

**NH Suicide Prevention Council—Military & Veterans
October 7, 2020**

In attendance:

Co-Chairs: Amy Cook, Beth Alves

Members: Chaplain (LTC) Steve Veinotte, Sheena Bice, Lisa Boedigheimer, Seth Gahr, Thomas Groulx, Susan Stearns, Dale Garrow, Pam Szacik, Thom O'Connor, Kristen McGraw, Sarah Morrissey

Guest: Mike Mullen, Clear Path for Veterans New England

If you were logged on to this meeting, but your name did not get recorded in the attendance, please notify Amy Cook for a correction to be made.

SPC Full/Leadership Update

The SPC Annual Suicide Prevention Conference will be switched to a virtual format and will take place November, 12-13. There will be no charge unless you need CEUs. You need to register for each day you plan to attend. The SPC was awarded the grant to fund an independent facilitator for strategic planning. This will be moving forward. The SPC continues to meet virtually on last Monday of month—if anyone wants to attend, let us know and we'll forward link.

Postvention

Moving forward, we will include Postvention as an agenda item in our monthly meeting encouraging further discussion. As a result of regular discussion and sharing experiences, appropriate action items will be developed in this area as-needed.

No discussion.

Peer Support Services (Expand access to peer support services for SMVF.)

This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda. At this time, there is no line of effort to report on. No discussion.

Virtual Care Services (Increase access for SMVF population to virtual care services.)

This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.

Amy Cook—A group consisting of WRJ VA, Manchester VA, the NH Military Leadership Team and the Berlin VFW have been meeting to explore the possibility of opening and hosting a Virtual Living Room in the North Country. Talks are ongoing, challenges have been identified. For the purposes of this group, waiting to see what happens with this group will be valuable information that can be used to determine how this committee should proceed.

Military Cultural Competency Training (Increase number of general healthcare and behavioral healthcare providers trained in military culture. Increase confidence of Veterans in the military cultural competence of their providers. Expand access to military cultural competency training to other sectors outside healthcare.)

This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.

Sheena Bice—Star Behavioral Health Providers training program is holding several trainings in coming months. Visit website for list of training dates. All trainings are currently being held virtually.

Amy Cook—A draft was shared with the committee for review of a MCC Training Recommendations Sheet. The sheet was modeled after one created by the Virginia Dept of Military Affairs and customized for NH. This is in DRAFT form and feedback was being sought from all committee members in the past month. Some changes have been made and a 2nd version was provided to members for this meeting. No additional revisions were requested. Amy and Beth will work to finalize the document. When the document is finalized, all members will be asked to take it back to their organizations and gain commitment.

Amy & Beth participated in a call with PsychArmor this past month to learn about the services they can provide to states, teams and organizations to customize curriculums and collect data on completed training. At this time, the cost is prohibitive to New Hampshire using this service to meet our needs, but if there is ever an opportunity to secure funding, then this may be a good option to pursue.

Social Connectedness (Increase social connectedness of rural Veterans. Increase social connectedness of military-Veteran spouses & families.)

This was identified as an area in which the committee would like to focus efforts in the coming five-year plan period and, therefore, has been added to the standing agenda.

Veteran Wellness Series, Lakes Region—no report available

Together With Veterans (Chaplain (LTC) Veinotte & Beth Alves)—Steering Committee will be working to build a bigger team. They are planning a meeting in the near future to which they will invite community partners in the region. Progress is slow, but steady and on target with what is recommended by the national program.

Military Spouse & Family Supports (Amy Cook)—The Military Leadership Team continues to explore developing social supports and opportunities in NH for military/Veteran spouses and families. They will meet virtually with staff from the Veteran Spouse Network next week to learn about two programs that might be worth replicating in NH. After the call, they will begin to recruit interested professionals and organizations to join in the conversation. If anyone is interested in helping to explore these possibilities, please let Amy know.

Other Related Initiative Updates

Zero Suicide Academy (Beth Alves)—The contract for this was awarded, so planning will move forward. Initial stages of planning have commenced.

Discussion

Guest Speaker: Mike Mullen, Clear Path for Veterans New England

VFR has partners with Clear Path for Veterans New England to bring some new opportunities to Veterans in NH. The program started in New York and was, most recently, replicated in Massachusetts. They would like to expand into New Hampshire and are starting by partnering with VFR. Mike shared that they provide holistic care through direct programming and community collaboration. They provide direct and indirect programs and services that offer opportunities for Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve, Guard and their families. Direct programs include Dogs2Vets, Peer to Peer Mentoring, The Wingman Program, Warrior Reset /Wellness, and Working Warriors. Many of the programs utilize a peer-to-peer support model. NH Veterans are welcome to utilize the services opening in MA if they are able to commute to the location.

They are planning an October food giveaway. They are receiving a shipment of 1000 boxes every week through October (open to public, not just SMVF).

They will also be conducting a Needs Assessment for the city of Methuen, MA. Down the line, they could help orchestrate something similar in N.H. if anyone thinks it would be valuable for their city.

Announcements

National Guard (LTC Veinotte)—NHNG continues to be very busy. 120 mobilizations coming up, 90 coming home in next 6 weeks. Many are still working on COVID-related assignments. Additional ASIST workshop dates have been scheduled—you can find them online through ASIST website or contact Dale Garrow for more information.

Division of Community Based Military Programs (Amy Cook)—19 businesses will be recognized as NH Veteran-Friendly Businesses this year. A recognition event is in the process of being planned. A funding recommendation that will provide funds to work with SUD and healthcare providers to help them operationalize Asking the Question will be put forth to the Governor's Commission on Alcohol & Other Drugs this week.

UpReach (Kristen McGraw & Candace)—UpReach has been hosting SFRG events with 26-27 participants. They started to resume some retreats and are scheduled to partner with Camp Resilience for one. October and November retreats are being considered. For the Camp Resilience retreats, interested Veterans can sign up through the CR website. UpReach plans to host Equine Immersion Retreats (1-day) for families. They will also have a kids group for 8-17 year olds.

NAMI NH (Susan Stearns)—the 18th Annual NAMI Walks event is coming up and will be held during National Mental Health Awareness Week. Saturday is the National Day of Hope. Registration is free. There is a lot of information on FaceBook and that is where people can share stories as well.

Upcoming trainings include Gatekeeper Training with Ann Duckless.

NH State Troopers (Seth Gahr)—Seth attempted to provide an update, but his internet connection was not working.

Next Meeting

November 4, 2020

2-3:30pm; Webex virtual platform

Recorded By:

Amy Cook