

Veterans' Healthy Minds Advisory Council – South Texas
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VHMACST Meeting Minutes 16 February 2023

Call To Order

Council Chair Dr. Dave La Pointe called to order the regular meeting of the Veterans Healthy Minds Advisory Council South Texas on 19 January 2023 at 1304, via Zoom & in person at AACOG.

Council Chair Dr. Dave La Pointe called council roll.

Roll-Call Chair called role: Present or Excused: Angie Bukowski, Dr. Betsy Davis, Carlos Acosta, Dr. David La Pointe, Edsel Thomas, Fred Thomas, John Nelson, Kevin Crozier, Larissa Martinez, Laura Knoll, Leah Smith, Priscilla Bell, Dr. Scott Rheinschmidt

Not Present: Becki Williams, Karah Smith, Kristie Steinmeier, LaKeisha Howard, Leah Whitmire, Michael Carrion, Dr. Shirley Johnson, Troy McGrath

II. Approval/Review of Previous Minutes/Current Agenda

Council Chair, Dr. Dave La Pointe motioned to accept previous meeting minutes (January 2023) as published to council for review. Co-Chairperson Larissa Martinez seconded the motion. Minutes were approved and adopted by the council members with unanimous vote.

- ✓ **GUEST SPEAKER (S):** **Jeff Schnoor**
 Spirit Wolf Intervention
 102 W. White Ave., Suite 100
 SATX 78214
 210-794-3044
 info@spiritwolf.net

Our guest Speaker opted to speak prior to the new business portion of our meeting.

Mr. Jeff Schnoor introduced himself to the council as the Founder and Director of Spirit Wolf Intervention. They have been in operation for a little more than seven years. He is retired military, started as enlisted and subsequently retired as a Major. Spirit Wolf Intervention as a Non-Profit organization located on the south side of San Antonio. They reach out to help the homeless, veterans, men and women, families in need suffering from mental health or addiction issues. They also participate in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's program for Veterans for those that are incarcerated in the system. They provide education, PTSD, anger management, mental health programming for that special population in the TDC. They've operated emergency shelters, provided bus tickets back home. But their primary focus is mental health and addictions, getting them the treatment, they require within the state or nationwide. They offer training in domestic violence, three levels of trauma informed care by certified trainers, sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and military support groups. **(CLOSED)**

III. Old Business

Mental Health Community of Practice: A copy of the last set of minutes were distributed to the council via email. Minutes were reviewed. Council members were asked to provide any input to Dr. Davis, the Chair or Co-Chair for questions/concerns. **(OPEN)**

VAMAC Quarterly Meeting: No information **(OPEN)**

VA National Council: Dr. David La Pointe reviewed/discussed the National Council's last set of minutes (these were provided via email to council. He asked for feedback from the council to be provide to Dr. Davis for any issues of concern for her to address. **(OPEN)**

Dr. Davis asked that I review/mention the following:

VHMACST Secretary: We really need to fill this open position! Would like a volunteer. **(OPEN)**

Veteran Health Education and Information Committee: No submissions for review this month.

Dr. Betsy Davis requested/provided the following information for review, consideration, recommendations, and feedback:

- Specific ideas for service while Veterans are waiting for care
- Input for MH Month "what to expect" videos or other MH Month efforts
- Save the Date: VMHC Conference, April 11-12 2023, 1000 – 1330 on TEAMS

Please provide input directly to Dr. Davis, Myself or Larissa. **(OPEN)**

Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force: Co-Chair, Larissa Martinez, gave an overview of the program and the task force. (Her detailed work product was distributed to council members previously). She is preparing to "hand deliver" the packages to local law enforcement communities. She reviewed/discuss what was included in the information that was provided. **(CLOSED)**

Unaccompanied Burial Memorial Service – March 15, 2023: at 0900. (Bexar County), 3rd Wednesday of each month, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, 1520 Harry Wurzbach Rd., SATX 78209 (follow the signs when you enter the main gate). VHMACST provides arrangement and roses for person being memorialized. PLEASE wear your VHMACST badge when attending event. **(OPEN)**

VHMACST Possible Conversion to A Non-Profit Organization–

In depth information will be provided and the council will vote on this initiative in an upcoming Council meeting (Documents from Dr. Davis and Fred Thomas). Discussions/opinions were presented by Fred Thomas (in favor) and Carlos Acosta and Larissa (against) the consideration. Dr. La Pointe presented Dr. Betsy Davis' response to the council from VA legal section and stated that she in fact was not in favor of the non-profit option. Dr. La Pointe stated that he would request Kevin put together a ballot for vote to be sent out next week. **(OPEN)**

2023 Spur's Mental Health Awareness Night – Saturday, 28 Jan 2023, 1 AT&T Center Pkwy., SATX 78219. Dr. La Pointe thanked Becki Williams, John Nelson, and Dr. Shirley Johnson for their efforts in making the annual Spur's mental health night another huge success! We had approximately 300 visitors to the tables, about 40 vendors' participating and met several folks we might be able collaborate with on future projects. **(CLOSED)**

IV. New Business

Veteran's Experience Office: Dr. La Pointe had distributed an email that had several links to extensive databases of informative information. (One of the most we've seen). It will be sent out again and Kevin will post it on the website as well. Dr. La Pointe said he thought this is one of the VA offices we should have as a "guest speaker" in an upcoming VHMCAST meeting. **(OPEN)**

Veteran Suicide Rate, February 2023:

- ✚ 17 per day
- ✚ 6,205 annually

Dr. La Pointe ask "if one time this month can you pick up the phone and call somebody? I don't care if it's veteran, a family member, a civilian, a biological family member, somebody you just met in the parking lot, reach out to somebody this month. The last thing I want is to show up next month and report that one of our own has died by suicide. It's five minutes that can mean a lot and I can tell you, I know six people on our council that have either talked about, expressed, referred to, made comments about suicide this past month. So, it's part of us, it's part of what we are supposed to be doing. It's a sad thing and it is what it is. It's what we are doing and why we are here. And, I just ask – one time this month just pick up the phone and call somebody. Drive by, talk to someone, let them know that there's people out here that want to listen, hear them, you don't need to do all the talking. Some of us, it's hard sometime to just sit quiet and let other people talk. Sometime that's all it is, let them talk. Let them know there's an "ear" out there who wants to listen to them. **(OPEN)**

Possible Training Event: Chair reviewed a training opportunity submitted by Kevin Crozier; PTSD and The Law Online Event, Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6 PM – 7:30 PM. <https://www.facebook.com/events/896045571775280>. Notices were sent via email to all council members. **(CLOSED)**

Chair reviewed the email distributed about Mr. Gregory Watson (Gregory.watson75@yahoo.com). They had spoke to one another at the Spur's Event. Greg is a Board Member – South Texas chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, ASIST Master Trainer, Safe TALK Trainer. 831-402-5142 (Cell), 210-346-4962 (Office). They provide a variety of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. We will attempt to have him as a guest speaker at an upcoming VHMCAST meeting. **(OPEN)**

VHMCAST Website/Information: Kevin provided the latest web-site totals (documents will be provided in attachments). **(CURRENT TOTAL HITS: 562,449!)**. He has provided a huge number of additions to pages on the site and shared all via email to the council.

Website: <https://veteranshealthymindsadvisorycouncilsouthtexas.com/home/> FB page

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VHMCAST/?ref=br_rs.

(OPEN)

Caregiver Information: Larissa reviewed information concerning the caregivers, upcoming training and procedures to become a caregiver and difficulty to try and become a caregiver (outside the VA system). She is providing another link to help.

Here is a caregiver link please read.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z9U0WFuyUdswZDnBNuw5oDeQjLHKxSSB/view?fbclid=IwAR22f6mJZuZC1Qh4jMjvuXfApPTyWT2ZWu3ln81zN3g5lyPiIsqMRDqug48> **(CLOSED)**

Welcome/Membership Envelopes: Chair showed a new “Welcome/Membership Envelope” that can be made available to council members to hand out to potential new members.

It includes: Envelope with VHMACHST information label

Application

VHMACHST Brochure

FREE APP Book Marker

VHMACHST “Thank You For Your Service” Business Card”

VHMACHST Council Member’s Card

Veterans Crisis Line (plastic) Card (**CLOSED**)

V. Closing Go Around:

Non-Profit Program Manager: Fred Thomas stated that Carlos had good and accurate information about non-profits and to consider all input. He said that we do need a Secretary and a Treasurer and that members could fill more than one role/position. He has the majority of the paperwork in place. We need to get an EIN number to file with the IRS. There are some negative things to being a non-profit – a lot of paperwork. But there’s not an individual legal liability. What he’s learned from the council input. The non-profit option is the way the council should proceed. But he is prepared to move forward with appropriate paperwork for the organization either way.

Kevin Crozier: I think we need to expand membership. We need “fresh blood” as the saying goes. More people. More organizations... other than that, I’m good to go!

VHMACHST Outreach:

Unaccompanied Burial Memorial Service – March 15, 2023: at 0900. (Bexar County), 3rd Wednesday of each month, Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, 1520 Harry Wurzbach Rd., SATX 78209 (follow the signs when you enter the main gate). VHMACHST provides arrangement and roses for person being memorialized. PLEASE wear your VHMACHST badge when attending event. (**OPEN**)

VHMACHST Training:

PTSD and The Law Online Event: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6 PM – 7:30 PM. <https://www.facebook.com/events/896045571775280>. Notices were sent via email to all council members. (**OPEN**)

VI. Next Meeting 15 March - 1300

VII. Adjournment

Meeting ended at 1352

VIII: End of Minutes

Minutes Submitted/Approved by Dr. David A. Pointe