



A Discussion on Veteran Healthcare and Post-Service Employment

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Every November as Veterans Day approaches, Proskauer honors the service of our active military, veterans and their families. As part of our efforts, the Firm had the privilege of hosting a panel discussion on some of the most pressing issues that veterans and their families currently face. We were honored to be joined by Wanda Montalvo, PhD, RN, Executive Director of [Jonas Nursing & Veterans Healthcare](#) (JNVH) at Columbia University, and Timothy Cochrane, SVP of Business Development at [American Corporate Partners](#) (ACP), whose work is on the frontlines of veterans' healthcare and post-service employment.

Under Dr. Montalvo and the Board of Directors' leadership, JNVH connects some of the country's most prominent advocates for healthcare investment with leaders, innovators and experts from the worlds of business, philanthropy and education. Since 2008, [Jonas Philanthropies](#) has awarded \$25 million in scholarships to support more than 1,250 doctoral nursing scholars at 157 universities in all 50 states. Approximately 330 of these scholars are focused on advancing veterans' healthcare.

Mr. Cochrane, a former U.S. Marine, joined ACP three years ago after a long career on Wall Street following his military service. Knowing firsthand the difficulties of finding employment after service, Mr. Cochrane is passionate about ACP's mission to help veterans transition into their next careers through one-on-one mentorship with volunteers from more than 80 Fortune 500 companies. Last year, Proskauer signed on as a corporate partner for ACP and paired 10 of our partners and senior staff with veteran protégés looking to integrate into the workforce.

Throughout the discussion, the panel made clear that while there are many services available to veterans, there is still much work to be done.

Dr. Montalvo noted that despite the many healthcare services available to veterans through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) many veterans do not know how to access them. This issue is compounded by the VA's geographical limitations for veterans in rural areas. Without easy access to VA facilities or benefits, many veterans seek assistance from other healthcare providers who are often less equipped to properly care for veteran patients. Recognizing this gap in care, JNVH is taking an innovative approach by focusing specifically on nurses, who the organization calls "the backbone of the American healthcare system." By increasing the number of nurses with advanced training to fill leadership roles as faculty, clinical leaders and researchers, and by supporting doctoral-level nursing candidates committed to veterans healthcare, JNVH aims to improve the care and overall health of our nation's veterans.

ACP takes an innovative approach to easing veterans' transition process from military service to civilian employment. Many former service members often have difficulty in recognizing and communicating to hiring managers the variety of valuable skills (tenacity, leadership, organization, team work) they gained through their service. Once hired, they must also acclimate to an often unfamiliar work environment and structure. Mr. Cochrane noted that due to these barriers more than 50% of veterans will leave their first post-service job within eight months. ACP's decade-long work has proven that monthly mentorship from an experienced corporate professional can be a game-changer in this process. Not only do ACP veteran protégés gain meaningful employment, more than 85% of them remain at the same company past the eight-month marker.



At Proskauer, our work to support veterans in need is a year-round commitment. Our lawyers have ongoing matters through the Veterans Assistance Project at the New York [City Bar Justice Center](#) to aid indigent veterans file claims and appeals with the VA. Volunteers throughout our U.S. offices work on various pro bono matters and partner with local organizations to serve meals to food-insecure veterans and provide warm winter wear, toiletries, nonperishable food and any other items that are needed. Special thanks to Dr. Montalvo of JVNH and Mr. Cochrane of ACP, for the work of their organizations which improve the lives of veterans, and for furthering our understanding of the current state of veteran affairs, and how we can better serve those who have so honorably served our country.