



August 28, 2014 Minutes
North Carolina National Guard Headquarters

Present: SFC David Abernathy, Tim Aiken, Ernie Allis, Wesley Alston, J'Metria Anderson, Dr. Will Barnes, Archie Barrow, Johnny Borunda, Janet Bradbury, Mike Breahy, Brenda Brubaker, Joshua Cain, ISG Stephen Caldwell, Jennifer Chauncey, SGM Childers, Kelli Davis, Hank Debnam, Lisa Delgado, Doug Dickman, Paul Dillon, Clarence Ervin, Jim Frink, Chris Froeschner, LTC Raynor Garey, Bonnie Garris, Bob Goodale, James Gorham, Jennifer Gradnigo, Jack Halliburton, Matthew Hanson, Kathryn Hare, Judy Harmon, Angela Harper, James Hicks, Jim Hoffman, Robert Immormino, Dr. Greg Inman, Daniel Joy, Chris Keon, Dr. Warren Kinghorn, Kimberly Lindsey, GEN Bud Martin, MAJ Bob May, MAJ Michael McCann, Enrique McClymont, Anthony McLeod, Dr. W.A. Merritt, CAPT Loring Montague, Sean Moser, Tina Nussenbaum, COL Paul O'Toole, Ilario Pantano, Brenda Ploss, Jim Prosser, April Proust, Cheryl Rawls, Dale Robbins, Rob Sherwood, Ashley Simmons, LTC Christopher Simpson, COL Vernon Simpson, Lee Slade, Tony Sowards, Flo Stein, Annette Stevenson, Lon Swiney, Doug Taggart, Vince Tesoro, Trina Titus, Rebecca Torres, Lucas Vrbsky, Janice White, Kyle Winder, Doug Windley, LTC D Wittingham, Melvin Wolfe, and John Worman

Ms. Stein welcomed attendees and wished Mr. Pantano a happy birthday. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the start of the Vietnam War. She asked each attendee to introduce him/herself. GEN Wilson recognized all Vietnam Veterans who were present. He thanked the General Assembly for passing military-connected legislation, important to keeping military assets in our State. Ms. Stein introduced the topics and said that Mr. Debnam would provide an overview of what Veteran Points of Contact do for the local management entities/managed care organizations (LME/MCOs).

Dr. Kinghorn spoke on *Combat Trauma and Moral Injury*. This concept—moral injury—has taken on increasing prominence in a clinical context in recent years. Moral injury is the recognition that an individual suffers from PTSD from activities that they did or experienced or witnessed. In 1968, the American Psychiatric Association dropped “trauma” from the DSM, which was unfortunate for those returning from Vietnam. Finally, in 1980, the term, PTSD was coined in the DSM. For the past 35 years, clinicians have been trained to view PTSD as anxiety or fear response, and most of the time, this is right. Studies began being published, bringing up the issue of killing in war. Associated with killing in war were feelings of depression, PTSD, alcohol abuse, anger, and dysfunction in relationships. Litz and his colleagues (2009) found that morals play a role and defined moral injury as “perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations”. This led them to propose a new conception of moral injury and a new therapy similar to cognitive behavioral therapy. Mr. Pantano commented that this presentation was the most meaningful and most insightful presentation that he has attended for this group and thanked Dr. Kinghorn for presenting the topic so eloquently. An attendee commented that Benjamin Patton is a documentary filmmaker who has made a film and written a book on his family (he is the

grandson of GEN George Patton). GEN Wilson asked about how religious communities can play a role in veterans' reintegration into their communities. One possibility is to provide spaces where veterans can gather, speak, and experience.

Dr. Inman presented on bereavement services offered by Vet Centers. He noted that Vet Centers were first established in 1979 as an outreach effort for Vietnam Veterans, including peer counseling services. Their role has expanded since then to combat veterans of all eras experiencing grief and pain. In 2003, bereavement services for all military families (e.g., marriage and family counseling services and counseling services for military sexual trauma) were added to the types of services offered. The VA Secretary has authorized six Vet Centers across the State. The TAPS program is their largest referral source. Suicide tops the list as to why people request counseling services. Services are free and time unlimited. The National Bereavement number is 720/874-1031.

Mr. Windley stated that the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) was founded by Bonnie Carroll twenty years ago when her spouse died. The program has expanded to about 90 associates, the majority of which are survivors. Services include peer-based emotional support, a 24/7 hot line, community-based grief support, and case work assistance. "Survivors help survivors heal." Located in Arlington, VA, associates deploy to installations and communities across the country. They have MOAs with all branches and the VA so that when a service member/veteran dies, the family member receives information about TAPS and can sign a release form to be contacted by a TAPS associate.

Mr. Debnam gave a brief history of the public system for mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse services. Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, the agency that he works for, is the second largest LME/MCO. Each of the nine LME/MCOs has at least one Veteran Point of Contact, and VPOCs are located throughout the State. VPOCs are responsible for linking their resources and provider services to callers that are Veterans or military-connected family members. They work with local stakeholders, and Alliance is lucky to have two VA Medical Centers in its catchment area. VPOCs hold monthly meetings and trainings and will attend the September meeting. They have three goals: (1) to secure MOAs between federal, state and community agencies and organizations to engage stakeholders so that military members and their families receive the services and supports that they need, (2) to ensure that providers ask their consumers whether they have a military history, and (3) to provide military culture training to all providers.

Ms. Stein and Mr. Pantano thanked the four presenters and asked attendees to provide updates.

- Ms. Rawls thanked everyone for assisting her in filling the positions available at the VA. She distributed a flyer about town halls that will be scheduled in the State this year.
- Ms. Lindsey presented an employer awareness program in June. Since then, they have been successful in getting the State Society of Human Resource Management State Council to appoint a Military Liaison Coordinator at the state level and one at each of the 18 chapters in the State. The Governor has agreed to assist in the video messages. In terms of education sessions for strategic leaders, the Governor has agreed to provide a

keynote speech. To date, they have obtained the commitment of four companies—Duke University, SAS, Wells Fargo, and Pepsi.

- Mr. Pantano asked that nonprofits complete an info sign-up sheet to describe services that they offer for inclusion in the upcoming resource catalog. On Veterans Day, this catalog will be released on the new website; a Call Center will also be announced. In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, memorials were offered in five locations. Over 200 veterans participated in four locations (Jacksonville's event was cancelled due to bad weather). He noted that Jim Prosser, Director of Veterans Services for Mecklenburg County, is hosting a Vet Fest to thank veterans of all eras on Saturday, November 8 in collaboration with Charlotte Bridge Home. The event will include a Veterans Day parade, booths, and food trucks. Mr. Pantano encouraged all agencies and organizations to staff booths.
- Mr. McClymont, the Suicide Prevention Manager for the NC National Guard, noted that they will be sponsoring an annual Gratitude Walk on September 4. This free event will be part of Suicide Prevention Month.
- Mr. Debnam is on the planning committee for the *Boots to Suits HR Professionals and Hiring Managers Conference* at NC State University McKimmon Conference and Training Center on September 11 from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.
- The North Carolina Veteran's Business Association is hosting power networking sessions during the evening of September 16, followed by educational sessions and business matchmaking on September 17 at the Embassy Suites in Cary. More information can be found on their website www.ncvetbiz.org.
- Mr. Taggart announced the Fort Bragg Education Fair on November 18, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Fort Bragg Club.
- COL O'Toole represented the Widow Support Committee, which works for all veteran's survivors, not just widows. They provide assistance prior to a veteran's death, immediately after death, and during follow-on training. The COL would like this work known at the national level so everyone knows where to go. Mr. Pantano said that the GWG is the group that is tying everything together in NC.
- The Joint Veteran Crisis Team is a coalition of American Legion posts, VFW posts, and American Red Cross chapters across the State. They help both active duty and veteran groups on issues such as finances and suicide prevention.

The next meeting on September 25 will be in the Emergency Management Situation Room. Mr. Pantano asked attendees to provide outcome data related to the services that they provide—the types of services that have been provided and the number of veterans and family members served.