

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

Member attendance:

Peggy LaBrecque	NH Veterans Home
Maj Gen Gretchen Dunkelberger	SVAC
Ken Norton	National Alliance on Mental Illness, NH
Representative Richard Osborne	NH House of Representatives
Michael Rice	SVAC
Amy Cook	DMAVS
Jerry Donovan	Robin Hill Farm
Ana McKenna	Care Coordination Program NH
Seth Gahr	NH State Police
Tony Paradiso	Veterans Advocate
Erin Hall	Brain Injury Association
Eric Johnson	NH Behavioral Health Association
Chuck Saia	Governor's Commission on Disabilities

Excused

Alicia Semiatin	Manchester VA
Dr. Nicole Sawyer	NH Psychological Association
Nick Tolentino	Disabled American Veterans
Dr. Richard Wren	WRJVA
Catrina Watson	NH Medical Society

I. Welcome & Introductions

Pledge of Allegiance

New Member Introduction:

Chuck Saia from the Governor's Commission on Disabilities

New Guest Introductions:

None

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the October 17, 2019 meeting were approved as written.

III. Commission Updates (Updates pertinent to COPT mission)

General Membership

Ken Norton (NAMI): Ken mentioned that the Suicide Prevention Council was looking for a new vice chair.

Seth Gahr (NH State Police): Trooper Gahr indicated that the state police continue to assist people with hearing loss and TBIs with good success including veterans living in Massachusetts. They are seeing many Viet Nam vets. He noted that it has taken a long time but that assistance is finally forthcoming to get them the benefits they deserve.

In December Trooper Gahr will be teaching peer support to 911 personnel and police dispatchers (first responders). Major Conti in coordination with NAMI, conducted a third CIT training consisting of a 40-hour block of instruction.

Eric Turner (NHBHA): The 10 CMHCs have been allocated funds to administer the Bridge program. Bridge - which was formerly administered by Harbor Homes - is a rental subsidy and assistance program that helps individuals find housing while they wait to enroll with the NH housing program. The new structure allows the program to be administered at a more local level. The funds provided were sufficient for each center to hire a housing specialist. Additional dollars may also be forthcoming to help with items such as moving expenses and security deposits.

Michael Rice (SVAC): SVAC received a briefing from the NH Community Veterans Engagement Board. This was designed to educate and inform NH civilians to issues and concerns related to the veteran community. For anyone interested in attending the December meeting it will start at 4:00 pm instead of 5:00 pm and will include a Christmas social.

Erin Hall (Brain Injury Association): Erin provided to the Committee members a brochure on case management services along with a flyer on the upcoming Vertical Challenge event scheduled for January 25, 2020. She noted that funds are available - \$500 - and that no application is required.

Erin attended a meeting for people with hearing impairments and mentioned the availability of a communication card that provides assistance when engaged in a traffic stop. She also attended LADAC (licensed alcohol drug abuse counseling) training that included brain injuries. She suggested that it would be beneficial if veteran's issues could also be part of the training. Lastly, she discussed a training series called Brain Matters and noted that a veteran specific training to work with veterans with TBI should be developed.

Representative Osborne: Rep. Osborne mentioned that the committee that was reformed for PTSD first responders had its first meeting and is now back up and functioning.

Ana McKenna (CCPNH): Ana indicated that her agency has opened 89 new cases bringing the total to well over 1,100 clients since the program started in 2014. A total of 214 referrals have been made and counseling was provided to 11 clients. There were six suicide ideations and that one suicide occurred in Q1.

Peggy LaBrecque (NH Veterans Home): There have been many children visiting the Home which is hugely positive for the residents. There are currently 175 veterans residing in the Home with 15 of them being women. The youngest resident is 58 and there are a couple of residents who are in their hundreds. The Veterans Home is still looking for LNAs to staff the second shift. Currently their maximum capacity is 225 but because of staff shortages they are capping the maximum population at 175. Peggy noted that there are numerous vacancies throughout the agency, not just nursing openings.

NH DMAVS (Amy Cook)

The Dept of Military Affairs and Veteran Services officially opened. Amy is no longer employed by DHHS but remains in close cooperation with DHHS and is located in the same office.

ATQ: Had a table at the suicide prevention conference and the Toolkit is available online. There is a simple handout to point people to where they can download the Toolkit. The transfer to new website is scheduled for February. She has discussed with Dr. Sawyer conducting two trainings on how to use to Toolkit and suggested that the Commission might consider providing support and coordination assistance, perhaps in the spring. She noted that they are still in the early stages of planning.

Amy mentioned new training resources that were available for clinical professionals from Star Behavioral Health Providers. The training is free and offers CEUs.

Sue Brown and Amy will be conducting the final military culture training at Riverbend. This training is NH centric whereas the Star Behavioral Health training takes a more national focus. Additionally, our training isn't solely targeted at clinicians and is an adaptable curriculum.

Amy has been asked to put together a daylong training related to military and veterans that would be beneficial to children's organizations. If anyone has any ideas for topics let Amy know.

The NHES and DMAVS completed a new employment guide that list statewide resources. It is available online.

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

None

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

Peggy noted that the survey has identified the areas that we need to work on. One of the vital pieces that was identified is that, as a consequence of high turnover rates, providers still need training. Specifically: military culture, stigma reduction, and whether a vet feels understood when entering a provider's office. We moved the needle but there is still additional work to be done.

Rep. Osborne would like to bring this up to the NH Medical Society.

Amy is doing a great job with education in the school system and has developed a family guide.

Ana would like to see the commission engage in getting people to buy into trainings. ATQ – now what? She expressed concern that veteran issues are fading from the public view. Recognition would be an easy thing for the Commission to do. Start recognizing those who are contributing.

Mike Rice suggested doing some sort of roundtable with provider organizations. Try to encourage questions and find out what they are really looking for.

Amy mentioned that two new things going on:

Through the Governor's Challenge there is work being done on a military culture competence programs that have some sort of recognition associated. The goal is not to provide the training but come up with recommendations for both in person and online formats.

The military leadership team is working on ways to engage the private sector. The Adjutant General wants to come up with a recognition program. Amy noted that the Commission should determine how to align with this effort.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17 pm

Next Commission Meeting is Thursday, December 20, 2019 from 2:30 – 4:30 pm at the Walker Building, Room 274, 21 South Fruit Street, Concord