

VHMAC-ST Meeting Minuets 11/17/2021

I. Call to Order

Dr. David A. La Pointe called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council-South Texas, at 1103 on 17 November 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.

Dr. La Pointe called council roll.

Roll Call - Present or Excused: Angie Bukowski, Becki Williams, Carlos Acosta, David La Pointe, Edsel Thomas, Jeff Anderson, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Michael Carrion, Monica Garcia, Troy McGrath.

Dr. Betsy Davis – VA Facilitator
LaKeisha Howard – VA Advisor

Not Present: Christopher Vidaurre, Ginger Seda, Jose Gonzales, Karah Smith, Leah Whitmire, Lisa Firmin, Natasha Walden, Robin Soto

II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

Dr. La Pointe motioned to accept previous (**October**) meeting minutes, seconded by Ed - 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-National Veterans MH Council (Dr. Davis) There is a national call with the council leadership and liaisons. They talked the annual reports we submit. We will prepare our report to submit to Dr. Davis who will submit it to the National Council on our behalf. They focused on sharing what other councils are doing. If you would like to receive the meeting information, please let Dr. Davis know. (**OPEN**)

In-Patient Unit Project – Dr. Davis briefed us about a court-yard beautification project she is planning for Saturday, 22 Jan 2022. It will involve the VA, several community partners and any volunteers who wish to participate. It will include replanting the garden beds and painting a mural. She is asking for volunteer support and donations for lunch for fifty volunteers. Please let Dr. Davis or any of the officers know if you are interested.

GUEST SPEAKER: My Life, My Story – Dr. Davis gave a presentation on My Life, My Story. She played a short video and gave an overview of the program. The objective is to give your medical team the opportunity to get to know you better and learn about what's most important to you in your daily life. The My Life, My Story project team believes that each veteran has a life story worth telling. Our project allows your story to be included as part of your medical record. There is research suggesting that when doctors,

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nurses and other care providers know their patients well, they provide even better care. If you are interested, please contact Dr. Davis or LaKeisha Howard. **See Attachment - (OPEN)**

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

VHMACST - Women Veteran Sub-Committee (Col Lisa Firmin) - Lisa Firmin was not available – no report. (OPEN)

VHMACST - Outreach Sub-Committee (Dr. La Pointe) Dave reported six members were still participating with the check in program. We call and check in on them regularly. We continue to help. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST - Budget (Dr. La Pointe) – No response yet from VA. (OPEN)

VHMACST Reference Guide (Dr. La Pointe) – Dave discussed the Reference Guide and explained what it was and how he uses it to talk to Vets, family members, etc. He will try to make copies to distribute so we can all provide consistent information. It contains all the programs/organizations the Council has been utilizing to refer Veterans and Family Members since we began. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST Resource Guide (Dr. La Pointe) – The Resource Guide is a collection of information compiled by VA staff, members, support groups, advisors and other local, state, and federal agencies that help our Vets, Family Members, etc. We will need to get a group together to organize the information and make it easier to understand and navigate. There is a large amount of material to sort through. **(OPEN)**

IV. New Business

Review of the By-laws – Ginger Seda/Dr. Davis – Dr. Davis requested us to review the mission statement, and what the focus of the Council is moving forward. We will discuss this at the next meeting when Ginger is back. **(OPEN)**

VA Employees and their participation in the VHMAC-ST – Dr. La Pointe asked Dr. Davis to clarify the rules. Dr. Davis stated that VA employees aren't allowed to be on the Council as members, even those who are Veterans. It has to do with the regulations around "advisory councils" and needing to maintain the VMHC independence from the VA. They can be non-voting members and play a similar role as Dr. Davis does for us now, join in meetings, provide connections, guidance, advice, etc. **(CLOSED)**

Veterans-Directed Home & Community-Based Services (VD-HCBS) – Dr. La Pointe discussed the documents provided to the council concerning the program. It's an 8-page script full of essential information about the program. For more information you can contact Chantil Minton, RN, at 210-617-5300, ext. 10694 or Yvette Martinez, RN, at 210-617-5300, ext. 14943. **See Attachment - (CLOSED)**

Anger Management Resources – Dr. Davis was asked to discuss anger management options available to us. She stated our BHIP (Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program) clinic, which is the VA general mental health clinic locate at clinics around San Antonio and in Kerrville, have anger management groups and there are other groups in different mental health programs too. If the Veteran is already engaged in VA

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Mental Health services, they should ask that provider for a referral. If not, they should ask their VA primary care provider for a referral and start with an intake with the Primary Care-Mental Health Integration Program. She also stated that there is an online self-paced program with an anger management component: <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/>

Veterans Advisory Council – Kevin will be posting information on the website from that organization. He also reviewed the laws for the Vet/handicapped license plates for parking that go into effect on 1 Jan 2022. We will re-send that information to all again.

Miscellaneous -

Upcoming Events:

Veterana Menta, Empowering through the battlefield of our minds. Presented by Circle of Arms. Looking for Women Cohort Leaders! Spring 2022. More information to follow. Contact – larissa@circleofarms.org or odulia@circleofarms.org

ConnectAbility's Rockin' Holiday
Friday, December 10, 2021, 1600 – 2100 **(See Attachment)**

Caregiver Support Group
Tuesday, November 23, 2021, 1900 – 2000 **(See Attachment)**

Inpatient Beautification Project **(POC: Dr. Betsy Davis)**
Saturday, January 22, 2022, Time – TBD
Need volunteers to assist with gardening and/or painting mural and
Donations of lunch for 50 volunteers. **(See Attachment)**

Upcoming Outreach Events:

Veteran/Family Appreciation & Connection Day, 20 Nov 21, 1000 – 1600,
Lazy U Ranch, 450 Naumann Road, Seguin, TX 78155 **(See Attachment)**

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

Upcoming Training:

Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season Series
Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 1500-1600 **(See Attachment)**

Caregiver Skills Workshop
Tuesday, November 30, 2021, 1300-1500 **(See Attachment)**

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V. Next Meeting: 15 December 2021, 1100 – If you have ideas for locations – let us know!

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1159.

VIII. End of Minutes

Minutes submitted by Dr. La Pointe

Minutes approved by Ginger Seda