

VHMAC-ST Meeting Minutes (15 July 2020)

I. Call to Order

Council Chair David LaPointe called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council- South Texas, at 1103 on 15 July 2020, via Zoom video/tele- conference.

Roll Call - Present or Excused: Carlos Acosta, Christina Lynch, Christopher Vidaurre, David La Pointe, Estela Cantu-LaPointe, Gingerlei Seda, Karah Smith, Kesha Delasbour, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Lisa Firmin, Michael Carrion, Natasha Walden, Wil Seda, Betsy Davis, Richard Martinez.

Not Present: Andrea Strong, Jill Palmer, Jose Gonzales, Michael O'Connell, Robin Soto, Scott Rios, Austin Lawler.

II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

Council roll was called by Council Secretary, Kesha Delasbour.

Council Chair David LaPointe motioned to accept previous meeting minutes. Council member Kevin Crozier seconded.

III. Old Business

VHMACST— Proposed Removal of Secretary by Council Chair. Council Chair, Council Secretary, Council members, and VA Rep. Dr. Davis addressed all Council members. Chair instructed Council members to submit an electronic vote to Council member Kevin Crozier via Jot Form. Meeting recessed for approximately five minutes before resuming normal Council meeting agenda. At the conclusion of the meeting, Council member Kevin Crozier reported voting results that affirmed no removal of the Council Secretary by majority voting. **(CLOSED)**

VHMACST— Veteran Resilience and Recovery Operation/ Collaborative. VA Rep Dr. Davis discussed efforts to develop MST Trauma specific services, resources for couples, support group care, and Mental Health First Aid training and funding (currently available for 20 participants). Council member Karah Smith discussed suicide training via Wounded Warrior Project. Further info on suicide training, may be obtained by contacting Karah: kwsmith@woundedwarriorproject.org **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Women Vet Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Chair Lisa Firmin was excused from attending the meeting, thereby being unavailable to provide a Sub-Committee update. An update was pending. Sub-Committee Chair have previously been in communication with VA Chief officer of the Center for Women Veterans (CWV) concerning institution of Women's Clinics and childcare services within VA hospitals/ Vet Centers. Previous response from CWV/ Hayes was unfavorable— direction offered was towards Telehealth options, optional services for eligible veterans, and the responsibility of individual VA hospitals to implement healthcare models appropriate for its site. Last update determined there is no institutional stance on the outlined proposals for the VA healthcare system. On-going tasks for Sub-Committee: Obtain model of service for women veterans; Gather statistics on local women veterans via STVHCS HR, VA satisfaction surveys, Bexar County veterans, women veterans' group on social media, Google Docs surveys, etc. Previous recommendation by VA Rep. Dr. Davis was to seek advocacy via STVHCS Women Veterans Program Manager Barbara Hector. Sub-Committee members

have been asked to forward availability dates to Sub-Committee Chair via email: lisa.firmin@utsa.edu.
(OPEN)

VHMACST— Outreach Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Chair Wil Seda was excused from attending the meeting, thereby being unavailable to provide a Sub-Committee update. The Sub-Committee’s Check-In Program, and the VA’s Specially Adapted Housing (SAH)/ Special Home Adaptation (SHA) grants were reviewed. All in-person outreach efforts, with the exception of contact by phone, email, or electronically are temporarily suspended or limited until further notice due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. Recommendations for outreach efforts have included workshop videoconferences via Zoom app, use of Webex, Coffee with vets on-campus or virtually, use of Facebook page, and Eventbrite website for promotion and/or advertising. All council members are advised to submit information regarding outreach opportunities during monthly council meetings, or via email to Council Chair David LaPointe. For more info on the VA’s SAH and SHA grants: <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/> (OPEN)

Mental Health First Aid Training. Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, and council member, Larissa Martinez (with Circle of Arms organization) discussed a current event involving a female soldier that was missing and later determined to be deceased by homicide. Larissa also shared information detailing Circle of Arm’s services related to MST, education and awareness initiatives, and Predators in Boots. Circle of Arms will be hosting a discussion table on Jul 25, 2020. For more info, contact Larissa at the email listed below. Council member Christopher Vidaurre informed Council members that Endeavors is offering Sexual Awareness Training. Council members are reminded that Circle of Arms is offering a Mental Health First Aid virtual training class (1/2 self-pace, 1/2 via Zoom) for all Council members. The purpose of the training is to help “identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders”; Mental health first aid training includes instruction for adults and youth. Training is recommended for all veteran’s service organizations and individuals. Other training options include training during a council meeting or off-site at a later designated time. Cost: \$40 for course material; 8-hr. course; Current pricing have been reduced to \$25. For more info, please contact a council officer or council member Larissa Martinez. Contact email: info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org; Site: www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org. A partnership with the Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) Veterans Resilience & Recovery Collaborative was previously discussed for possible for sponsorship opportunity. (OPEN)

VHMACST—General Election. Council Chair informed Council members that general election discussion and voting will take place next Council meeting. October 1, 2020, new Council Officers will be in place. Nominations may be submitted at any time. All current Council Officers verbally affirmed they are seeking re-election. (OPEN)

VHMACST— Sub-Committees. Council Secretary informed Council members that a copy of Sub-Committee designations was distributed via email and advised Council members to request a copy from the Council Secretary if necessary. (OPEN)

IV. New Business

Peer Support Group Training. VA Rep. Dr. Davis recommended that this brief be postponed. VA Peer Support Rep. Richard Martinez briefly discussed breaking of stigmas, the importance of early recovery,

asserted that Council members are currently living in recovery and agreed to conduct a full brief next Council meeting. Council member Larissa was told that she will be put into contact with VA Peer Support Rep. Kizzy. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Polling Options. Council Chair informed Council members of polling options for next Council meeting. Per Council Chair, voting will be anonymous. Options proposed included use of JotForm (via Council member Kevin Crozier) and use of SurveyMonkey (which was recommended by VA Rep. Dr. Davis).

VHMACST— Member Listing. Council Chair reviewed Council member listing, and informed Council members that members' personal data was updated and that an inactive Council member, Robin, was active. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Upcoming Training. Council members were notified that Suicide Prevention Training would be conducted on July 22, 2020 via webinar. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST—Budget Meeting. Council Chair informed Council members that a virtual meeting open to all Council members is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 2020. Council members are advised to email Council Chair to be forwarded the meeting link for participation. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Website. Council Chair informed Council members that Council website had 3,000 hits. Sub-Committee Chair Kevin stated that VA info was updated on the website. **(OPEN)**

Other— PTSD Foundation. Council Secretary was asked by Council Chair to inform Council members that David Dean, a PTSD Foundation Rep., contacted Council Secretary about providing input for Council website. **(OPEN)**

Other— Circle of Arms Food Distribution. Council member Larissa informed Council members that Circle of Arms is utilizing volunteers for food delivery services and donations are tax-deductible. The Stand Up For Change Challenge was presented. For more info, contact Larissa: circleofarms19@gmail.com. **(OPEN)**

V. Next Meeting

19 Aug 2020 – 1100, notifications to be emailed.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made by council member Kevin Crozier to adjourn the meeting. Council member Larissa Martinez seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1246.

VII. Minutes approved by chair, Dr. David A. La Pointe