

# VHMAC-ST Meeting Minuets 1/19/2022

## 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 1108 on 19 January 2022, via Zoom video/tele-conference and in-person. This hybrid meeting was held in-person at AACOG Headquarters, 2700 NE Loop 410, SATX, 78217, 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, Ginger Seda, Jeff Anderson, Jose Michael Gonzales, Karah Smith, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Leah Whitmire, Col. Lisa Firmin, Michael Carrion, Monica Garcia, Natasha Walden, Robin Soto.

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

Not Present: **100% attendance or excused absences!**

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

Dr. La Pointe motioned to accept previous **(November, no December meeting)** meeting minutes, seconded by Becki - Minutes approved, no one opposed.

## III. Old Business

**VHMACST- Veteran Resilience and Recovery (Dr. Davis)** – Dr. Davis again reminded us that meetings will continue every other month. They usually have 5-10 people on each meeting. Focus on sharing updates from different programs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday every other month. This is mostly a provider focused group, or different agencies that connect veterans to care. **(OPEN)**

**VHMACST-National Veterans MH Council (Dr. Davis)** The call with the national MH council leadership concentrated on individual councils across the country reviewing/updating their “reasons and purpose” section of by-laws. Feedback varied from various locations commenting that the councils are independent of the VA and while it is a good idea to review all items of individual council’s documents. The VA can’t and doesn’t “dictate” to councils. They also discussed annual reports. We have prepared our report and submitted it to Dr. Davis who will edit and submit it to the National Council on our behalf. **(OPEN)**

**In-Patient Unit Project** – Dr. Davis briefed us that this project will be rescheduled for March and specific information is to follow. The project is about a court-yard beautification project. 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.

**My Life, My Story** – Dr. Davis and Lakeisha Howard are the POC’s for this program as we have been notified and educated. The program 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

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record. There is research suggesting that when doctors, 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 for any further information. (CLOSED)

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

**VHMACST - Women Veteran Sub-Committee (Col Lisa Firmin) - Lisa Firmin updated us on current status of sub-committee. (OPEN)**

**VHMACST - Outreach Sub-Committee (Dr. La Pointe)** Dave reported that the outreach contacts continue, and four 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. Davis)** – Budget request - as submitted, was approved. We will have to request in advance of expenditures and of course provide appropriate documentation for any requests and expenses. (CLOSED)

**VHMACST Reference Guide (Dr. La Pointe)** – Reference Guide completion is pending. Meetings are to be scheduled for volunteers to consolidate and publish. (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. Resource Guide completion is pending. Meetings are to be scheduled for volunteers to consolidate and publish. (OPEN)

## IV. New Business

**Guest Speaker: Ms. Amelia Peacock, USMC Veteran, Outreach Coordinator, Grace After Fire.** 210-864-2958, [amelia@graceafterfire.org](mailto:amelia@graceafterfire.org). Ms. Peacock gave an extensive and enlightening presentation of the Grace After Fire program as well as answering/addressing all questions and inquiries posed by council members. Some of the topics covered in her briefing included peer-to-peer support program, community resource navigation, financial basic needs assistance program, veteran retreats, social events and workshops and extensive information to “provide and connect women Veterans to means to gain knowledge, insight and self-renewal.” We will try to capture her portion of the meeting and post it on our website.

**Resignation of Officers:** Ginger Seda and Karah Smith resigned as officers from our council. The conflicts in schedules between school and new job requirements are the reasons for resignations. They will continue as members of the council.

As a result of these actions, we will hold **elections at our next meeting for ALL OFFICER POSITIONS**. Nominations should be provided to Dave by the last day of January. If you want to nominate someone or yourself, you can submit a written note to share prior to the election. We will also let everyone have an opportunity to speak before we elect at the next meeting as well. Nominations will be sent out on 1 February 2022 for your consideration. Again, you will be able to nominate at our next meeting regardless. Call, email, text Dave if you have any questions.

We will have ballots set up for election as we have in the past. A member of the council who is **NOT** running for office or Dr. Davis will receive the actual votes, tally, and report results to us at the February meeting.

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## 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](mailto:larissa@circleofarms.org) or [odulia@circleofarms.org](mailto:odulia@circleofarms.org)

### 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 (See Attachment)

**Upcoming Training:** Current training options were sent by email

**V. Next Meeting: 16 February 2022, 1100 – If you have ideas for locations – let us know!**

## VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1203.

## VIII. End of Minutes

Dr. David A. La Pointe approved these minuets.