

# VHMACST Meeting Minutes (06/17/20)

## I. Call to Order

Chair David LaPointe called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council- South Texas, at 1100 on 17 June 2020, via Zoom video/tele conference.

**Roll Call** - Present or Excused: Carlos Acosta, David La Pointe, Estela Cantu- LaPointe, Gingerlei Seda, Karah Smith, Keshia Delasbour, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Lisa Firmin, Michael Carrion, Natasha Walden, Wil Seda, Betsy Davis, Richard Martinez. Not Present: Andrea Strong, Becky Smith, Christina Lynch, Christopher Vidaurre, Jill Palmer, Jose Gonzales, Michael O'Connell, Scott Rios.

## II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

A motion was made by the Chair to accepted as the May 2020 minutes as published and posted, the motion was seconded by Wil Seda and the motion carried.

## III. Old Business

**VHMACST— Veteran Resilience and Recovery Collaborative** Dr. Davis noted that her comments would dove-tail with other items that we are going to talk about today. That one of the things the VRRCC talked about at their meeting was organizing mental health/first aid training. And, that we were experiencing an increase in mental health concerns including all the racial trauma and pandemic issues in the community right now. She wanted to ensure that Veterans know they will be supported. She also stated that she hopes we will be discussing the mental health/first aid training later in the meeting.

Larissa Martinez then responded (representing Circle of Arms and her being the Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor) that previously there had been the delays and discussions about possibly having to cancel training because of all the Virus impact and the requirement for her to conduct "in-person" instruction at that time. She stated that they have switched to "virtual" training and she is now able to conduct training on Zoom and other platforms. In addition, she has now been certified to do "youth" training as well. She had a lot of new options available to her and we will set up a meeting with her to discuss and publicize those to the council shortly. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST— Women Vet Sub-committee** Col Firmin expressed her frustration and disappointment with a typical the bureaucratic response from DC. She continues to move forward with her initiatives but says we are basically we are right back where we started from. She reviewed the letter she received. She is setting up a new meeting to stop "chasing out tails". Also reviewed the pilot program for child-care and the Women's Clinic program as well. She and Dr. Davis have plans to move forward. She also discussed funding and data collection to move ahead. She included a discussion about collecting data from our sources to pull together from our council members and our other sources. Members, Carlos and others added a variety of ideas to assist. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST – Outreach Sub-committee** Council Member Wil Seda stated he has been unable to do much with the current virus situation. He will get with Mike and get back with the Chair this week on future actions he and his committee will be taking. **(OPEN)**

**Sub-Committee Listing** – The Secretary will complete a sub-committee, to include the website and Facebook committees and distribute when completed.

#### **IV. New Business**

**Chair** - Reviewed the Box Lunch Program initiated by Larissa and thanked all for the quick response in assistance in getting them out to the appropriate people. We appreciate the efforts in supporting one another so rapidly.

**Larissa** then spoke about the distribution of the 175 lunches and thanked everyone for their support. She then went on to further clarify the Mental Health First Aid Training. She then discussed the missing soldier on Fort Hood. She has been missing for 50 days and was last seen on base, she was going to report a supervisor for sexual harassment and now she's missing. She and her organization have been trying to get the news out. She is having a discussion next week for young adults in the community expecting to join the military it is called "Predators in Boots". Her organization is also running a program called "Circle of Support." They are doing mental health -ins for anyone who wants to be involved. She stated that she would like the council to consider us getting involved with mental health checks. They are doing these checks every Wednesday. **(OPEN)**

**Chair** – the discussed an article that appeared in the DAV magazine – "PTSD Breakthrough" highlighting alternative medication and intense counseling some reporting extraordinary "success" using MDMA and asked if anyone was familiar with the program. He said he would fax a copy of the article to Dr. Davis for review and feedback. Dr. Davis stated that she is not endorsing the program.

**VHMACST Budget** – Budget was reviewed, and a copy will be included as an attachment to these minutes.

**Website/Facebook page recommendations** – A member had sent an email with several recommendation to improve these programs, most were excellent contributions and were/are being implemented. However, when I reviewed the email there were a couple items that that Keven (Chair of committee) and I as a member of the committee did not want to change. The member took offense to my telling Kevin to hold up on the changes until our committee had an opportunity to discuss them further. An inappropriate comment was made about "because I'm personally funding the programs and have a "conflict of interest" and I should not be making these decisions. Please let me make it clear, Kevin controls these two committees. After he has discussions with me, he decides what content/changes/edits actually get posted. Even when I want to post things as the Chair on these platforms, I make my recommendations and he maintains these platforms as he sees fit.

**VHMACST 2020 Elections** – The election situation was debated extensively. After much discussion, Council Member – Kevin Crozier motioned to suspend the current election process until September and align us with the fiscal year as written in or by-laws. Robin Soto seconded the motion. The motion was voted on and passed by the council. We will take nominations at the next council meeting, with Q & A session to follow and conduct the vote at that time.

**Peer Support Session** was offered by Richard Martinez. We will coordinate with him to get him on the agenda for an upcoming meeting.

**V. Next Meeting** – 15 Jul 2020, 1100, Zoom Phone-in Video Conference (invitations will be sent).

**VI. Adjournment** – A motion was made by Kevin Crozier to adjourn the meeting. Council member Wil Seda seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 1220.

#### **VII. Minutes**

Minutes will be approved by Chair, Dr. David La Pointe.

**Veteran's Crisis Line.** 24/7 access; Contact 1-800-273-8255 option 1.