

Commission on PTSD & TBI Meeting Notes
Walker Building, Room 274
Thursday February 21, 2019
Recorder: Tony Paradiso

Member attendance:

COL Richard Oberman	NH National Guard
Michael Rice	SVAC
Robert Mottola	Manchester VA
Ken Norton	NAMI
Erin Hall	Brain Injury Association of NH
Denise Roy-Innarelli	NHES
Jerry Donavan	Robin Hill Farms
David Appleby	NH State Police
Ana McKenna	Care Coordination Program NH
Peggy LaBrecque	NH Veterans Home
Tony Paradiso	Veterans Advocate
Cherry Gavin	Easter Seals Military Veterans Services
Richard Osborne	State Legislative Representative

Members Excused

Barry Conway	SVAC
Amy Cook	DHHS
Suellen Griffin	CBHA
Colleen Moriarty	NH Vet Center
Dr. Nicole Sawyer	NH Psychological Association
Nick Tolentino	Disabled American Veterans Stigma Reduction Co-Chair

Guest attendance:

Melanie Spears	Representing Congresswoman Annie Kuster
Chris Scott	Representing Senator Jeanne Shaheen

I. Welcome & Introductions

Peggy LaBrecque

Pledge of Allegiance

New Member Introduction: Dick Osborne Legislative Representative

New Guest Introductions: Melanie Spears from Congresswoman's Kuster's office
Chris Scott from Senator Jeanne Shaheen's office

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the January 19, 2019 meeting were approved as amended.

III. Commission Updates (Updates pertinent to COPT mission)

General Membership

Ana McKenna - Care Coordination Program: The Care Coordination Program has experienced a higher than normal incidence of suicide ideations (a total of 7). Ana noted that service members can self refer. She also indicated that they have a Facebook page and encourage people to review and “like” the page as well as make recommendations for postings. Recommendations can be made via e-mail to Ana

Denise Roy-Innarelli – NHES: Planning for this year’s resource fairs is already in process. A total of 24 will be held throughout the year. Eight fairs are confirmed and are scheduled from March 21st to May 9th. Employers can register. They will continue to vary the times to make the fairs available to more people. Various times include 4 - 7pm, 2 - 6pm, and 10am – 2pm. A schedule of the eight confirmed fairs was handed out to members. The schedule will also be posted on the NHES website but it has not been posted as yet.

Mike Rice SVAC: SVAC now has language for the legislative bills. They have agreed to follow two of the bills and the remainder they will support. In particular, Mike noted SB 208 (Bill title: Renaming the adjutant general’s department to the department of military affairs and veterans services). The next SVAC meeting is scheduled for March 5th at the new National Guard maintenance facility on Hooksett Road.

Ken Norton – NAMI: NAMI’s annual conference is scheduled for March 9th and will consist of a variety of workshops. NAMI is also keeping up with all the legislative activity and continuing to contribute to the 10-year plan.

Erin Hall - Brain Injury Association: Erin noted that they have a conflict with the NAMI event as the Vertical Challenge Event will also be held on March 9th. This is a fundraiser located at Bretton Woods. The event consists of skiing and snowshoeing activities and the funds raised will go specifically to veterans.

Robert Motolla Manchester VA: Robert indicated that nationwide the VA has adopted the C-SSRS (Columbia- Suicide Severity Rating Scale). The VA sent a representative to the Governor's Challenge SAMHSA training. Robert noted that part of challenge is to end suicide.

Chris Scott – Senator Shaheen’s office: Scott let the Commission know that the goal of his attendance is to identify gaps in services and provide letters of support.

Melanie Spears – Congresswoman Kuster’s office: Melanie indicated that she is attending as a resource and contact point for the congresswoman and that she is happy to assist in any way she can.

Col. Oberman – NH National Army Guard: Col. Oberman noted that this is training season for the Guard. Over the next two to three weeks members will be going all over the globe to train. His goal is to ensure that all participants receive any care that is needed as a result of their training. Currently on the Army side there are approximately 21 guardsmen actively deployed from New Hampshire.

Amy Cook from DHHS could not attend but sent the following update:

Ask the Question: Amy met with the IT team to review the ATQ website transfer. DOIT finished some requested revisions and provided Amy a link to the mock up site for review of final revisions and approval. Given the new site will also have a new web address and because we are not contracting with the former site’s hosting platform they will not be providing an automatic re-direct for visitors to the new site page. Thus the challenge will be getting the word out on the news site. The former site is due to expire in the fall 2019. Because no one is contracting with the former site’s host, there’s no ability to edit anything on the site. Additionally, it was recently brought to Amy’s attention that the ATQ phone number on the website is outdated and currently brings callers to a Priceline hotline.

The goal is to get the new site live and terminate the old site as soon as possible. Prior to advertising the new site address, if someone goes there and finds it’s not available, they will likely Google “Ask The Question” and can be directed to the new website address which will be askthequestion.nh.gov. Amy believes that the number of people we might lose will be minimal and she’d rather that than have people either calling Priceline or getting information from two websites.

With the IT issues resolved we can move forward with the ATQ Toolkit being developed by Dr. Sawyer. Once the news site is live the plan is to make it available on the website. Amy is requesting that COPT members review the toolkit and provide feedback. A link can be sent to anyone who is interested. The goal is to review the foundation of the Toolkit and identify any additional tools that would be useful to create. After final feedback and making it publicly available the next step will be to develop “advertising” and perhaps training for the Toolkit.

CMHC Military Liaison Program: Liaisons continue to meet monthly. In order to determine the group’s priorities for the coming year, and to help identify how any funds that become available would be utilized, this past month Liaisons completed an online survey. A continuing refrain is that funds are needed to continue the program but it is unclear specifically how any such funds would be used.

TBI/SUD Task Force: This group recently started meeting and is being facilitated by professional consultants associated with BIANH. For a period, they will be meeting monthly to develop a plan to make services more effective and accessible for those individuals who suffer a brain injury but don't qualify for services through the existing programs like the DD or ABD waiver. This is exciting work and the group's membership is diverse which will allow it to touch as many populations as possible.

IV. Action Items (Items that require decision /action by COPT)

By-Law update discussion

This discussion revolved around the Commission receiving and allocating funds. Legislatively the Commission does not have the authority to receive and distribute funds. To change this an LSR - legislative change – would be required. This would allow the Commission to write grants and solicit funds.

A motion to update the Commission's By-laws to be in compliance with our legislative mandate was made. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

2017 Veteran Survey

Dr. Sawyer is working on a final draft of the survey summary. The survey will be critical to determine if we have helped move the needle in the areas of stigma, education, and ask the question. The summary will help answer that question but what it won't address the following question: Now what? DHHS will play a major role in helping to determine that answer.

VI. New Business

There was a question regarding a new veteran's population density map for the state. In the past UNH has provided this information. Nick may also know a source. It is believed the latest map is 2017. The VA has one for 2017 by county. It can be found at www.va.gov/vetdata

Next month we will be discussing brain injury. Chris Whitlock from the VA will attend the meeting. The goal is to facilitate a roundtable discussion to help identify safety nets and whether there are any obstacles that limit care.

A likely question is: What is the deficit that exists in the community? With PTSD we identified an education deficit. This led to military culture training and ATQ.

There are different types of brain injuries with varying symptoms. Peggy is particularly interested in TBI among the elderly. Specifically: is it possible that a brain injury suffered early in life may manifest itself later in life when someone no longer has the ability to compensate for it (i.e. can it cause early onset dementia)? Peggy is seeing applicants in their fifties with co-morbidities and she wonders if some of the symptoms are brain injury related.

It was also noted that in past decades there were not as many survivors of brain injury. That changed from the Viet Nam era on.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 pm

Next Commission Meeting is Thursday, March 21, 2019 from 2:30 – 4:30 pm at the Walker Building, Room 274, 21 South Fruit Street, Concord