

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team

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

April 26, 2022

10:00am – 11:30am

Edward Cross Training Complex, Pembroke, NH

New Hampshire Military Leadership Team Attendance

X	Major General David Mikolaities, Adjutant General, NH National Guard
X	Warren Perry, Deputy Adjutant General, NH National Guard; MLT Co-Chair
A	Kevin Forrest, Director, Manchester VA Medical Center; MLT Co-Chair
X	Amy Cook, Administrator, Community Based Military Programs, NH DMAVS; MLT Facilitator
X	Jim Adams, Chair, NH State Veterans Council
A	Steve Ahnen, President, NH Hospital Association
A	Matt Albuquerque, Next Step Bionics and Prosthetics
X	Pete Burdett, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army
X	Madeline Dreusicke, NH State Veterans Council
X	Ed Drury, Community Behavioral Health Association
X	Brendan Finn, NH State Veterans Council
A	William Gaudreau, Director, Division of Veteran Services, NH DMAVS
X	Jason Grower, Regional Director of Operations, Dead River Company
X	Karen Hebert, Director, Division of Economic and Housing Stability, DHHS
X	Ena Lima, Director, VA Regional Benefits Offices in MA, NH & VT
X	Paul Lloyd, Chair, State Veterans Advisory Committee
X	Kim MacKay, Commandant, NH Veterans Home
X	Sarah Morrissey, Employment Service Bureau Director, NH Employment Security
X	Ginger Munson, Family Representative
X	Jeffrey Newman, Administrator, Division of Higher Education, NH Department of Education
A	Dr. Brett Rusch, Director, WRJ VA Medical Center
X	Roger Sevigny, NH Veterans Council
GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:	
X	Matt Henry, NH Veterans Home
X	Carole Hitchcock, White River Junction VA Medical Center
X	Julie Voss, Manchester VA Medical Center
X	Chris Mooney, VBA

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions

MLT members participated in the meeting in-person and via a virtual Zoom link.

- II. Review of February Minutes**—No corrections made to the February 2022 minutes. Jason G. moved to accept the minutes as written. Jim A. 2nd, all members approved. The February 2022 minutes can be found on the DMAVS—MLT website page: <https://www.dmavs.nh.gov/about-us/councils-and-committees/nh-military-leadership-team>.

III. Initiative Status Updates

A. Legislative Updates—Warren Perry

Details are sent regarding status of all LSRs the Department is tracking in the LSR Tracker compiled by Warren P. and distributed by him and also Amy C. Each week Warren compiles updates on the

status of each. Warren provided a summary of the status of the LSRs in the legislative process and an overview of how some may affect the lives of Veterans in NH or the National Guard.

B. Veteran-Friendly Business Recognition Program Update—Amy Cook

Number of recognized businesses continue to increase. Businesses in network continue to be interested in coordinating a national recruitment campaign to encourage Veterans to choose New Hampshire for where they live, work, serve and play. This will help fill critical workforce shortages. As shared at the previous meeting, SNHU will be hosting a national recruitment event for the Network in fall 2022 to help in this effort. Approximately 1,800 military-connected students and alumni from multiple colleges/universities across the nation will be invited to attend. DMAVS has also met with Department of Business and Economic Affairs to discuss possible ways to collaborate on a marketing campaign they will be conducting to recruit workforce from outside New Hampshire.

C. Supports for Military Spouses/Families—Amy Cook

The DMAVS will begin sending a Welcome Letter along with a brochure highlighting employment opportunities to newly transitioned Veterans who have identified a NH address as their civilian home. Additionally, the same information will be distributed to Service members of all branches through TAPs around the country with the hopes many will consider making NH their civilian home in the future. There are currently 24 TAPs that have confirmed agreement to distribute the information and outreach continues to all others. The Welcome Letter and TAP materials will inform Service members, Veterans and their families about the services and supports available to them in the state.

And, a continued focus for communicating information about resources and services available to families will be on utilizing the Department's new Facebook page. On Facebook, search for "State of NH Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services".

IV. Old Business

A. Update on efforts to develop Veteran campus in Franklin

\$21 million has been allocated to develop a Veterans Campus in Franklin, NH. Easterseals NH will be leading the efforts and coordinating community partners to collaborate. GOFERR will be initially managing the contract with Easterseals. DMAVS may end up monitoring contract deliverables in the future. A breakfast with the Governor & Council was hosted at the location so members could see and hear first-hand about the plans. Lots of questions regarding deliverables, but overall it was well received. First year or more will be focused on construction.

V. New Business

A. Burial Equity—Warre Perry

Legislation passed recently allowing eligible National Guardsmen and Reservists to be buried at the State Veterans Cemetery. Same character of discharge requirement as VA. There will be no segregation as to where/when buried. The VA has a system for burials and is allowing the state to use that for these as well. State will pay \$400 per burial, no cost to the Veterans being buried (cost for spouse). DMAVS is currently working through policy regarding residency requirements for eligibility. Intent is to have first burial by Memorial Day.

B. AIR Recommendations—Julie Voss

Julie shared a powerpoint presentation outlining the recommendations and the potential benefits or disadvantages for New Hampshire. Final recommendations will be due to Commission by 1/31/23. Al Montoya is involved. Implementation of any recommendation will take many years; will need to determine how to fund and President could veto in the end.

VI. Information Briefs

A. Member Updates & Announcements—

- 1) **VA Medical Center, Manchester**—Julie Voss
New Urgent Care/Mental Health clinic opened and going well. Mountain entrance almost complete. Giving 2nd boosters to staff and patients.
- 2) **VBA**—Ena Lima
VBA preparing for passage of Act that will increase claims. Will add 25 conditions related to toxic exposure. It will have ripple effects into all other programs. VBA continues to hire to address the anticipated need—15 hires in March so far. Will be taking multi-pronged approach across the nation. Exploring technology solutions for faster processing of claims.
- 3) **NH Employment Security**—Sarah Morrissey
Unemployment is at 2.5% which is a 30-year low. NHES is shifting outreach to those who are looking for new careers. Labor Market Bureau shows a greater percentage of people moving into NH than previously which is good for workforce, but more are needed. Housing is the elephant in the room and the barrier to people moving into NH. Looking to connect job seekers to resources for housing.
- 4) **Dept of Military Affairs & Veterans Services**—MG Mikolaities & Warren Perry
150 Active-Duty coming to Pease this summer. Legislation passed to allow transfer of National Guard CCSNH tuition waiver to spouse. The Closed Loop Referral system in development by DHHS will enhance collaboration among organizations serving Veterans; DMAVS is in support of this. DVS is fully staffed. The Cemetery is replacing the Army memorial due to weather damage. A Memorial Day event will be held at the Cemetery. Amy C. participated in the 4/21 Field Hearing of the US Senate Veterans Affairs Committee hosted by Senator Hassan and Congressman Pappas.
- 5) **State Veterans Council**—Jim Adams
Will be having a meeting with the Chair of the Justice Involved Veterans Task Force to discuss how to make pro-bono legal services for Veterans available again.
- 6) **Veterans Home**—Kim MacKay
NHVH is COVID-free for Veteran residents. Using volunteers to cover lack of staffing in some areas (laundry). Putting out signs to advertise hiring needs. Starting the LNA class today—8 students. In the process of fixing some IT issues at facility.
- 7) **DHHS**—Karen Hebert
Medicaid Unwind is focus of Department currently (when federal public health emergency ends, the Medicaid coverage many had received during pandemic will end; outreaching to get people to renew now so there's no gap in coverage). The Department of Insurance has "Navigators" that help people connect with health insurance. Food insecurity—efforts underway to conduct outreach for those in need who might be eligible for SNAP, but don't know they are.

VII. Next meeting date—June 2022*

At the meeting, the next meeting date/time/location was announced. However, since the 4/26/22 meeting it was decided through an announcement and consensus that instead of convening for a regular MLT meeting, MLT members will attend Day 2 of the End Veteran Homeless Summit for state leadership—a Veterans FIRT event powered by Harbor Care in conjunction with DMAVS on **Thursday, June 30th. 9am-3pm**. Simon Center, New England College, Henniker. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. This event is in-person attendance only.