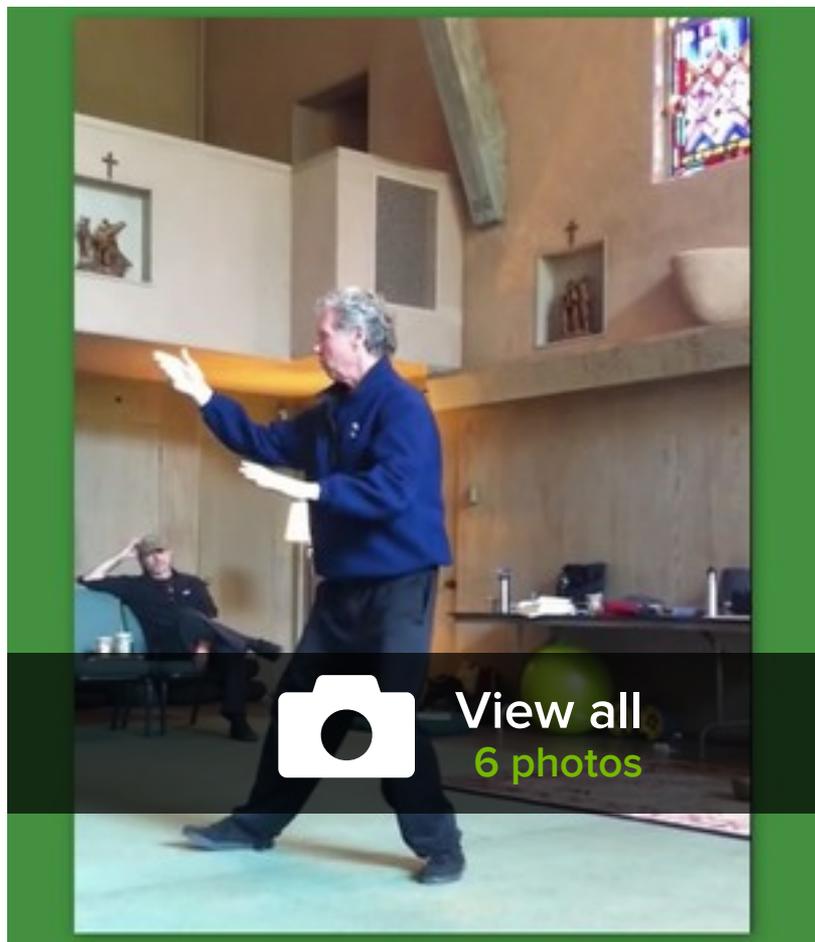


## IIQTC Brings Qigong and Tai Chi to Veterans

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[The Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi \(IIQTC\)](#) directed by Dr. Roger Jahnke, OMD, has benefited [veterans](#) across the country and its success continues to grow. The IIQTC trains [Qigong](#) and [Tai Chi](#) (Taiji) teachers and has recently released information on their initiatives to empower veterans to add this mind-body practice to their lives as a complement to medical treatment and as a method of disease prevention.



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The Veterans Administration Health Care System has been implementing new ideas through the VA Center for Innovation and the VA Office of Patient Centered Care and Culture transformation. The mandates of these departments are to think of innovative approaches to Veteran programs that include "non-pharmacological interventions". "The mind-body wellness practices of Qigong and Tai Chi are perfect for this", stated Dr Jahnke, whose clinical practice of Chinese medicine continued for 30 years before he turned his attention to training Qigong and Tai Chi teachers. According to ancient Chinese medical wisdom, which Dr Jahnke explores in his book *The Healer Within*, "The most profound medicine is produced in the human system for FREE."

The IIQTC's VA initiatives fall in 3 categories:

- 1 Provide certified teachers and practice leaders to numerous VA facilities throughout the US to teach Tai Chi Easy, a method developed by Dr. Jahnke.
- 2 Train VA healthcare delivery staff and selected veterans to become practice leaders.
- 3 Conduct research

In this article, I am focusing on their first effort to provide Tai Chi and Qigong classes and practice sessions to veterans through several funded programs.

In Oct 2011, I first reported that the Northport VA Medical Center was adopting Tai Chi Easy to train medical professionals to use Tai Chi/Qigong as a complementary treatment for veterans. You can read

the article by clicking [here](#). Since then, a number of trainees have been teaching Tai Chi and Qigong on a weekly basis.

In Tennessee, the Women's Health program at the VA in Mountain Home has a grant for a cardiac prevention program that uses Tai Chi Easy as the intervention. Two individuals were trained as practice leaders at the [Kripalu Institute](#) with Dr. Jahnke so they learn how to lead the Tai Chi and Qigong practice.

In New Orleans, Louisiana, the VA Health Center received a grant to launch a Tai Chi Easy program in the integrative health care program. The program contracted an IIQTC graduate to present Tai Chi Easy practice sessions at several VA facilities and the training continues due to its success.

In Orlando, Florida, Jeanne Eileen Reed, RN at Orlando VA Medical Center, submitted an idea in the highly competitive VA Employee Innovation Competition to offer an integrative mind-body practice in the form of TaiChi/QiGong to veterans to complement and enhance traditional care. Her idea was awarded in 2012. With the assistance and coordination of Brian Stevenson, Management Analyst of VHA OIA Reed developed a cohesive team of Dr. Jahnke, Dr. Linda Larkey Research professor at Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovation, Dr. Tracy Hunter Licensed Clinical Psychologist as Research Investigators, and Kevin Merrigan, certified Tai Chi & Chi Gong Instructor.

The initial goal at Orlando was to develop a prototype for implementing Tai Chi/QiGong as a stress reduction tool for veterans who are impacted by symptoms of PTSD. The second component was to develop a RCT research study. The first part kicked off at the end of 2013 and concluded at the end of 2014. They offered four classes per week to veterans and each session was 12 weeks long and many participants enjoyed it so much they returned for later sessions. Each class was 60 minute long. Instructor Kevin said that there were no prerequisites to attend. The goal was to help those physically and psychologically compromised as well as healthy ones trying to stay healthy. Many of the attendees, aged 40-70 with 75% men and 25% women, had suffered from PTSD, chronic pains, sleep disorder, heart disease, cardiopulmonary, stroke, brain injury, arthritis/bursitis, diabetics, anxiety disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, cancer, depression, nervous disorders, fibromyalgia, and other diseases. A consensus reported among attendees is reduced symptoms and improved quality of life.

According to Dr. Jahnke, about 20 IIQTC practice leaders have been working at 20 other VA facilities. Due to the positive results from all the participating areas, we are certainly hopeful that more veterans can and will be helped by the healing power of Tai Chi and Qigong.

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**Violet Li**

Tai Chi Examiner