

GOVERNOR'S WORKING GROUP

ON VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES



MAKING NORTH CAROLINA THE STATE OF CHOICE FOR VETERANS

March 23, 2017 Minutes

Present: Ashley Alfonse, Terry Allebaugh, Rom Alphin, Laura Anders, Dale Badgett, Fred Baker, Rudy Baker, Randy Baker, Archie Barrow, Mark Bilosz, Michael Bishop, Karen Bozard, Jeremy Brogden, Lindy Brown, Jason Cain, Jennifer Chauncey, Maisha Collier, Jeremy Collins, Will Collins, Cajun Comeau, Christine Costit, Hank Debnam, Sara Dereberry, Paul Dillon, Russ Ditzel, Daniel Dore, Nick Drake, Lane Dyer, Joe Edger, Robert Elliott, Shelton Faircloth, Dr. Wei Li Fang, Rich Fay, Reginna Ford, Moses Gloria, Nicole French, Diana Graham, Susan Graham, Penny Greer-Link, Kelly Grivner-Kelly, Daniel Hackley, Secretary Larry Hall, Kathryn Hare, Judy Harmon, Angela Harper King, Lynn Hauka, Brad Helton, Troy Hershberger, Genea Hill, Jim Hoffman, Robert Hosford, Dr. Eric Howard, Andy Jackson, Gordon Jeans, Duggie Johnson, Teresa Johnson, Sandy Jolley, Terri Kane, Victoria Knott, Cristen Koshk, Dr. Bob Kurtz, Mary Jo Littlewood, Neely Mahoney, Jerome Malloy, Ron Mangum, Michael Marhelko, Ralph Markwood, Noel McCall, Janene McGee, Megan Miller, Michelle Miller, Brenda Monforti, Daniel Murray, Thomas Murry, Jeff Netznik, Ilario Pantano, Amanda Parkstone, Vincent Penn, Jim Prosser, Jean Reaves, Robert Reichman, Sandra Robinson, Walter Rodriguez, Jacob Shaheen, Austen Shearer, Craig Shore, Jeff Smith, Jeff Smith, Wayne Smith, Belivia Spaulding, Flo Stein, Judge Henry Stevens, Annette Stevenson, Lea Strickland, Judge Michael Surles, Pamela Thomas, Eric Truesdale, Kathleen Vollandt, Lucas Vrbsky, Dr. Joe Wescott, Heather Whillier, Steve Wilkins, Dwight Williams, Kelli Willoughby, Brandon Wilson, Robyn Winneberger, Tim Wipperman, Martin Woodard, Bob Wright, Yolonda Woodhouse, Holly Yanker, and Terri Zaczyk

Mr. Gloria assisted in the Introductions of audience member. Secretary Hall and the co-chairs then introduced themselves.

Ms. Woodhouse works for the NC Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). She provided a brief history, saying that Judge Robert Russell of Buffalo NY started the first Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) in January 2008. In NC, Harnett County started the first VTC in 2013. Mark Teachey is the coordinator. Eric Howard is the coordinator of the second NC VTC in Buncombe County. Craig Shore is the coordinator of the third VTC in Cumberland County. In October 2016, Forsythe County established the fourth court, with Ms. Jimmy Moore as its coordinator. Former Governor McCrory funded these early courts through the Governor's Crime Commission. In October 2016, Harnett County VTC was awarded a three-year \$1.4M grant from two federal agencies—SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services) and BJA (Bureau of Justice Administration, US Department of Justice). Ms. Woodhouse recommended that those interested in starting a VTC should contact Judge Marion Warren at the AOC. Interested counties should prepare a proposal, which demonstrates that the county has a sufficient number of Veterans to support a court over time. She suggested that they look at the resources provided on www.allrise.org, the website of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). She also suggested that they meet with their district court judge, the

superior court judge, probation, and treatment providers to gauge the level of interest in the community and to develop a memorandum of understanding between the key partners. Interested parties should consider attending the annual conference of the NADCP as it offers excellent training. She also suggested that they visit Judge Russell's court in Buffalo as well as the courts in the State. VTCs are run by an interdisciplinary team including the judge, coordinator, district attorney, defense attorney, clerk, probation officer, law enforcement, Veterans mentors, VJO (Veteran Justice Outreach specialist), and treatment agencies. Treatment providers are critical since they help participating Veterans with trauma, anger management, domestic violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and traumatic brain injuries. The goal is for program graduates to become productive citizens once more. The average population of the court is 30 participating Veterans. Ms.

<http://ndcrc.org/content/10-key-components-veterans-treatment-courts>):

1. Veteran Treatment Court integrates alcohol, drug treatment, and mental health services with justice system case processing,
2. Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting due process rights,
3. Eligible participants are identified early and promptly referred to Veteran Treatment Court,
4. Veteran Treatment Court provides access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and mental health and other related treatment and rehabilitation services (e.g., employment, housing, etc.).
5. Abstinence is monitored by random and frequent alcohol and other drug testing.
6. A coordinated strategy governs Veteran Treatment Court responses to participants' compliance,
7. Ongoing judicial interaction with each Veteran is essential,
8. Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness,
9. Continuing interdisciplinary training promotes effective Veteran Treatment Court planning, implementation, and operation,
10. Forging partnerships among Veteran Treatment Courts, Veteran Affairs, state agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances Veteran Treatment Court effectiveness.

Ms. Woodhouse noted that in addition to the NADCP website, other resources are Justice for Vets (<http://www.justiceforvets.org/>) and the Center for Court Innovation (<http://www.courtinnovation.org/>), which has an online webinar series.

Mr. Shore, the coordinator of the Cumberland County VTC, also mentioned how Judge Russell pioneered the VTC on his own. Initially, he fellow judges and the State considered censure but a New York Times editorial praised his innovative court. There are now over 300 VTCs in the US. What Judge Russell realized is that Veterans needed a holistic wraparound approach, where treatment is essential. It requires a partnership with the VA, treatment providers, and the community. The VTC holds the Veterans accountable for criminal activity that they were involved in. The Judge speaks on an individual level with the Veteran, and three

minutes with the Judge can make a huge difference. Praise from the judge is considered priceless. Some jurisdictions have been reticent to start a VTC, believing that Veterans do not deserve special dispensation. The court does administer to the unique needs of the Veterans. Programs are generally 12-24 months long, with the Veteran appearing before the judge at scheduled times so that progress can be reviewed. Veterans are mandated to appear for appointments, such as treatment, meeting with a probation officer, or meeting with a mentor. VTC is very structured. Currently, there are 4 VTCs in NC. An average of 9-30 Veterans are on each court's docket. Each VTC has a coordinator, but there are few funds that support these courts.

The Cumberland County VTC currently has eight Veterans and two spouses of Veterans. PTSD is an integral part of the paradigm that they work with even though there may be no overt signs of PTSD. As the number of deployments increases so does susceptibility to PTSD. These Veterans need treatment. Their VTC has been successful, with only an 8% recidivism rate. There are currently about 40,000 in state prisons. It costs about \$30,000 to maintain a single prisoner, which translates to \$1,200,000,000 per year. Ten percent are Veterans, which means \$120,000,000 for them. It only costs \$5,040 per Veteran in the VTC. It costs about \$100,000 to maintain a VTC per year. VTCs should be a line item in the legislative budget instead of VTCs trying to compete for grant money. The State needs to get fully behind it. Veterans need our help. This problem will not go away.

Ms. Miller presented on TASC—Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities. TASC started in North Carolina in 1978 and is one of 38 states that has the program. Since 2002, TASC has been in all 100 counties. The model includes screening and assessment; referral and placement; care planning, coordination, and management; and reporting progress to the justice system. Its primary functions are to assess for treatment and recovery and support needs; match clients with appropriate levels of care; develop and adjust care plans; refer clients to and ensure placement in community-based treatment and support services; integrate service needs and supervision requirements; and monitor client progress and report to the criminal justice system. TASC serves all Veterans, not just those participating in VTCs. It develops and maintains partnerships with diverse stakeholders. The state is divided into four regions, with offices in Asheville, Winston-Salem, Raleigh, and Wilmington.

Mr. Comeau commented that we should be a part of solution before it becomes a problem. The VTCs identify Veterans before they spiral down. Our Veterans deserve our help.

Judge Surles asked if the VTCs served active duty as well as Veterans. Mr. Shore said that active duty service members are usually seen by a military court. He also mentioned that he will refer Veterans to treatment in the community if they are not eligible for VA benefits. Recently, the VA Secretary announced that all Veterans will be eligible for behavioral health care but not medical care. Treatment is also available through the State public system.

Ms. Parkstone announced that the Southeastern Council on Military Education will be holding its next conference in October 2017. For more information, go to its website, <https://www.facebook.com/SoutheasternCouncilonMilitaryEd/>.

BioGen and Whole Vet will be co-sponsoring a hiring event for Veterans on April 20, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. This inaugural event has a capacity for 150. For more info, go to <http://wholevet.org/events/corporate-campus-visits/>.

April 15 is the deadline for submitting services and supports for Veterans to jeff.smith@milvets.nc.gov. Please submit the information in a high res format. Only not-for-profits may participate.

NC STRIVE (Student Transition Resource Initiative for Veteran's Education) will be hosting three regional conferences this spring. Dates and registration sites follow:

- April 5: Charlotte registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nc-strive-charlotte-tickets-31545764230>
- April 21: Clyde registration: <https://www.evensi.us/nc-strive-clyde-haywood-community-college/198867409>
- May 11: Raleigh registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nc-strive-raleigh-tickets-31417604902>

Ms. Vollandt said that her organization, Auroros, will be mentoring Veterans who want to start their own business.

On June 19, the Cohen Foundation is conducting a free clinic regardless of discharge status. The Vet Centers see combat Veterans and Active Duty service members.

On May 20, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, Veterans Appreciation Day will be held at the Carolina Field of Honor, Triad Park in Kernersville. The day will feature music, food trucks, and fun activities for families. Read more at <http://www.healourheroes.org/event/veterans-appreciation-day-2017/>.

NC Serves RDU will be conducting a focus group on April 20 from noon to 3:00 pm at the Veteran-owned brewery in Fuquay-Varina.

On April 22, Congressman Price is hosting an event for Veterans at the Salvation Army building in Durham. Participants are asked to pre-register.

VBA's next action center will be on March 30-April 1 in Wilmington.

On April 25, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, Goodwill will host a military culture training in Winston-Salem.

A beauty pageant for Women Veterans ages 50 and over will be held on November 4.

The NC Museum of History has a display on the Vietnam experience this weekend on Friday, 9-5 and on Saturday and Sunday, 12-5. Andy Jackson is on the Board for the NC National Guard Museum.

VA Valor Games will occur in Chapel Hill and Durham in May. For more information, go to <http://www.bridge2sports.org/valor-games-southeast/>.

The fifth annual WRAL Freedom Balloon Fest will take place on May 26-29 in the Town of Fuqua-Varina. Read more at <http://www.freedomballoonfest.com/>.

Joe Edger, VHA, confirmed that the VA will be providing mental health crisis services for other than honorable (OTH) discharges.

Congressman Rouzer will be sponsoring a claims filing clinic on March 30-April 1 at American Legion Post 10.

Mr. Bilosz attended a court session of the Forsythe VTC. He said it was a moving experience and recommended that everyone attend one of these courts.

The NC Museum of History is hosting a World War I commemorative exhibit from April 8, 2017 to January 6, 2019. It will start with a WWI commemoration at the Capitol on April 8 at 10:00 am, with an 11:00 ribbon cutting ceremony. The new exhibit will open in the afternoon. Secretary Hall and Governor Cooper will be attending. Read more at <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/exhibits/NC-World-War-One>.

The next GWG meeting will be on Thursday, April 27, and will highlight entrepreneurship.