

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

How can I participate in the My Life, My Story project?

If you'd like to participate in this project, you can send us an email at lakeisha.howard@va.gov, call us at (210)792-1850, or let your care team know. They will arrange for a member of the My Life, My Story team to contact you more about the project. If you are interested in participating, the team will schedule a time for your interview. Our project team will encourage you to share what you'd like to share; there's no pressure to discuss "off limits" topics. Once your interview is completed, it will take a day or two to write your story. Once the draft is written, you will have the opportunity to review the draft and make any changes you'd like to make. After the draft is edited and approved by you, you will receive a copy of your story and it will go into your medical record here at South Texas Veterans Health Care System.



Our Team:

Betsy A. Davis, Ph.D.
Psychologist, Local Recovery Coordinator
Mental Health Service

LaKeisha D. Howard
Experience Trainer
Patient Experience Service

South Texas

Veterans Health Care System
7400 Merton Minter Blvd
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210)792-1850
lakeisha.howard@va.gov

What's your Story?

Why is this important?

Our 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, nurses and other care providers know their patients well, they provide even better care.



“So, what should I talk about?”

Frequently asked Questions:

- Q:** What if I change my mind?
A: That's fine, we can stop at any time.
- Q:** What happens to the information?
A: Once you approve of your story, it will become part of your medical record at the VA hospital. You'll also get a copy of your story.
- Q:** How long does it take?
A: The interview itself will take about an hour, on average. It depends on how much information you feel comfortable sharing.

Some topics to consider:

- Childhood or upbringing
- Information about your schooling
- Military experience
- Work, jobs, career
- Family & other supports
- Medical concerns, past or present
- Hobbies, interests, or skills
- Anything you wish your treatment team knew about you, but you never got around to saying
- Topics that matter to you, but may not otherwise be discussed during your appointments

What are Veterans saying about MLMS:

“The interview was enjoyable. I said things that I had never told anyone. I am now saying those things to my friends and family. It feels good.”

“I am able to have a voice to myself. This is so helpful in dealing with trauma. An absolute must! Very valuable addition to VA treatment!”

What are Providers saying about MLMS:

“I can tell you firsthand that reading my veterans' stories elevates our relationship to the level of relationships that I have with patients after many years.”

“I have read each of the stories I have encountered in my patients' charts and am grateful to have the additional dimension and background to help me better understand who my patients really are in their own words”



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
South Texas Veterans Health Care System

Veteran-Directed Home & Community-Based Services (VD-HCBS)

Veteran Directed - Home and Community Based Services (VD-HCBS) is a program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home and community-based service (HCBS) for Veterans who need significant support to remain safely in the community and avoid nursing home placement, live independently, and manage self-directed care. As a participant VD-HCBS program allocates a budget for Veterans to pay for their care. VD-HCBS empowers Veterans to choose and manage services and supports in their own homes as an alternative to living in a long-term care facility. The Veteran or the Veteran's Representative ("Employer") hires, supervises, evaluates, and pays the Employee to provide specific services and supports that the Veteran needs to live in his or her own home. Tax ID number (TIN) or Employer Identification Number (EIN) is required for all providers to engage in VD program

Veterans can pay for a wide range of goods and services with their budget.

Personal Care Services are services provided to support the health and wellbeing of an individual in their home

Service Assessment/ Plan of Care Development (case management) are the initial assessment and case set-up fees that go to the Aging and Disability provider as a one-time payment at the beginning of VD-HCBS services being provided.

Budget - The monthly amount allocated for the Veteran to spend to acquire their long-term care services and supports.

Financial Management Services - Financial Management Services (FMS) are those services that assist Veterans' managing their budgets. FMS provides payroll services to assure that hired workers are paid appropriately and reimburse purchases of the Goods and Services using the Spending Plan as the guide to determine which services are authorized by the VAMC. Fees for the FMS are included in the Aging and Disability Network provider's administrative fees.

All purchases of Goods and Services are approved by the VAMC VD-HCBS Coordinator when they approve the Spending Plan. In a Spending Plan, Personal Care Services are hands-on care

provided by a worker hired by the Veteran or the Veteran's representative.

Purchased HCBS Case Mix and Budget Tool-An assessment tool which determines the Veteran's level need for home services. Money that a Veteran does not spend from his or her budget in a given month may, within limits, be kept available to the Veteran in the form of savings. The actual savings are held by the VAMC. Some services are large purchases (such as a home modification) or Emergency savings which are savings for unexpected expenses, such as increased care hours should the Veteran fall ill.

Allowable VD-HCBS Expenditures	Unallowable VD-HCBS Expenditures
<p>Veteran-directed community supports may include traditional goods and services as well as alternatives that support Veterans. There are four general categories of services which may be considered in VD-HCBS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal Assistance 2. Treatment and training 3. Environmental modifications and provisions 4. Veteran-directed support activities <p>Additionally, the following goods and services that may also be included in the Veteran's budget as long as they meet the criteria and fit into the above categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therapies, special diets and behavioral supports not otherwise available through the State plan that mitigate the Veteran's disability when ordered by a VA primary care provider; - Expenses related to the development and implementation of the Veteran's plan; - Cost incurred to manage the Veteran's budget. - Meet identified needs, goals and outcomes in the Veteran's spending plan AND - Improves Veteran's ability to remain safely in their home AND - Addresses activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living needs of the Veteran AND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services provided to Veterans living in licensed foster care or other congregate residential settings; - Services covered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Medicare, or other liable third parties including education, home-based schooling, and vocational services; - Services, goods, or supports provided to or benefiting persons other than the Veteran; - Any fees incurred by the Veteran such as medical fees and co-pays, attorney costs or costs related to advocate agencies, with the exception of services provided as flexible case management; - Insurance except for insurance costs related to employee coverage; - Room and board and personal items that are not related to the disability; - Home modifications that add square footage; - Home modifications for a residence other than the primary residence of the Veteran; - Expenses for travel, lodging, or meals related to training the Veteran or his/her representative or paid or unpaid caregivers; - Experimental treatments; - All prescription and over-the-counter medications, compounds, and solutions, and related fees including premiums and co-payments; - Vacation expenses other than the cost of direct services;

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be the least costly alternative that reasonably meets the Veteran's identified needs; AND - Not be provided or paid for by VA, Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, or other or other agency organization, program service, or insurance AND - Not be the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain, repair or replace - Laundry service from a Laundromat or other provider - Limited yard maintenance when access to and from the Veteran's home and/or vehicle would be impeded due to a lack of maintenance - Cost of changing locks at the Veterans home, as necessary when the Veteran's direct care worker ceases employment - Expenses related to the development and implementation of the Veteran's spending plan, such as background checks for workers and worker's compensation insurance - Therapies and behavioral supports not otherwise available that mitigate the Veteran's disability when ordered by a VA primary care provider - Costs incurred related to the management of the Veteran's budget or responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicle maintenance (can cover maintenance to modifications related to the disability); - Tickets and related costs to attend sporting or other recreational events; - Animals, including service animals, and their related costs; - Costs related to internet access. - Yard services performed employee - Bonuses - Homemaker/Home Health Aide services - Outpatient Respite Care services |
|---|--|

Employee Orientation Packet includes forms that must be completed prior to employees starting to work.

Criminal background check and registry check required prior to starting to work. You may not start work until that check has been completed.

The Veteran has completed certain forms that officially make the Veteran an employer

As an "Employer of Record," the Veteran or the Veteran's Representative has certain responsibilities:

- Help the new Employee to complete the Employee paperwork (supplied by the FMS). The FMS will process all the paperwork

- Review, approve and submit time sheets to the FMS on time, through the mail, scan, email, or by fax, so that Employees are paid for their work on a timely basis.
- Train the Employee in what the Veteran expects the Employee to do and how the Veteran wants it to be done.
- Provide the Employee a safe environment in which to work.

What Services May an Employee Be Asked to Perform?

VD-HCBS allows the Veteran to decide what services, supports and goods will best meet the Veteran's community living needs. Each Veteran's service plan and Employee job descriptions are individualized based on the Veteran's needs.

Below are examples of tasks that you may be asked to perform as an Employee of the VD-HCBS Program:

Homemaking Services: These include, but are not limited to, laundry, sweeping and mopping floors, dusting, changing linens, cleaning the bathroom (Toilet tubs/showers, sinks & floors), cleaning the kitchen (loading/unloading dishwasher, hand washing dishes, washing off countertops, sinks, floors, and stovetops as needed). This may also include the preparation of meals, home management, and/or escort services.

Personal Care Services: These include, but are not limited to, the following assistance to the Veteran: getting in and out of the shower or bath tub, bathing, getting on/off the toilet, brushing teeth/dentures, grooming and dressing the Veteran or providing verbal prompts to help the Veteran do these tasks for their self, reminding the Veteran to take medication or placing pills from a medication minder into the hands of the Veteran and verbally reminding or physically guiding the Veteran to take them.

In-Home Respite Care: Respite care provides short term breaks for family members or friends who are caring for the Veteran. The purpose of respite is to relieve stress, restore energy, and promote balance in family caregivers of the Veteran. Services may last from a few hours to overnight. Respite services may include meal preparation, housekeeping, assistance with personal care and/or social and recreational activities and require supervision of the Veteran in the absence of family members.

Escort Services: Accompanying and assisting the Veteran on appointments. These include, but are not limited to, driving a vehicle to take the Veteran to an appointment, accompanying the Veteran on mass transit or accessible transportation, assisting the Veteran (who may be walking or may be handicapped and using a walker, wheelchair, white cane or other device) in and out of a building or vehicle, accompanying the Veteran into the appointment, assisting the Veteran in understanding and filling out forms, and asking questions for the Veteran to assure the Veteran receives the service that is sought.

Shopping or Running Errands: Shopping with or without the Veteran. If the Employee uses the Veteran's vehicle, no mileage is paid. If the Employee uses his own private vehicle for travel, mileage may be reimbursed if 1) an agreement has been written with the Veteran concerning the rate of reimbursement and 2) the Employee submits a log provided by the Veteran that records the date, time, distance and destination of the trip and the purpose of the trip.

Socialization Support Services: The Employee may accompany the Veteran to activities such as education or exercise classes, support groups, movies, or other social engagements as indicated by the Veteran.

Transportation: The transportation required for socialization or medical support with the designated Employee may be reimbursed with prior approval and documentation in the Spending Plan and Budget. Provision of transportation assistance may include an escort for a Veteran who has special needs (physical or cognitive) when using regular vehicular transportation.

Contracted Services/Chore Maintenance Initial and/or periodic heavy cleaning chores. Some initial assessments may reveal that a home is unhealthy due to prior neglect of Household chores by the Veteran. Chore maintenance allows a heavy-duty level of cleaning to get the home into a healthy environment for the Veteran. This may include removal of trash and debris from the home, heavy cleaning (scrubbing floors, washings walls, washing outside windows) moving heavy furniture, yard clean-up, and walk maintenance and repair.

Veteran Roles and Responsibilities



VD-HCBS Participant Rights and Responsibilities

RIGHTS

- I have the right to live as I choose, in my own home, as independently as I desire
- I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- I have the right to privacy and confidentiality
- I have the right to create a budget and options plan that meet my needs within the guidelines of the program at any time
- I have the right to change my budget and options plan to meet my needs within the guidelines of the program at any time
- I have the right to a monthly report on how my budget is spent
- I have the right to bring whomever I wish to all meetings pertaining to the program
- I have the right to an explanation of all services and procedures for billing
- I have the right to refuse services and terminate my participation in the program at any time
- I have the right to submit a complaint about any aspect of the program
- I have the right to submit an appeal if I am discharged from the program

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The requirements and responsibilities to participate in the Veterans Directed Home and Community Based Services (VD-HCBS) program are:

- Demonstrate the required skills and abilities needed to self-direct employees, or designate an Authorized Representative to do so
- Actively participate in developing my VD-HCBS Service Plan and Monthly Spending Plan
- Review my VD-HCBS Budget monthly statement and monitor all expenditures to ensure that I do not exceed my monthly service amount
- Complete all necessary forms and provide information to the Financial Management Agency to ensure compliance with tax and labor laws
- Manage my employees by:
 - Recruiting and hiring my employees
 - Setting job duties and training my employees
 - Paying my employees a fair and legal wage
 - Setting my employees' schedules in advance and reviewing time sheets to ensure they are correct

- Supervising my employees' daily activities and reviewing the adequacy and quality of their work
- Ensuring a safe work environment for my employees
- Treating my employees with dignity and respect
- Notifying the Financial Management Agency and Options Counselor immediately if you choose to no longer employ a worker
- Develop an emergency back-up plan in case my worker is not available
- Notify my Case Manager immediately if I am admitted to the hospital or other medical facility
 - For inpatient or long-term care placement stays which continues beyond 15 days, you will be placed in an inactive status, at which time all payments will cease until you are discharged home
 - Long term care placement outside of the home over 35 days could result in being discharged from the program
- Oversee the activities of any other service providers
- Responsible for all required paperwork and adhering to all tax and labor laws
- Provide timesheets on the scheduled due date to the FMS and AACOG case manager
- Contact FMS for all issues concerning timesheet and payroll issues before contacting the AACOG case manager
- Be available at home for scheduled visits and allow VD-HCBS/FMS staff to enter the home for any scheduled visits.
 - Failure to comply on two or more occasions may result in discharge from the program
- Have a working telephone. In order for this program to work, you must have consistent and reliable telephone contact methods. For this reason, as well as for your personal safety, you will need to have access to a working phone (land line or cell phone) in your home. It is your responsibility to communicate your phone number to your case manager, as well as keep them informed of any changes to the same. If you are having problems with your home telephone service, please contact your telephone provider, and let us know as soon as possible. If you are going to be away from home, please provide your case manager with an alternate means to reach you.
- Treat VD-HCBS staff with courtesy and respect
 - Verbal or physical threats or abuse or harassment of any kind by anyone interacting with VD-HCBS/FMS staff may result in discharge from the program.
- Weapons must be secured in a locked location while VD-HCBS/FMS staff are in the home.
- Animals must be restrained in or on the property while VD-HCBS/FMS staff are present
- No illegal drug use of any kind by anyone in or on the property.

- No smoking and/or alcohol use or drunken behavior during VD-HCBS/FMS staff visit. This includes other family members or friends who are present during the visit.
- Home environment must be safe and non-threatening for the Veteran and VD-HCBS/FMS team members, as well as an appropriate venue in which to deliver and receive services.

Welcome to South Texas Veterans Health Care System Veteran Directed-Home and Community Based Care Services

If you have questions, feel free to contact us.

Chantil Minton, RN

(210) 617-5300 ext. 10694

Yvette Martinez, RN

(210) 671-5300 ext. 14943

davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

From: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, November 11, 2021 07:58 AM
To: Dr. David A. La Pointe
Subject: Anger Management Counseling

From: Davis, Betsy <Betsy.Davis@va.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, November 10, 2021 12:14 PM
To: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Anger Management Counseling

Hi—I apologize for the delay! Our BHIP (Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program) clinic, which is the VA general mental health clinic located at clinics around San Antonio and in Kerrville, has anger management groups and there are other groups in different mental health programs too. If the Veteran is already engaged in VA 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.

There is also this online self-paced program with an anger management component:

<https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/>

Let me know if there's anything more specific or other questions and I can provide more guidance.



We Cordially Invite You

FREE - VETERAN / FAMILY APPRECIATION & CONNECTION DAY

Join us for a day of fun-filled activities for our veterans, first responders, and their families or simply hang out and relax with comrades. Food and beverages, music, and hourly raffle awards will be provided.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have been isolated, stressed, and experienced a lot of grief and loss. Veteran/Family Appreciation & Connection day's purpose is to help us reconnect and find out about different resources while having fun or relaxing. Professional Licensed counselors will be available if needed.

Seat

NOVEMBER 20, 2021
10:00AM-4:00PM
LAZY U RANCH
450 NAUMANN ROAD
SEGUIN, TX 78155

REGISTER



COST TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE: FREE

PLEASE RSVP BY NOVEMBER 10TH, LIMITED TO THE FIRST 300 REGISTERED ATTENDEES

LCENANOVIC@ECRH.ORG OR CALL (210)616.0885

NO WEAPONS AND NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ARE ALLOWED ON-PREMISES.

** Seat Logo*

IN COLLABORATION WITH OUR COMMUNITY ALLIES



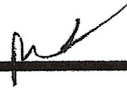
THE BIRDWELL FOUNDATION
 NO ONE HEALS ALONE



TEXAS VETERANS NETWORK
 SAN ANTONIO | LAREDO | CORPUS CHRISTI

UTSA Veteran and Military Affairs

davelp.lapointe@gmail.com



From: Circle of Arms <circleofarms19@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 11, 2021 09:25 AM
To: Dr David A La Pointe; Dr. Betsy Davis
Subject: Veterana Mente
Attachments: image_6483441.JPG; image_6483441.JPG; image_6483441.JPG

Good morning Dr La Pointe & Dr Davis!

Happy Veterans Day to all who served selflessly and took an oath to protect our country. May you now dedicate your service to your mental and physical well being and continue to serve as leaders in your community.

Seems fitting that we announce today our Veterana Mente Cohort which will begin Spring 2022. Veterana Mente is a 6 month cohort for servicemembers & military spouses who identify as female and are transitioning from service. The Cohort will focus on four pillars: Healing, Advocacy, EmpowHERment, & Mentorship.

We're currently looking for female veteran and civilian (familiar to military culture) as Cohort leaders, look out for an informational event coming soon.

We're also currently looking for servicemembers/military spouses who identify as female who're transitioning from service with at least 6 months from their ETS date from cohort start date. Look out for an informational event coming soon.

(Some exceptions can be made if you have transitioned from service)

(We also plan to create a male cohort called Veterano Mente in Spring of 2023)

Please share! Blossom with purpose! #veteranamente #COAmendingmindchangingcycles

--
Larissa Martinez
Circle of Arms
CEO/Founder
"Mending Minds, Changing Cycles"

We're looking for Women Cohort Leaders!

Contact larissa@circleofarms.org or

odulia@circleofarms.org



Blossom with purpose!

- Healing
- Advocacy
- EmpowHERment
- Mentorship

Veterana Mente

Empowering through the battlefield of our minds



KNOWLEDGE SERIES

Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season Series

Tuesday, November 30

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Staying healthy during the holiday season is now more important than ever before. Learn for FREE how to keep you, your family, and friends a little healthier with nutrition education. Each class includes a follow-along cooking demonstration!

You can watch the recordings of past classes on our [YouTube channel](#).

Final class: **Tuesday, December 7 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

[Register for the Series Online](#)

SPECIAL EVENT

Caregiver Skills Workshop

Tuesday, November 30

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Do you know a caregiver or family member who would benefit from transfer training? This free workshop is open to all caregivers.

It will cover:

- Ambulation assistance
- Transfer Technique
- Situational Transfers

Nursing Educator Marie Hoffman will provide a virtual "hands on" training focusing on safely transferring your loved one.

[Register Online](#)



ConnectAbility's Rockin' Holiday

Friday, December 10

4:00 PM - 9:00 PM

You are cordially invited to ConnectAbility's Rockin' Holiday.

4:00 – 6:00 PM Dinner & Dance

6:00 – 9:00 PM Feel free to enjoy Morgan's Wonderland at its holiday finest!

We will have a Holiday contest! Categories will be:

- Ugliest Sweater
- Cutest Sweater
- Most Bling Attire
- Most Festive Attire
- Holiday Movie Inspired Attire

RSVP for ConnectAbility's Rockin' Holiday

THIS WEEK

Monday, Nov. 22 - Sunday, Nov. 28

Caregiver Support Group

Tuesday, November 23

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Join us every month to share, learn, and find support with other caregivers who also care for someone with a disability. We meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month. This month we will focus on "Attitude of Gratitude" – taking stock of self appreciation.

[Join Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 980 1883 2966

One tap mobile +13462487799,,98018832966#

Dial-in: +1 (346) 248-7799 Meeting ID: 980 1883 2966

RECURRING EVENTS

davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

From: Davis, Betsy <Betsy.Davis@va.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 15, 2021 11:33 AM
To: Gingerlei Seda; davelp.lapointe@gmail.com; Karah A. Smith
Subject: New VA inpatient project

Hi all,

I'm coordinating a project between the VA and several community partners where we are going to improve the inpatient unit courtyard with re-planting the garden beds and painting a mural. We're organizing a workday on Saturday January 22 to do most of the work. I'd love for the VHMIC to be involved! We're looking for two things:

- (1) Volunteers to assist with gardening and/or painting on 1/22
- (2) Donation of lunch for ~50 volunteers – I know this was talked about recently and several members/organizations offered, so thought I'd check.

Let me know if you all are interested in being involved in this project! Thanks!

Betsy A. Davis, Ph.D.
Psychologist, Local Recovery Coordinator
Mental Health Service (116B)
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
7400 Merton Minter
San Antonio, TX 78229
VA cell: (210) 740-8149
betsy.davis@va.gov

"Our job is not to judge who will and will not recover. Our job is to create environments in which opportunities for recovery and empowerment exist." Patricia Deegan, 1996

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davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

From: Lisa Firmin <Lisa.Firmin@utsa.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 01:51 PM
To: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com; Dr. Betsy Davis; Ginger Seda; Kevin Crozier
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] regret on mtg VHMACEST Nov Meeting Agenda
Attachments: Stories from the Front MST book w QR code.pdf; Women Vet Flyer.jpg

Dave, Betsy, Ginger, Kevin,
I will not be able to attend tomorrow's meeting.
Will be at BAMC pain clinic undergoing a procedure.

Please let me know what I missed.

Here is some info you can share:

Attached is a one pager on my book that has a QR code to take you to my publisher's site, where people can pre order the book.

I also have an author's page on the site. You can share the attachment with the council and if you like can put on the website.

Been doing lots of media interviews and have two events later this week; one on Saturday, flyer attached, by Art Spark Texas, focused on women vets, the healing arts.
They reached out to me after the VA summit and wanted me to serve as a panelist to discuss my poetry and writing.

The event I am recording this Friday is: Mental Health and the Military (MST)/The Silent Struggle. Hosted by Dweebs Global.

I am a panelist on this. I will find out when this goes live so people can tune in.

I recently did several days of interviews with Univision for a documentary on Latinas and MST which will air sometime next year.

I brought the producer to an event I did with American GI Forum, the Stand Down for Homeless Vets. And we were able to engage with vets, women vets.

They also got to speak with Larissa there.

AMGIF had blown up one of my poems and had it on the wall so women vets could see it.

I had a real emotional moment with a homeless women vet (has since gotten an efficiency apartment thru a program) who had read some

of my poetry (provided to her by her therapist) and was so inspired and moved by what she read, she finally started speaking about her own MST.

She literally ran right up to me and hugged me and said, "I've been waiting to meet you." I was stunned and also grateful that my work is helping others.

This is starting to happen to me more and more as I speak at events.

Be well everyone,
Lisa

Lisa Carrington Firmin
Colonel, USAF Retired

THROUGH CREATIVE ARTS



**A VIRTUAL EVENT
SATURDAY**

NOVEMBER 20, 2021

9:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Join us for this day of self-care through the arts. We are bringing together female-identifying active-duty, retirees, and veterans with various veteran and art organizations, art therapists, and other resources to help provide supportive networking opportunities and demonstrate methods for improving interpersonal communications.

- Interactive Panel Discussions
- Experiential Art and Writing Activities
- Connections with other Women Veterans
- Resources

Find more information and register at
www.artsparktx.org

**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**
arts.gov/creativeforces
CREATIVE FORCES

 **Art Spark
Texas**
Sparking the Creative in Everyone



***Stories from the Front:
Pain, Betrayal and Resilience on the MST Battlefield***
by Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin, USAF retired

Bronze Star-decorated combat commander [Colonel Lisa Carrington Firmin](#) outlines her own experiences with military sexual trauma (MST) and recounts the stories of 13 others: veterans as well as active duty women and men who are bravely sharing their stories of sexual assault and sexual harassment while serving in the United States military. *Stories from the Front* authentically captures experiences and carefully tells their stories of trauma and the resilience and empowerment they display in their lives.

By including the lived experiences of a diverse group representing all military branches, ranks, eras of service, wars, races and ethnicities, from Vietnam through Iraq and Afghanistan to the present day, *Stories from the Front* documents how men and women suffered at the hands of their fellow sailors, coasties, airmen, soldiers, and Marines. Eerily similar in the retelling, their experiences with MST range from hazing, bullying, misogyny, and sexual harassment to sexual assault and rape. They recount their most painful experiences and open their hearts and souls to the author and to the world. Many of the book's participants have never previously shared the full details of their MST experiences or spoken publicly before.

After serving 30 years in the Air Force, and as its most senior-ranking Latina officer upon retirement, [Colonel Carrington Firmin](#) was horrified by the appalling murder of a fellow Latina, Army Specialist Vanessa Guillén, in April 2020. Vanessa's horrific death became the catalyst for repressed memories of the colonel's own sexual assault during initial training and the repeated sexual harassment she endured early in her career and catapulted her on a soul-searching journey to document others' experiences and to advocate for change within the armed services. Her poem "[Into the Light](#)," featured in *Stories from the Front*, captures her feelings and recounts how she came to end her silence on the negative aspects of her military career. The colonel is proud of her service and the strong bonds she had with so many military professionals but acknowledges that now is the time to share the full reality of all that she experienced and endured.

Stories from the Front: Pain, Betrayal and Resilience on the MST Battlefield will be published by Blue Ear Books (www.blueearbooks.com) in April 2022, to commemorate the second anniversary of Vanessa Guillén's murder.

Pre-order by using the QR code or by going to <http://blueearbooks.com/books/stories-from-the-front/>



Contact Colonel Carrington Firmin directly at CarringtonFirminLLC@gmail.com and for bulk orders or to learn more about *Stories from the Front* and other veterans-related projects, contact Blue Ear Books publisher Ethan Casey at ecasey@blueearbooks.com

davelp.lapointe@gmail.com

From: Kirstin Manka <KManka@Spurs.com>
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 11:08 AM
To: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com
Cc: Gingerlei Seda; Karah A. Smith; Dr. Betsy Davis
Subject: RE: Spurs MHA Save The Date

Hey Dave,

It seriously has been TOO LONG! I will definitely reach out as I know more. 😊

Cheers,
Kirstin



Kirstin Manka
Group Sales Account Executive
Spurs Sports & Entertainment
1 AT&T Center Parkway, San Antonio, TX 78219
O: 210-444-5319 | M: 210-414-2197
KManka@Spurs.com



From: davelp.lapointe@gmail.com <davelp.lapointe@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 9:46 AM
To: Kirstin Manka <KManka@Spurs.com>
Cc: Dr. David A. La Pointe <davelp.lapointe@gmail.com>; Gingerlei Seda <leignised@gmail.com>; Karah A. Smith <kasmith@endeavors.org>; Dr. Betsy Davis <betsy.davis@va.gov>
Subject: RE: Spurs MHA Save The Date

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Kirstin,

Just let us know what we can do to help! We have been looking forward to it TO LONG! Seriously, whatever we can do to assist/participate – we will be there. Keep us updated.

Dave

David A. La Pointe
Dr. David A. La Pointe, PhD, MBA, CCT, SPHR
(SMSgt, USAF Ret.)
299 Tufted Crest
San Antonio, TX 78253-6364
President/CEO Myriad-Enterprises Consulting
Notary Public
888-896-9078 (Voice and Fax Service)
210-488-1593 (Cell)

210-236-9667 (Home)
Davelp.lapointe@gmail.com Myriad-Enterprises.com

Chairperson, Veterans Healthy Minds Advisory Council – South Texas
Audie Murphy VA Hospital, San Antonio TX
VHMACST@gmail.com VHMACST.com
Veteranshealthymindsadvisorycouncilsouthtexas.com
[@vetminds](https://twitter.com/vetminds)

From: Kirstin Manka <KManka@Spurs.com>
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 9:39 AM
To: Dr David A La Pointe <davelp.lapointe@gmail.com>
Subject: Spurs MHA Save The Date

Good Morning David,

I hope you have been doing well since we last spoke! I am so excited to inform you that we have our 2nd Mental Health Awareness Day on the calendar for this season! Yayy! Please save the date for February 4th. I will send you more information as we get closer to the event, but please let me know if you have any questions.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS NIGHT

FEBRUARY 4TH, 2022

**PURCHASE INCLUDES:
SPURS VS ROCKETS GAME TICKET
T-SHIRT**



Best,
Kirstin



Kirstin Manka
Group Sales Account Executive
Spurs Sports & Entertainment
1 AT&T Center Parkway, San Antonio, TX 78219
O: 210-444-5319 | M: 210-414-2197
KManka@Spurs.com

