

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team

*A Meeting to Build Partnerships & Improve Services for
New Hampshire Veterans, Service Members and their Families*

19 February 2019

VA Medical Center

718 Smyth Road, Manchester, N.H.

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team Attendance

A	Jim Adams, NH State Office of Veterans Services (Chair, Veterans Council)
X	Steve Ahnen, President, NH Hospital Association
X	Matt Albuquerque, Next Step Bionics and Prosthetics
X	Pete Burdett, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army
X	Amy Cook, Administrator, Community Based Military Programs, NH DHHS
X	William Gaudreau, Director, NH Office of Veteran Services
A	Suellen Griffin, President, NH Community Behavioral Health Association
X	Dave Kenney, Chair, State Veterans Advisory Committee
A	Commandant Peggy LaBrecque, NH Veterans Home
X	Bradley Mayes, Director, VA Regional Benefits Offices in MA, NH & VT
A	Al Montoya, Director, Manchester VA Medical Center
A	Colleen Moriarty-Anctil, Director, Manchester Vet Center
X	Jeffrey Newman, Administrator, Division of Higher Education, NH Department of Education
X	Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General, NH National Guard
A	Mark Roberts, Director, White River Junction Vet Center
A	Brett Rusch, MD, WRJ VA Medical Center
X	Roger Sevigny, NH Veterans Council
X	Pam Szacik, Employment Service Bureau Director, NH Employment Security
GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:	
X	Corey Beem, Acting Staff Assistant to the Director, Manchester VAMC
X	Dan Wilson, Acting Associate Director, Chief Financial Officer, Manchester VAMC
X	Jamie Cummings, Veterans Service Office, NH Office of Veteran Services
X	Donald B. Abele, Jr., Administrative Assistant to the Associate Director, Manchester VAMC

Meeting Minutes

I. Information Briefs

- a. Military Affairs & Veterans' Services Update
 - i. OVS--William (Bill) Gaudreau reported an overview of the attached slides to update the team on the trends in contacts at OVS and other things going on at OVS. Highlight—OVS is maintaining a Pease Veteran Registry. If you, or someone you know, worked there, please share with them that it's important to call OVS to get on the registry for periodic updates about what is happening. Those who feel they have a service-related condition should start the claims process now despite guaranteed denial.
 - ii. NH State Veterans Cemetery—Warren Perry reported that the cemetery is right on track for 3-year average, so far. Veterans Memorial Administration is funding pre-placed vaults for full casket internments. That saves each veteran buried at the Cemetery the cost of purchasing the vault. Space at the cemetery is anticipated to last until 2093. (Attached slide)
 - iii. Service Member & Family Support—Warren Perry reported that this program continues to provide case management to folks who present to OVS, but have other co-occurring issues to be addressed. (Attached slide)
 - iv. Bureau of Community Based Military Programs—Amy Cook reported that the biggest project being coordinated right now is the *Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide among Service Members, Veterans and their Families*. A team of 13 which included civilian and military representatives recently traveled to

Washington DC to participate in a Policy Academy hosted by SAMHSA. A State Action Plan was created that was brought back to the state for implementation by the larger State Team. (Attached slide)

- v. Statewide Info Sessions—the Military Affairs & Veterans Services team from TAG Dept has been holding Information Sessions around the state to explain the Executive Order and how it will impact the veteran community.

2/20 Nashua

2/27 Manchester

3/13 Concord

TBA Littleton for 2nd round

II. VA Update

Corey Beem reported that the VAMC is currently working with Kotter Group on Onboarding process improvement to aid in talent retention; also have a clinic cancelation improvement initiative that is tasked with limiting and mitigating cancelations by providers and patients. Finally, there is a group that is aiding in organizational communication called the Urgency group.

High Reliability Organization-Al Montoya and the rest of the Quad are in culture training as VAMC moves into this HRO journey; a culture of patient safety, continuous process improvement and leadership engagement are the keys to this initiative.

Nurse Recruiter, Pathways To Excellence and HRO officer each selected and on station; as they roll out additional improvement initiatives VAMC is staffing them accordingly, typically not adding to an already busy position.

Access to Care data—average = 17.7 days at Manchester vs. national average = 29.8

Mental Health appointments—average of 12.5 days from create date and 5.6 days from preferred date for the appt.

Brady Sullivan Building--30,000 additional sqft of administration space that will house VSOs, Whole Health, Call Center and Community Care as well as numerous other lines.

III. Legislative Affairs

Warren Perry reported. Amy will continue to send out Legislative updates as they are made available.

HCR2--Asking federal govt to look into whether benzodiazepans contribute to veteran suicide.

HB113—licensure for MH practitioners

HB239—licensure for MH and drug counselors

HB790--Relative to suicide prevention

HB261--Relative to toxin exposure in water

HB694—drug takeback program for illegal drugs

SB1091--Expand MH courts statewide

SB84—making appropriations to DHHS for homeless services expansion

SB208—codifies Exec Order and establishes Dept of Military Affairs and Veteran Services, passed Senate unanimously; anticipating no barriers in House

IV. Old Business

- a. Legislative Breakfast 3/19 8:30am-10am; TAG invited General Court to come to ECTC for briefing. Presenters will be Major General Mikolaities, Deputy Adjutant Warren Perry, Bradley Mayes, and Al Montoya; would like to have someone from White River Junction VA there as well and if so, that person would speak as well. All MLT members invited to attend, but will not have an opportunity to present. Recommendation to invite congressional staff liaisons as well—Warren Perry will send invites. Theme of briefings—this is our organization and this is what we're doing to work together.
- b. MLT Chair nominations & election
Al Montoya offered to co-chair. Warren Perry offered to co-chair from the state side. Nominations, and seconds, were made by members. All voted in favor of Al Montoya and Warren Perry co-chairing the NH Military Leadership Team. Corey Beem will notify Al Montoya and Warren Perry will contact Al to talk further.
- c. Guest speaker or subject matter expert requests for future meetings—
 - Brig Gen (ret) Carolyn Protzmann—co-chair of NHCVEB; Amy will invite to April meeting
 - Veterans Count—helps with suicide prevention efforts, expertise in many areas; Pete Vice-Chair, Brian McLaughlin is new Chair

V. **New Business & Member Updates**

a. Member updates from around the table

Pete—National meeting of Civilian Aides to Secretary of Army coming up. If there are any issues you'd like Pete to bring, please let him know.

Recruiting continues to be challenging. Dinner in May for enlistees. Harder to get into Army now than to get into college and Army can pay for college.

Don—gave a summary of his career

Brad—today is a big day—year ago President changed how appeals are processed and it's effective today—Brad summarized the changes. Recruitment—doubling Voc Rehab counselors in Boston, hiring employment coordinator & employment support specialist in Manchester, can hire veteran.

Matt—brings non-profit connection to MLT, recommended Veterans Count as a guest speaker.

Warren—need to change narrative about how we're talking about veterans in NH, don't want to use language about how veterans are "broken" when the majority do not have problems. Need to change the narrative about how valuable veterans are in communities while we're helping the minority who need some significant help. We need to help those who need help, but veterans are valuable members in their community.

In last 10 days, 2 former members of NHNG committed suicide.

*asked Pete to re-send veteran employment statistics

Currently work taking place to pass regulations to give veterans preference for hiring in state government.

Jamie & Bill—working to update information that is sent out by OVS as well as website as some laws have recently changed; also getting link on website page for Pease; waiting for CRM, but it's been delayed—hopefully, up & running by summer; fully staffed with 7 VSOs + Admin Asst. Trying to get OVS into the prisons to help incarcerated veterans. Brad Mayes shared that MA just passed Brave Act that is related to studying issues related to incarcerated veterans. VSOs will also help veterans get ID cards.

Pam—actively recruiting for Granite Workforce—work requirement will become mandatory a/o 3/1. Brochures available

Mature worker program will, hopefully, be passed this week and will be available to 55+ older folks.

Roger—Veteran's Council, supporting SB208, has experience with mental health providers and licensing requirements & obstacles and can be of assistance if/when necessary.

Jeff—attended National Association of Approving Agents (for GI Bill) in DC, heard about a lot of programs and initiatives and will keep team updated if something is relevant.

VI. **Next Meeting & Next Steps....**

a. **Next meeting date:** April 16, 2019

b. **Location:** Norris Cotton Federal Building, Manchester VA Regional Office, Room 711, 7th Floor; 275 Chestnut St, Manchester, N.H. 03101