

Justice Involved Veterans Full Task Force

Meeting Minutes: 8/26/20

Location: Virtual Meeting

In attendance: Co-Chairs: Jill O’Neill, Sheena Bice

Members & Guests: Warren Perry, Susan Stearns, Amy Cook, Aaron Dristiliaris, John Hattan, Thomas Groulx

Updates

JIV Chair Update:

Jill shared information regarding the Data Work Group—why it was formed, the focus of the group and what it has been working on.

Alex Casale is facilitating the development of a statewide strategic plan for the courts and the Veterans track will be included in that plan which is a positive development.

Q: Do we see any difference yet between the need of Veterans in rural areas vs. non-rural areas in NH?

A: We do not yet have enough data to see trends like that. Currently, the sources of data we have are extremely limited in scope. We need to have the courts asking everyone at intake if they have served in the military or not and then be willing to share that data with the JIV Task Force.

Veteran Track Updates

Rockingham County (Aaron D.)--9 participants—struggling to engage participants due to COVID. 8 are actively participating, 1 is struggling. They are all on probation—it is being required now for this county as it wasn’t enough in the past to rely on the VA for documentation of compliance. They are considering terminating the one person. Without Easterseals serving non-VA-eligible, they have had to turn away 2-3 people in the past few months.* [see post-note at end of minutes] Hearings are still being conducted virtually in addition to meetings and graduations. Teams are meeting 2x/month. Currently, participants collectively have 7 driving charges, 3 firearm incidences (reckless conduct), 2 domestic violence related, 2 drug use, 1 felony assault & did prison time before court. Referral sources are currently defense attorneys and Hampton Police Department.

Business & Discussion

Military Culture Training—Sheena gave an update regarding the Star Behavioral Health Provider program trainings (see VFR member update). Discussion took place regarding how it would be helpful to provide information to the courts about when trainings are available as well as information regarding Ask the Question.

Member Updates & Announcements

VFR (Sheena B.)—New Care Coordinator at VFR—Thomas Groulx. His focus will be supporting Veterans at VFR—increase access to care, get connected to VA, get involved with Veteran-related groups.

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Star Behavioral Health Provider program has been launched in NH (military culture training). Two trainings have been done so far virtually and one is being offered in September. A Tier 2 & 3 trainings are coming up as well. Tier 1 is non-clinical, broad military culture training. Tiers 2 & 3 are clinical tracks.

Department of Military Affairs & Veterans Services (Amy C. & Warren P.)

Department has been processing applications for CARES Act funding to benefit Veterans service organizations and organizations that provide traditional services to Veterans. \$3 million was split between about 50 applicants.

HB 1582 was passed this summer and includes a Veterans Bill of Rights. This legislation creates 3 new positions for the Department; however, the legislation does not come with funding. There is language in the bill stipulating that the Department is not responsible for completing the responsibilities outlined until the bill is funded. We do not anticipate funding being available any time in the near future.

There are several initiatives going on around the state with a goal of preventing Veteran suicide—Together With Veterans was launched in the Lakes Region and is going well; Northeast Passage is working with the Suicide Prevention Council-Military & Veterans Committee to develop a quarterly 6-week Veteran Wellness series in the Lakes Region as well.

The deadline for applications for the Veteran Friendly Business Recognition Program was extended to 9/30/20. Find the fillable, pdf application and a brochure with more information on the DMAVS/Adjutant General's website.

The Ask the Question website is finally live! www.askthequestion.nh.gov

Check it out! It has resources for any organization wanting more information about how to ask the question effectively or resources for military & Veterans.

NAMI NH (Susan S.)—continue to offer all supports remotely & virtually. Anticipate this will continue through fall. One advantage is that it expands access for people who would not have been able to attend group otherwise. Recently launched some specific supports for family members of individuals who have experienced severe mental illness. Lack of access to high-speed broadband internet has been challenge for many.

Action Steps

- Jill will create a draft of a revised JIV Fact Sheet and will distribute to TF members for editing.

Next Meetings

- Data Group—Tuesday, September 22, 2020 9am-11am; location TBA
- Full Task Force—Wednesday, October 28, 2020 9am-11am; location TBA

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Post-Note

Following the meeting on 8/26/20, an email notification was sent out by Deanna Monroe from Easterseals that would be of interest to the members of this group:

While, Easterseals still does not have funding to support Veterans through Veterans Behavioral Health Track, they did receive a grant allowing them to serve this population through free MRT Groups*. Easterseals will accept referrals for any Veteran that the VA cannot accept in their MRT groups. (This can be part of court-mandated treatment.)

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) is a treatment that combines education, group counseling and structured exercises designed to foster moral development. MRT directly confronts trauma issues typically encountered by veteran populations and addresses the specialized needs of veterans who may have been assigned to treatment through the criminal justice system.