

VHMAC-ST Meeting Minutes (19 August 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 1100 on 19 August 2020, via Zoom video/tele- conference.

Roll Call— Present or Excused: Andrea Strong, 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, Robin Soto, Scott Rios, Wil Seda, Betsy Davis.

Not Present: Jill Palmer, Jose Gonzales, Michael O'Connell, Austin Lawler, Richard Martinez.

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 at 1116. Council member Kevin Crozier seconded.

III. Old Business

VHMACST— Elections. Nominations were closed, and Council Chair announced that there was only one candidate for election into each Council officer position: Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary. The current Chair and Co-Chair will remain in office for another term. Council member Karah Smith will assume duties as Council Secretary. New Officer tenure will commence 1 October 2020. **(CLOSED)**

VHMACST— Veteran Resilience and Recovery Operation/ Collaborative. VA Rep Dr. Davis announced that a Community Veterans Engagement Board (CVEB) meeting was held, and informed the Council that there is an overlap of information and resources provided by involved organizations. Updated points-of-contact for the Council was requested. CVEB will be conducting a VetTalk in December; Submit speaker recommendations (preferably veterans) to VA Rep Dr. Davis; Target audience- civilians; Possible location for VetTalk- the Ecumenical Center; VetTalk will be broadcast via Facebook Live and YouTube platforms. Dr. Davis notified Council of current VA turnovers affecting Council Budget submission estimated at \$3,500. Council members that volunteered for VA Feedback group were asked to contact Dr. Davis; Council member Larissa was added to the group. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Women Vet Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Chair Lisa Firmin announced that her involvement with the Council will be reduced; Requested a replacement as Sub-Committee Chair due to personal reasons. Sub-Committee Chair participated in League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) virtual panel about sexual harassment/assault in the military, and women veterans issues on 14 August 2020; Issues presented were need for improvement of VA mental and health care services for women, and establishment of an independent reporting and investigative agency for women in the active duty armed forces. Input for consideration of other issues should be submitted to Sub-Committee Chair NLT 1 September via email: lisa.firmin@utsa.edu. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Outreach Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee Chair Wil Seda informed Council that he have been in contact with one veteran; a follow-on email will be sent to Council members detailing the

veteran's need(s). Sub-Committee members Wil, David, and Michael held a Committee meeting last week. Outreach efforts in-person (i.e. gatherings/events) are not currently active. Sub-Committee ideas detailed were: Vehicle placement of "Thank You"/Council info cards; Council Chair informed Council that card designs were complete and will be sent out to Council members at a later time; VA Rep Dr. Davis informed Council that reproduction of Council materials can be fulfilled via VA services. Council Chair stated he briefed VA mental health staff on Council Check-In Program. Council Chair informed Council of notification that one Council member contracted COVID-19, and is in recovery. **(OPEN)**

Mental Health First Aid Training. Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, and council member, Larissa Martinez (with Circle of Arms organization) informed Council that virtual training is currently postponed due to system glitches with the virtual program utilized for training. A one day, eight-hour virtual training date was proposed for Council member training; Tentative date: 18 September 2020, 0800-1700 (lunch hour and breaks provided); Council members are asked to contact Council member Larissa NLT next week to secure training spot and/or provide input for an alternate training date. Council member Larissa recommended training for Council members in use of computer/virtual/online programs and tools. Note: Mental health first aid training includes instruction for adults and youth. Training is recommended for all veterans service organizations and individuals. 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)**

IV. New Business

VHMACST—Budget Submission. Council Chair informed Council members that a copy was forwarded to the Council via email, outlining the proposed FY2021 Council Budget for \$3,745. Council was informed that Budget restrictions were in place for food and drinks. Items included with Budget proposal were as follows: Mental Health training, development of Website, Meeting sites, and Council give-a-ways. Council Chair informed Council that he is currently seeking monetary donations on behalf of the Council, and stated himself and Co-Chair have discussed establishing a Fundraising Committee Treasurer as a fourth Council Officer. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Resource Guide. Council Chair informed Council that a consolidated/alphabetized list of Council resources, with a brief description of each resource/organization/program, will be created. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Upcoming Training. Council members were notified that the Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors conduct monthly meetings on veteran's resources and suicide prevention every 1st Friday of the month; A Virtual Financial Literacy Training is scheduled for 25 August 2020 (1000-1200); Contact Council member Christopher Vidaurre for more info. Council Chair informed Council that Operation Comfort provides services, programs, and classes for disabled military members and veterans; For more info, visit <https://operationcomfort.org>. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Events. Council Chair notified Council about a Veteran's Day Classic Golf Charity event. For more info, contact Council Chair David LaPointe. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. Council member Lisa Firmin informed Council that UTSA is hosting a public event for Hispanic Heritage Month (September) that will include a panel for Hispanic veterans. She also updated Council of a research-based UTSA collaborative, Operation Buddy Check, between multiple UTSA program offices; The collaborative focuses on isolation issues within the veteran community, serves 1600 student veterans, provides training in customer call service, and offers FAQ pamphlets. An inquiry by Council member Lisa Firmin was made to VA Rep Dr. Davis regarding current VA impact on isolation problems with veterans; Response from VA Rep centered on the current high demand for mental health services, the importance of normalization of stress, and use of non-professional services/resources/programs such as: Circle of Arms, community support, Wounded Warrior Program, etc. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. VA Rep Dr. Davis reminded Council of mental health service access via My HealtheVet, VA Telecare use for primary care consultations and referral authorization(s). Input for VA services should be submitted to VA Rep Dr. Davis. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. Council member Kevin Crozier informed Council of personal meetings (i.e. dining and shooting range outings) with veterans for social engagement. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. Council Chair stated information on local resources, events (such as game nights) have been sent via email to Council members. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. Council member Karah Smith proposed Council involvement with a Mayor's Challenge for suicide prevention. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST— Other. Council member Larissa informed Council members of a "22 A Day Challenge" for suicide awareness, and a program called "Circle Within Ranks" that educate and provide mentoring to high school girls participating in their school's ROTC program; Focus topics include: military culture, and military sexual trauma; The program is currently operational in one local school district; School district expansion is tentative. Circle of Arms will be organizing a local memorial event for deceased service member Vanessa Guillen, who was the victim of military sexual harassment and homicide. For more info on the aforementioned challenge, program, or event contact Council member Larissa: circleofarms19@gmail.com. **(OPEN)**

V. Next Meeting

16 Sep 2020; 1100; Phone-In/ Video Teleconference (due to COVID-19 and tentative city-wide ordinance restrictions for the gathering of personnel).

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made by Council member Kevin Crozier to adjourn the meeting. Council member Wil Seda seconded. Meeting adjourned at 1159.

VII. End of Minutes

Minutes submitted by Council Secretary, Kesha Delasbour.

Minutes will be reviewed by Council Chair.

Appendix

VHMACST— Conference line. Info for council meetings: The Council's conference line has been temporarily replaced by Zoom videoconference link or call-in number to be disseminated via email.

VHMACST— Meetings. Council meetings will be conducted on Wednesdays at 1100, the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

VHMACST—Upcoming Events. All in-person events are canceled or suspended until further notice due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. Virtual events will be forwarded to Council members via email.

VHMACST— South Texas Mental Health. Council members are asked to provide feedback and to report issues or concerns with obtaining quality mental health care via VA mental health services in order to improve the quality of VA mental health services provided. Issues highlighted include: VA customer service, procedural triggers within VA healthcare for veterans with MST/history of suicidal attempts and ideations. Feedback may be submitted to council officers for forwarding to council VA rep, Dr. Davis.

VHMACST— Sub-Committees. Establishment of committees within the council have been determined for council training, women's needs, website, and education and outreach. No current Sub-Committees have been set forth for communications and fundraising. All council members, with the exception of council officers are to submit feedback and individual committee designations to council Chair if assignment to a sub-committee have not been confirmed. Council Chair have advised that all Council members be assigned to an internal Sub-Committee position.

VHMACST—Website. Development is a work-in-progress. Please review and provide input for website content. Resource information for PTSD, veterans crisis, suicide, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is accessible on the site. A tab for women veterans related resources will be added. Site can be accessed at <https://veteranshealthymindsadvisorycouncilsouthtexas.com>.

VHMACST—Facebook Page. Council Facebook page may be accessed at the following: <https://www.facebook.com/Veterans-Healthy-Minds-Advisory-Council-South-Texas-108095933936524>

VHMACST—Twitter. Council profile may be accessed at the following handle: @VetMinds.

VHMACST— Business Cards. Cards are available for Council members. Contact Council Chair David LaPointe to obtain cards as necessary.

VHMACST— Contact Card Log. Council Chair David La Pointe maintains a log of all contacts made with servicemembers, veterans, and family members of veterans for assistance. An updated copy of the log may be obtained electronically by request. For record-keeping, council members are advised to notify Council Chair of contact made by Council members on behalf of the Council for support.

VMHACST— VA Outreach. VA Rep Dr. Betsy Davis will communicate with and encourage VA Mental Health staff to inform veterans about the VHMACST. Council member Kevin Crozier will present VHMACST agenda during Veteran Fair committee meetings as a rep. for D.A.V.

VHMACST— Functions, Duties, and Responsibilities. The mission of the Council is to establish a true partnership between the veterans and their families, VA mental health professionals, community partners, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in order to improve the quality of VA mental health services, to improve veteran and family understanding of those services, and to promote best use of those services. The Council is required to have 50% of Council members present at meetings in order to be operational. Contact Council Chair David LaPointe for more information.

VHMACST—Budget. There is currently no VA approved funding for food or beverage consumption. Please submit input for budget considerations to Council Chair. Restrictions exist for vendor selections. Final projected budget proposals will be submitted to VA rep, Dr. Davis.

Other— Guest Speakers. Dr. Betsy Davis will arrange for VA reps to present to the council on the following topics: MST for men, veteran’s court, Veteran’s Justice Outreach program (POC: Justin Childers), and VA programs for homeless veterans. **Veteran’s Crisis Line.** 24/7 access; Contact 1-800-273-8255 option 1.

Urgent Care. Where and When You Need It. Individually review information about the Mission Act, which expands same-day services in primary care and mental health, as well as expands Telehealth to veterans in their homes.

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound. For veterans receiving a VA pension that also require assistance with performing daily activities, are bed-ridden due to an illness, reside in a nursing home due to mental or physical disability, have vision impairment, or are housebound due to a permanent disability. Required forms— VA Form 21-2680; VA Form 21-0779). For more info, contact your Primary Care Physician (PCP), the local Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) at Frank Tejada VA Outpatient Clinic (FTOC), or the local Disabled American Veterans (DAV) office; FTOC Contact line: (210) 699-5040; DAV Contact Line: (210) 699-5064. Benefit eligibility, application process, form, and a local Pension Management Center (PMC) can be viewed online at the following site: <https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>; local DAV office can be viewed online at the following site: <https://www.dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office/>.

VA Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Assistance Program. Trend increase during COVID-19. VA Coordinator Glorive Cabino. The purpose of the program is to provide “comprehensive person-centered, recovery oriented assistance” to veterans, family members, caregivers, and VA hospital employees that “use or experience” IPV. Program provides screening, assessment, and resources. For more info, contact: Ms. Cabino, (210) 993-3575; Women’s Health, (855-VA-WOMEN), womenshealth.va.gov; Mental Health, (800) 273-8255, mentalhealth.va.gov; National Center for PTSD, (802) 296-6300, ptsd.va.gov. Call 911 for all emergency situations requiring immediate assistance.

My Telehealth. “Meet with VA providers virtually and send important health data from the comfort of your home, using your computer or mobile device”; Remote patient monitoring; Video appointments/ Talk to your doctor via VA Video Connect. Contact your primary care provider for more info. Site: www.telehealth.va.gov.

My HealthVet. Central VA hospital scheduling resource for expedited appointment processing and healthcare management. Accessible to any veteran enrolled in the STVHCS. Info routing is as follows: VA Rep Dr. Davis, Mike Collins, Rick Martinez, PCP. Site: www.myhealth.va.gov; Contact 1-877-327-0022; M-F; 0700-1900 (CT).

South Texas Veterans Health Care System. Mental Health & Recovery Services: “We believe that recovery from mental health and substance use problems is possible and that treatment can be an important part of this process for many Veterans.” Attachment previously provided to council members.

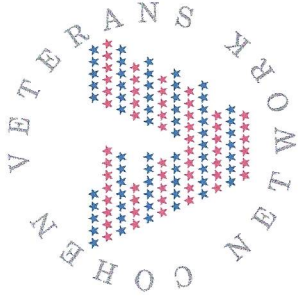
Vet Centers. Readjustment issues, counseling services, community outreach & education, individual and group counseling, marital, family & relationship counseling, bereavement counseling, anger management, spouse/significant other support groups, employment guidance & benefits referral, military sexual trauma and more! Attachment previously provided to council members. Contact nearest location for more info: San Antonio Northeast Vet Center, 9504 I-35 Frontage Rd. #214, contact number: (210) 650-0422; San Antonio Northwest Vet Center, 9910 W. Loop 1604 N #126, contact number: (210) 688-0606.

United Heroes League. “Provides equipment, camps, pro sports tickets, financial assistance and special experiences for current service members and honorably discharged veterans who have been deployed to a combat zone and their children under 18 years old. All military branches are included and may apply.”

Homeless/At-risk of Becoming Homeless Veteran’s Help. National Call Center— 24/7 access to counseling and information on available health care programs; Contact: 877-424-3838.

NRD.gov—National Resource Directory. An online resource “that connects wounded warriors, service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers to programs and services that support them” and “provides access to services and resources at the national, state and local levels to support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration” for the outlined population.

Veteran’s Discounts. Please submit information for organizations that provide discounts for services to veterans to council Chair, David LaPointe. A compilation listing will be developed and managed by the council.



The Steven A. Cohen
Military Family Clinic
at Endeavors, San Antonio

COHEN CLINIC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS MONTHLY MEETING

**Friday, September 4
8:30-10:30am (CT)**

Join us the first Friday of each month for a chance to connect virtually with other Texas agencies and briefly share how your agency provides resources to serve those in need. This networking opportunity will allow you to stay up to date with a variety of military and non-military agencies.

Promotional materials are welcome and can be shared virtually during the meeting.

**REGISTER BY VISITING:
bit.ly/sa-cx4m**

Questions? Contact Chris Vidaurre at cvidaurre@endeavors.org or 210-709-7363.




SAN ANTONIO RAMPAGE SLED HOCKEY CAMP

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Veterans Health Administration
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
Recreation Therapy Service

VA 

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No experience needed.
Lunch provided. Space is limited.
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
email: chris@operationcomfort.org
call : 210-913-8869 or 210-826-0500

If you have any questions please contact chris@operationcomfort.org and to register email felicia@operationcomfor.org





Grateful Americans Charity

Veteran's Day Classic

Monday, November 9, 2020

Fair Oaks Ranch Golf
& Country Club

In the Beautiful Suburbs of San Antonio
Registration 8:00 am

**Help Save
the Life
of a Local
Veteran**

Sign Up Today!

Benefiting PTSD Foundation of America,
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