

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION
VETERANS' SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
June 22, 2021

I. Meeting called to order

The Veterans Services Advisory Committee meeting was held virtually via GoToWebinar and started at 10:00 am. The following were present:

II. Roll Call Advisory Committee Members

Sara Henly, Lubbock

Greg Gomel, Plano

Earl Newsome, Richardson

Jim Cunningham, New Braunfels

Shelly Mencacci

Larry Wallace

TVC FVA Staff

Elaine Zavala

Cindy Kendrick

III. Public Comment

The floor was opened to members of the public.

No Comments Received

IV. Approval of Minutes of the VASC Meeting Held on April 1, 2021

- Motion to approve made by Lee Rivas
- Motion seconded by Shelly Mencacci
- Minutes approved by unanimous vote.

V. Update from Homeless Subcommittee meeting held May 25, 2021

Chairman shared 8 documents referencing homeless veteran data. Numbers keep changing, need to focus on services.

Gary Lee provided an overview of the Health Care Advocacy Department.

- Gary Lee does not have any homeless outreach, but they walk them to the VA homeless resources and set up appointments. 600 outreaches per year per advocate. We don't have the resources to make a huge impact but can direct the veterans to the VA. Engages with VA hospitals and clinics. Outreach • Outreach about the Texas veterans network Claims

- Homeless veteran outreach in their job descriptions. Use local resources that are already out there in the county. Continuity binders for all 49 offices.

- VCSO outreach locally • Two justice involved coordinators Mental Health

- Holding department meetings to reach out to justice involved veterans and at risk for homelessness veterans dealing with mental health issues.

- JIV program, community and faith-based organizations, governmental challenges have increased the focus on homelessness, peer network connects to the local resources. Employment

- Disable Veteran Outreach Specialists - Homeless Veterans walk into the American Job Centers. They must get triaged, and homelessness is a significant barrier to employment. Then, employees refer them to immediate local resources. First, they take care immediate needs, then when the veteran is job-ready they step in.

Overall findings from TVC overviews.

- TVC does not have specific individuals or job descriptions involving homelessness outreach. Homelessness outreach is an additional duty. Currently, no funds are dedicated to employ a homeless coordinator.

- When TVC employees connect with homeless veterans, the veteran is referred to VA or local resources.

- There is no central guide on homeless resources.

- Blake Harris, Veterans Mental Health Department Director, hosts homeless departmental meetings.

VI. Review of recommendations made by Homeless Subcommittee.

Draft recommendations from homeless veterans subcommittee.

- Create a fact sheet with resources statewide or asset map
- Gather homeless resources on website, portal, booklet
- Add VA Homeless 1-800 #, and TexVet Link

Final Recommendations approved by VSAC after discussion.

Recommendation #1: TVC provide the VA National Call Center for Homeless Veterans number (887-424-3838/ (877-4AID-Vet) on the TVC website by September 30, 2021.

Recommendation #2: TVC gather and provide homeless veterans services portal type information on the TVC website and disperse a printable information paper to partners by September 30, 2021 Information should include local resources as identified and verified by TVC mental health and healthcare advocacy representatives (i.e., Texas Veterans Network/Combined Arms, Integral Care, etc.

Recommendation #3: TVC provide homeless veterans services reference material to its outreach staff for their use and use by non-TVC veterans advocates on an ongoing basis.

VII. Discussion on agenda items for the next Committee meeting.

The Veterans in Justice Subcommittee will provide an overview of their findings at the next meeting as our agenda item. This will provide time for the actions taken in response to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission long term action plan report to address veterans' suicide to be presented to the Texas Legislature on September 1, as required by S.B 578. After review of the THHSC plan, the veterans Suicide Prevention Subcommittee should be able to present to the Committee during the first quarter of 2022.

VIII. Discussion to set the date, time, and location of the next Advisory Committee meeting.

Proposed date of 12 October 2021 at 10:00 am, unanimously approved by the Committee.

IX. Adjournment

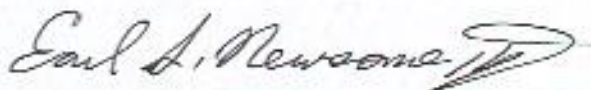
Motion: Adjournment of Advisory Committee meeting
Motion made by Greg Gomei

Motion seconded by Shelly Mencacci

Action: Motion passes:

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00am

Minutes Approved:



Earl S. Newsome III, Chairman