Council Chair Dr. David La Pointe called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans’ Healthy Minds Advisory Council-South Texas, at 11:03 on 15 September 2021, via Zoom video/tele-conference.

Council roll was called by Chair.

**Roll Call** – Present or Excused: Becki Williams, Carlos Acosta, David La Pointe, Edsel Thomas, Gingerlei Seda, Karah Smith, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Leah Whitmire, Lisa Firmin, Michael Carrion, Monica Garcia, Natasha Walden and troy McGrath.

Dr. Betsy Davis, VHMAC-ST/VA Liaison

Not Present: Christopher Vidaurre, Jose Gonzales, Robin Soto

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

Council Chair Dr. La Pointe motioned to accept previous (August) meeting minutes as published by Secretary. Motion seconded by Kevin. No one opposed motion. Minutes are approved.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** The Chair introduced new members that have joined the council. Troy McGrath – Veteran, Becki Williams – Care Giver and Monica Garcia – Community Partner (Vertava Health).

**GUEST SPEAKERS:** Speakers were offered and accepted option to speak now instead of waiting for New Business items.

**. Ms. Susan Parrish**

**Lead Care Specialist for Veteran Directed Care Services**

**Alamo Area Council of Governments – AACOG**

**. Ms. Angie Bukowski**

**VD-HCBS Veteran Care Specialist**

**Alamo Area Council of Governments – AACOG**

Susan introduced herself and Ms. Bukowski. She provided and overview and brief history of the Veteran Directed Care Program. The program has grown substantially and is expected to increase in size and utilization. Angie introduced herself and presented a PowerPoint Presentation of AACOG’s role in the Veterans Directed Care Program. This is a VA program funded and manned by the VA. AACOG does the case management portion of the program. The PowerPoint slides were reviewed and were/will be resent to council members. Our plan is to pull this portion of the Zoom meeting recording and publish it on our website to get all the details that were provided by Ms. Parrish and Ms. Bukowski. Start with your PCM! This presentation has generated the longest discussion of our guest speakers to date so there is a lot of information to share. We will attach brochures, contact information, and links to this presentation. **(CLOSED)**

**III. Old Business**

**VHMACST – Veteran Resilience and Recovery (Dr. Davis)** – Did not meet this month, looking at switching to bi-monthly meetings. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST – VA Community MH & Wellness Summit (Dr. Davis)-** Dr. Davis discussed the upcoming VA MH summit that will focus on women veterans. The summit is called EmpowHER and will be taking place September 24, 0830 - 1230. The flyer for the event was shared and will be attached. Dr. Davis thanked everyone for their help and gave a quick overview of the breakout sessions and activities planned. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST – National Veterans MH Council (Dr. Davis)** They had a great session on ethics this past month the link had already been shared but it was posted in the chat section and will be attached as well. The Ethics presentation was presented as a “guideline” for Councils to utilize. Great information and Dr. Davis recommends we look at this for inclusion in our council. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST- VA Mental Health Council (Dr. Davis)-**no updates **(OPEN)**

**MY LIFE, MY STORY –** Dr. Davis reviewed the “My Life, My Story” Program and brochure and it was shared in the chat. The information was previously published to council members via email. All items will be attached to minutes. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST – Women Veteran Sub-Committee** (Col Lisa Firmin) briefed on the American GI Forum Standdown and asked if the council could have an Outreach table at the event. They are also going to have a private room for females. The event is 5 November. Lisa will provide more information that will be sent out to all council members. She has received a request from The Nursing Service in Washington DA to speak with them on topics of her choice. She plans to discuss many of the item raised here in our council meetings. She asked if you have any ideas/items that you want her to discuss to pass that information on to her. Remember these are items to be discussed on a National Level. She discussed her attendance in DC at the Women’s Memorial. Shae said that the oldest person there was in her 90’s and the youngest was still serving! She said it was an amazing experience. She has shared some of her writings and will do the same with us. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST – Outreach Sub-Committee Wil/Mike - (Dave)** The “check-in” **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST - Budget (Dr. Davis/La Pointe)** – Dr. Davis stated that there was no new update but knows it was recently submitted in preparation for the fiscal year end. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST Resource Guide (Dr. La Pointe)** – will be one of the first topics we tackle once we are able to “meet” again. We’ve been provided a lot of information we just need to determine the best presentation method to publish. **(OPEN)**

**IV. New Business**

**DV Vehicle Plates and Blue Handicapped placards -** Dr. La Pointe informed the council that Texas has changed the law for Texas license plates and the blue handicapped placard. The information had already been sent to members and will be emailed and attached to minutes. **(CLOSED)**

**Employment Opportunities** – Because of work by the council assisting members find employment, we now have a source that is providing daily update on employment opportunities for our Vets, significant others, family members, etc. If you need assistance, please let us know. Also be aware of [www.hiringourheroes.org](http://www.hiringourheroes.org) **(CLOSED)**

**Larissa – Circle of Arms -** Larissa Briefed on a variety of upcoming events with her organization; Veteran’s Family and Appreciation Day (20 Nov 21), Hiking heroes, paddle boarding, multiple classes. She will provide specifics for all these events, and we will email to all council members and post on the website calendar. **(CLOSED)**

**Miscellaneous**-

Dr. Davis thanked out-going Chairperson for the work he has done the last two years.

* **Upcoming Events:**
  + - 2021 Health and Wellness Summit, 24 September, 0830 – 1230, Register Online – BIT.LY/2021STXMHSUMMIT
    - Walk For Recovery, 25 September, 0800, Texas A&M University, Register online – The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors, San Antonio
    - Major General Alfred K. Flowers Scholarship Golf Tournament, October 4th, 0800, Palmer Course at La Cantera, 17865 Babcock Road, SATX 78255, The Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Endeavors, San Antonio
    - Keep Abreast Support Group, Sat, Sep 13, 1900-2015
    - Caregiver Social Group Tue, Sep 14, 1900-2000
    - Neuro Support Group, Sat, Sep 15, 1130-1239
    - Low Vision Support Group – San Antonio Museum of Art Tour, Sat, Sep 18, 1000-1200
    - Stronger Together Support Group, Sat, Sep 18, 1300-1400
* **Upcoming Training:**
  + - 4 Hour, Suicide Prevention Gate Keeper Training – Karah Smith will provide updates
    - Marriage Management, Tue, Sept 28 & Wed, Sept 29, 1000-1400
    - Virtual Training: Use Your Voice to Educate, Advocate, & End Bullying & Cyberbullying, Thurs, October 7, 1300-1400
    - Virtual Training: Domestic Violence Prevention, Thurs, October 14, 1300-1500
* **VHMAC-ST Outreach Events:** None Scheduled at this time

**V. Next Meeting 21 October 2021, 1100**

**VI. Adjournment**

Motion to close by Chair, seconded by Becki, meeting adjourned at 1211

Minutes submitted by Secretary Karah Smith

Minutes reviewed by Council Chair, Dr. David La Pointe.