

VHMAC-ST Meeting Minutes (20 October 2021)

I. Call to Order

Council Chair Gingerlei Seda called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council-South Texas, at 11:33 on 20 October 2021, via Zoom video/tele-conference and in-person. This hybrid meeting was held in-person at 7400 Merton Minter Blvd. SATX 78229 as well as on Zoom.

Council roll was called by Secretary Karah Smith and completed at 1136.

Roll Call – Present or Excused: Becki Williams, Carlos Acosta, David La Pointe, Edsel Thomas, Gingerlei Seda, Jeff Anderson, Karah Smith, Lisa Firmin, Leah Whitmire, Michael Carrion, Monica Garcia, Natasha Walden, Robin Soto, Troy McGrath

Dr. Betsy, VA Employee

Not Present: Christopher Vidaurre, Kevin Crozier, Jose Gonzales, Larissa Martinez

II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

Council Chair Ginger Seda motioned to accept previous (**September**) meeting minutes, seconded by Dave - Minutes approved, nobody opposed.

III. Old Business

VHMACST – Veteran Resilience and Recovery (Dr. Davis) – Meeting every other month. Usually have 5-10 people on each meeting. Focus on sharing updates from different programs. The 2nd Tuesday every other month. November 14th at 3 PM. Mostly a provider focused group, or different agencies that connect veterans to care. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST – VA Community MH & Wellness Summit (Dr. Davis)- Close out item. Summit was a huge success, thank you to everyone who helped. 160 people logged on and stayed the majority of time. Great networking and discussions from the summit. The feedback is virtual event is not as engaging, but we were able to have people from across the state who were able to join. Talking about doing a regional summit. Those conversations are in the early stages. Asked about a possible hybrid. Virtual or in-person. In this last summit, all presenters were women. If you had a chance to attend, please complete the survey as that goes up to national level and would be great. **(CLOSED)**

VHMACST – National Veterans MH Council (Dr. Davis) There is a national call with the council leadership and liaisons. They talked about intimate partner violence. They focus on sharing what other councils are doing. That is where Dave often gets the feedback on what we are doing compared to other councils. If you would like to receive the meeting information, please let Dr. Davis know. **(OPEN)**

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

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- **VHMACST – Women Veteran Sub-Committee** (Col Lisa Firmin) Book is now published on website and can be pre-ordered. The book is telling fourteen stories of different individuals with different military backgrounds. The stories are powerful. “Stories from the front” has 13,000 views from twitter. Lisa is hoping to create change in the system and how things are done. Every branch of the military is reflected in the book. <http://blueearbooks.com/books/stories-from-the-front/>
- Lisa continues to write poems; she discussed the invisible veteran poem. Lisa will send out the poem as well as an email with updates. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST – Outreach Sub-Committee (Dave) Neither Wil nor Mike is on the call. Dave reported eight folks on the check in program. We call and check in on them regularly. We continue to help them. **(OPEN)**

Next Door Community App (Dr. La Pointe) – Program is approved, published and in use - (Redbird Ranch Neighborhood). Anyone can connect with their own neighborhood and start in their areas. Copy of “ad” was provided to council members. If you need another copy, contact Dave. **(CLOSED)**

VHMACST - Budget (Dr. La Pointe) – The budget request was submitted by Council to VA – they have not provided response. They have been funding the purchase of the “Vet – Thank you” cards. We will update members as soon as we receive feedback from the VA Hospital. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST Resource Guide (Dr. La Pointe) – Dave was going to bring resources but due to a shorter time frame he will hold off. It is a large collection of resources. **(OPEN)**

IV. New Business

No speaker for the month

- Outreach-2 events coming in November-Larissa is having an event as well so there will be three events. Going to outreach events helps the community know what resources are available and can change lives.
- Recognize Angie and Monica-new community members, Becki is a caregiver, Troy is here for the first time. Getting new people in is fantastic and getting new ideas. Talked about the handout cards that are available. We also have tags that we can wear to meetings and outreach events available as well.

Miscellaneous-

- ✓ Looked at the bylaws-mission statement and function in order to make sure we are in line with everything at this time.
- ✓ “Establish true partnership with VA, VSOs in order to improve quality of VA mental health services,
- ✓ Encouraged everyone to read the bylaws so we can focus on this as a separate meeting. Read the Mission Statement and Functions-
- ✓ Dave suggested that the VA staff could be more aware of what the council is and does. Asked Dr. Davis if we could help educate staff about what the council is as well as provide education about what veteran

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issues are. The more education provided by the council the more we can get the word out about who the council is and what we are doing. We may look into having education as a focus moving forward.

Spurs mental health awareness night is coming up-community partnership interactions-focused on veterans and mental health issues. Tickets are on sale now. We are now the #1 city for retired veterans, as well as #1 for retired female veterans in the country.

Maybe that should be an initiative-collaborate with outside agencies to education on where people can go-a lot of people don't know what the resources are and how to get connected to them.

✓ **Upcoming Events:**

✓ Everyone is invited to the grand opening for Veteran Wellness Center taking place on November 11th-
Natasha will send info of details.

✓ **Upcoming Outreach Events;**

- SA Spurs Mental Health Awareness Night, February 4, 2022, AT&T Center, 1 AT&T Center Parkway, SATX, 78219, 210-444-5319

VHMACST – Upcoming Training: None scheduled at this time

Miscellaneous

V. Next Meeting 17 November 2021, 1100

VII. Adjournment

Motion to close by Ginger, second by Dave, meeting closed at 12:11.

VIII. End of Minutes

Minutes submitted by Secretary Karah Smith

Minutes reviewed by Council Chair, Ginger Seda