

# Minutes for Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission

## July 12, 2023

### Hybrid In-Person & Virtually

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Call to Order – 8:30 AM MT

Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission was held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, in the Idaho Division of Veterans Services Central Support Office (located at 351 N. Collins Road Boise, ID 83702) and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

#### Attendees

Commission Members in attendance: **Jinny Cash** (acting Chairman as Chairman Josh Callihan was unable to attend), **Rockey Davis**, **Art Gimpel** (Virtual), **Eugene Brown**

IDVS Staff Members in attendance included: IDVS Chief Administrator **Mark Tschampl**, IDVS Deputy Chief Administrator **Tracy Schaner**, IDVS Business Support Services Bureau Chief **Paul Spannkebel**, ISVH-Boise Administrator **Rick Holloway**, ISVH-Boise Deputy Home Administrator **Amber Goodchild**, ISVH-Lewiston Administrator **Mark High**, ISVH-Pocatello Administrator **Josiah Dahlstrom**, ISVH-Post Falls Administrator **Colleen Moon** (Virtual), Idaho State Veterans Cemeteries Bureau Chief Jacob Faulkner, HR Officer Angela Hamilton, Community Resource Coordinator **Mitzi Cheldelin**, Community Resource Admin Assistant **Marisa McCarter** (Virtual), and Management Assistant **Kevin Wallior**.

Number of Citizens in attendance: 0

#### Approval of Minutes

**Acting Chairman Cash** asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on April 20, 2023. **Commissioner Brown** motioned for approval. **Commissioner Davis** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent.

#### Community Outreach – presented by **Mitzi Cheldelin**

Spoke about her outreach efforts around the state working with Veterans Service Organizations and community members to serve Idaho Veterans. Between April 1 and June 30, Mitzi has connected with 875 Veterans, 104 Civilians, and 4,115 mixed groups across 69 events in 13 counties.

Major Events during this past quarter:

- Memorial Day Ceremony at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery in Boise was attended by 900 visitors with collaboration from over 40 organizations.
- The first Idaho Women Veterans Conference since CoVID was a success. Over 80 women participants attended with both inspirational and educational presentations hosted by the Warhawk Air Museum. Exploring hosting a conference annually the Saturday prior to June 12<sup>th</sup>, which is Women's Veterans Day. Also looking to add a telecast option to expand this event statewide for attendees unable to travel.
- In April, the General Consul from the Republic of South Korea visited Boise to present our living Korean War Veterans with Ambassador of Peace Medals. Also placed a wreath at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery in Boise to honor Korean War Veterans no longer with us. Hosted a luncheon with Korean War MIA families.
- The Wall that Heals, a ¾ scale replica of the Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington DC, came to Idaho.

It was displayed 24/7 over a 5-day period. Over 15,000 visitors viewed it at all hours of the day and night. According to the organizers turnout was unprecedented for a community the size of the Treasure Valley.

Highlighted Community Events this quarter:

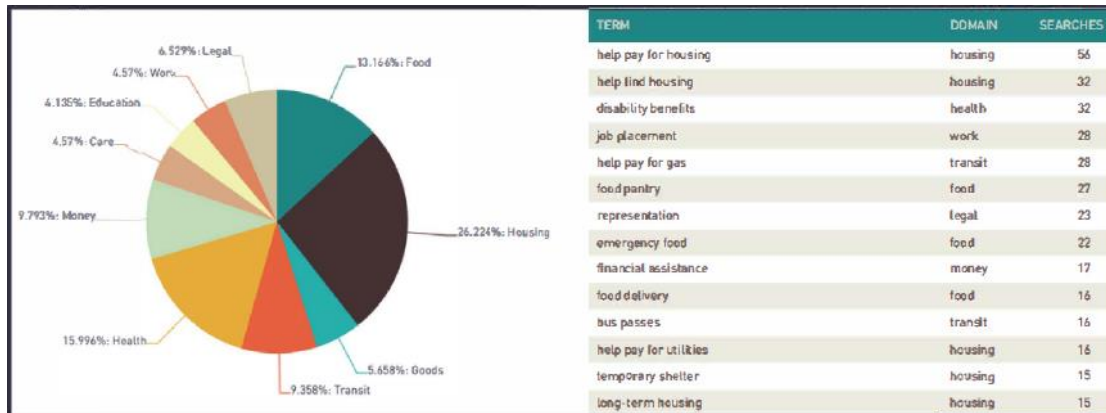
- Kilroy Coffee Klatch at the Warhawk Air Museum
- POW/MIA Sweet Ride
- Eagle Field of Honor, Benefiting Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Idaho Veterans Network Breakfast for service members at Gowen
- IDARNG Pre Retirement Brief
- Boise VAMC Appreciation Fair

Contributions through Outreach:

- Raised \$7,964.15 in direct Veterans Support thanks to Community Partners.
- Multiple moves where volunteers gave their time, vehicles, and energy to assist moving veterans to a new home.
- The purchase and installation of new water pump in a Veteran's well.
- Several send offs and welcome homes for Veteran honor flight recipients.

Ongoing Projects

- Governor's Challenge – Moving through year one of the Governor's Challenge setting up the framework for Suicide Prevention Initiatives in the state of Idaho. We seek to bring together existing support to reach all veterans in need with an all-encompassing approach to mental health.
- Joining Forces: Treasure Valley and Magic Valley – A monthly meeting to bring together all veteran support in our local community to share resources ensuring no veteran in need is turned away from a Veteran Resource Organization.
- Idaho Veterans Guide – Report from April 1 – June 30, 2023
  - 101 Programs Added (4,106 Total)
  - 91 Programs Claimed (1,091 Total)
  - Programs by Area:
    - Local – 2,308 total
    - State – 891 total
    - National – 907 total
  - Top 5 Local Engaged Programs – Mission43, Veterans Services; IDVS, Office of Veterans Advocacy; University of Idaho Remote Work Certification; El-Ada Community Action Partnership; Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force
  - Site Activity: 1,941 Searches, 1,028 Interactions
  - Site Search Trends:



- **Special Highlight**

A woman in Savannah, Georgia, who's husband served w/ a Veteran located in Idaho was concerned about the struggles and addiction issues the Idaho Veterans was suffering. She posted in a national group seeking assistance. A retired Idaho National Guard member currently living in Mississippi helped connect her with resources in Idaho. Mitzi connected the Idaho Veteran in need of assistance with Mission43 Project Resilience. Mission43 Project Resilience was able to get the Veteran into a long-term rehab program located in Texas and is paying for the treatment. Local Veteran Service Organizations stepped up to get his back rent and past due bills paid. They also were able to get his dogs boarded/fostered with a local family.

## Division Bureau Reports

### HR Report presented by **Angela Hamilton**

HR Modernization – All human resources staff were successfully transferred from IDVS to DHR on June 11, 2023. The staff will remain in our facilities but will be under DHR leadership.

Luma – Luma was implemented on June 20, 2023. There have been some technical issues with the Human Capital Management piece of the system that all HR staff are working hard to identify and correct with assistance from the Luma team.

Currently working to update the IDVS Personnel Policies and Procedures, as well as the IDVS Supervisory Handbook.

### OVA Report presented by **Bill Heyob**

OVA statistics comparing YTD FY-2023 totals to FY-2022:

	2023 YTD	2022 YTD	Increase/Decrease
Interviews YTD	8,449	7,324	+ 1,125
Phone Interviews	53,972	48,291	+ 5,681
POAs Filed YTD	6,048	5,107	+ 941
Claims Filed YTD	12,037	9,071	+ 2,966
Correspondence	9,719	6,334	+ 3,385
Appeals YTD	393	461	- 68
Home Visits	205	182	+ 23
Veterans Seen by OVA in Vet Courts	507	523	- 16
State Emergency Grants Approved	6	6	0

Comparing the 4th Quarter FY-2023 to 4th Quarter FY-2022, resulted in 294 additional office interviews, 1,279 additional phone calls, 880 additional claims filed, and 378 additional pieces of claims correspondence filed to the VA.

### **Noteworthy Issues Currently Happening with the VA**

- Boise VA Regional Office is continuing to hire new employees as part of the VBA Expansion due to workload increase due to the PACT Act.

- - Since the VA began accepting PACT Act Presumptive claims, the VA (Nationally) has received 722,654 claims with 394,782 still pending. Of the pending, 136,700 are in backlog status. Idaho PACT Act Claims submitted total 4,554.
- - Veterans have until August 19, 2023, to submit a PACT Act claim to have it back dated to August 10, 2022 as the effective date.
- - Camp Lejeune Justice Act (Contaminated Water Lawsuits) have until August 9, 2024, to submit a claim.
- - Boise VA Regional Office will be hosting a PACT Act Claims Clinic in Pocatello in September. They will be asking for our help to advertise the events and to see if we would like to participate.
- - VA increase the Award Rate for Non-Service-Connected Burial Benefit to \$893.00. The Plot Allowance Rate is \$893.00 if a Veteran is interred in a private cemetery. The VA is also paying transportation costs that are identified on the Itemized Funeral Bills. Service-Connected Burial Awards will also pay the transportation costs on top of the \$2,000 award.

### **Significant Events within the OVA**

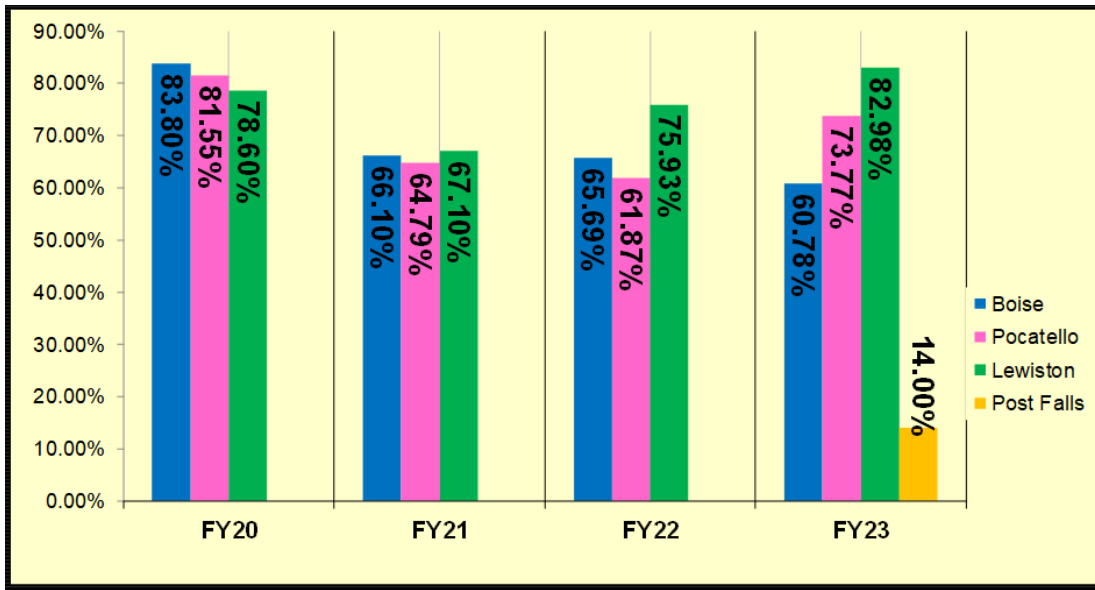
- We will be conducting the Annual County and Post Service Officer Training at the Riverside Hotel from August 16-18, 2023.
- VFW will be conducting their Annual Skills Level Training in Annapolis, MD September 10-14.
- The 2023 Idaho Women Veterans Conference was conducted at the Warhawk Museum on Sunday, June 11th with approximately (40) in attendance.
- OVA will be announcing a new VSO position for the Boise VA Regional Office soon. We are working with the Boise VARO to modify our office layout to permit an additional cubicle.
- The new [Quarterly OVA Bulletin](#) should be released within the next week or so.
- OVA has been participating in many outreach events to include the Idaho National Guard Family Day at Zoo Boise, AARP Idaho Town Hall, Lion's Club, National Guard Pre-Retirement Events, etc.

### **Fiscal Report presented by Debbie Spence**

#### FY23 YTD Nursing Occupancy Rate

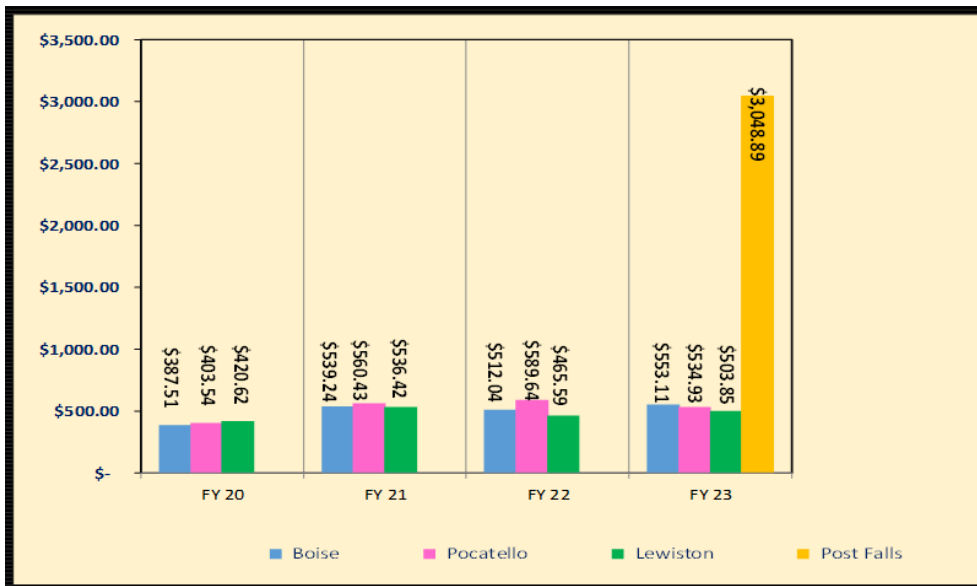
- IDVS Average – 64.9%
  - Boise Home 60.1%
  - Lewiston Home 82.9%
  - Pocatello Home 73.8%
  - Post Falls Home 14.0%
- Idaho Statewide Average – 61.0%

Average Census YTD Comparisons



FY23 Average Cost per Resident Day – Nursing \$576.69, Dom/Residential \$264.44

Nursing Yearly Costs Comparison per Resident Day

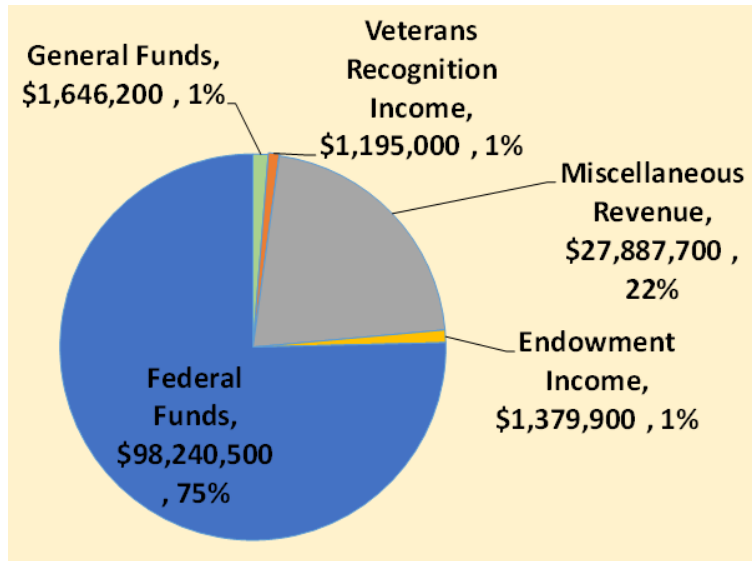


FY23 Preliminary End Results

- \$15,722,173 reverted appropriation, 22% of the total appropriation (\$72,864,390)
  - \$3,000 General Funds < 0.2%
  - \$4,352,075 Veterans Recognition Fund 6% (Post Falls Construction)
  - \$999,334 ARPA 1.4% (previous year appropriation reloaded but no cash)
  - \$3,452,347 CARES Act 4.7% (Post Falls Construction)
  - \$1,178,504 Federal Funds 1.6% (Post Falls Construction)
  - \$5,865,948 Misc. Receipts 8.0%
  - \$81,547 Endowment < 0.1%

Audits in Progress: FY20 – FY22 Accountability Review; FY22 Cost Report Audit

FY2024 Budget Appropriation \$130,349,300



General Fund Percentage of Appropriation by FY: FY20 1.6%; FY21 2.6%; FY22 2.4%; FY23 2.9%; FY24 1.3%

FY2025 Budget Preparation has begun. All bureaus have submitted their budget request to CSO. CSO is compiling the Division budget request to review with the Governor's Office Liaison and DFM to discuss necessity of request items.

FY2025 Budget will include:

- The Veterans Recognition Fund Allocation Plan recommendation (no grants)
- Our plan for operating if there is a reduction of 10% or more in federal funds that we receive per Governor's Executive Order #2014-03
- New Capital Outlay Items
- FY24 Supplemental Requests for Construction Projects
- Reappropriation for All Construction Grants (not completed)
- Boise Home Replacement Fund Increase

### **Construction Grants Update** presented by **Tracy Schaner**

IDVS received a grant award letter for the Boise Home Replacement Project. We have accepted the conditional grant award.

Construction will begin spring/summer of 2024.

### **Boise Veterans Home Report** presented by **Rick Holloway**

The final WWII Veteran residing in the Home passed away a few weeks ago. This was a long-time resident who lived most of their life in the Dom/Res.

Boise identified an error in the submission for a 5-star CMS facility.

The Public Health Emergency has lapsed.

Currently working to place residents from the domiciliary in other, safe living arrangements. Boise is ceasing it's

Dom/Res program because the VA Dom/Res reimbursement doesn't cover the cost of operating the Dom/Res program.

	Census								
	Nursing Care			Medicare A		Residential/Domiciliary Care			
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	
April	2,300	77	63%	43	1.4	411	14	39%	
May	2,376	77	63%	9	0.3	365	12	33%	
June	2,249	75	61%	23	0.8	340	11	31%	
Total/Avg	6,925	76	62%	75	0.8	1,116	12	34%	

**Pocatello Veterans Home Report** presented by **Josiah Dahlstrom**

DPW & Maintenance Projects:

- 20-604 Replace/Install Parking lot drains – began in May, ongoing.
- 21-606 Phase II of screening facilities. Discussion has begun with some minor changes to the locker room and outside surrounding entrance/concrete work. Construction has not begun but is anticipated to take 1-2 weeks when it does begin.
- 22-600 Boiler and Chiller Replacement – ongoing with some concern for warmer temperatures, placing emphasis on maintaining our current cooling system until this project can be completed over the next 18 months.

Significant Community Support and Activities

- Texas Roadhouse in Pocatello sponsored dinners for our residents over the last few months. We took several small groups and brought take-out for residents who weren't able to go.
- Volunteer staff from the ISVH-Pocatello participated in the 2023 Portneuf Valley Paintfest starting on June 19. Teamed up with Simplot and Simplot Credit Union to prep and paint a single level house. The homeowner was thrilled with the results.
- Received a grant from the Idaho Commission of the Arts to create an Art Club over the winter. The group culminated with an Art Reception with artist Bob Beason. We served appetizers and displayed artwork for the reception.
- We were visited by Marine Veteran, Scott Montefusco, on his Great American Road Trip (GART)! Our Veterans got a chance to check out his 1952 WWII Willy's Jeep and visit with Scott and local Veterans who came by to join the fun.

Surveys

**Last Annual State Survey 08/05/2019**

**State:** 08/05/2019 **Life Safety:** 12/06/2022 **CMS:** 06/24/2020 **VA:** 06/28/2023

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
April	1,500	50	75%	29	1.0
May	1,488	48	73%	31	1.0
June	1,440	48	73%	41	1.4
<b>Total/Avg</b>	<b>4,428</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

**BREAK 9:45 AM – 10:00 AM**

**Lewiston Veterans Home Report** presented by **Mark High**

DPW & Maintenance Projects

- The city of Lewiston has implemented a no automatic irrigation water restriction for our area. Maintenance will be hand watering areas around the facility. Areas outside of the fire lane will not be watered. The grounds are showing the impact of the lack of water combined with the heat. We continue to hand water as much as possible and are receiving some much-appreciated assistance from our residents looking to help!
- Windows have been installed in the business office. This project is now substantially complete.
- Replaced a broken window in the Activities room in June but found a large scratch in the windowpane during installation.
- Parking lot seal project is our only current DPW project. We received the project manual and prints in June and are awaiting bids.

Significant Community Support and Activities

- The Theon Flag Raising raised enough donations for us to purchase an Interactive Table for the mild to moderate cognitive residents.

	Census				
	Nursing Care			Medicare A	
	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Apr	1,576	53	80%	72	2.4
May	1,573	51	77%	52	1.7
Jun	1,536	51	78%	9	0.3
<b>Total/Avg</b>	<b>4,685</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>1.5</b>

Showcased a slideshow video of the various activities and events Veterans participated in during the previous quarter.

**Post Falls Veterans Home Report** presented by **Colleen Moon**

DPW & Maintenance Projects:

- Punchlist items continue.

Significant Community Support and Activities

- Dietary Department was awarded a Gold Star by the Panhandle Health District for Health inspection.



- Memorial Day- The Post Falls American Legion came to our Veterans Home and did a dedication ceremony POW/MIA Table
- The Lions Club donated a Bench of Gratitude to our Post Falls Veterans Home, thanking each resident for their Service.

		Census				
		Nursing Care			Medicare A	
		Days of Care	Avg Daily Census	Occupancy Rate	Days of Care	Avg Daily Census
Apr		227	8	11%	30	1.0
May		338	11	17%	9	0.3
Jun		462	15	23%	0	0.0
<b>Total/Avg</b>		1,027	11	17%	39	0.4

**Veterans Cemetery Report** presented by **Jake Faulkner**

Boise Veterans Cemetery had 812 interments (574 Veterans and 238 dependents) and Blackfoot Cemetery had 53 interments (49 Veterans and 4 dependents) during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of FY2023.

There were 2,673 Volunteer Hours ytd.

DPW 20-606 / Boise Veterans Cemetery Expansion (As of: 07/12/2023):

Completed project will add additional Columbarium Walls, surveyed plots for urn burials, and a new Memorial Wall courtyard.

Est. start date of 7/12

Estimated project completion and opening – TBD. VCGP

Total project budget \$840,000

Total construction budget \$646,000

DPW 21-605 Cemetery Projects, Blackfoot (As of: 07/12/2023):

The completed project will add a 30x60 ft maintenance building, employee break room, conference room, and public restrooms.

Broke ground 07/10/23

Showed some photos from the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 29, 2023.

**Education Report** presented by **Paul Spannkebel**

FY2023 Allocation:

Received \$55,379.21 on May 30<sup>th</sup> for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter VA reimbursement.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter reimbursement is due to the VA no later than August 18, 2023. It will be submitted to the VA once the final June pay period is released July 21, 2023.

COLA modification was approved by the VA in mid-March 2023. It will increase the FY23 Allocation from \$172,480

to \$187,486.

FY22 Supplemental budget request of \$79,189.31 was approved by the VA on June 12, 2023, can expect the disbursement in early 2024, possibly earlier.



## Education Contributes to Idaho's Economy

FY22 - FINAL		
Gender of Beneficiary	Total Paid	Percentage of Usage
+ Female	\$ 12,345,073.28	48.99%
+ Male	\$ 28,739,368.61	43.96%
+ Not Reported	\$ 367,419.78	7.04%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 41,451,861.67</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Idahoan Beneficiaries served in FY22: 3,350

FY23 - YTD		
Gender of Beneficiary	Total Paid	Percentage of Usage
+ Female	\$ 9,555,328.21	26.74%
+ Male	\$ 22,655,517.15	63.39%
+ Not Reported	\$ 3,526,391.91	9.87%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 35,737,237.27</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Idahoan Beneficiaries served in FY23-YTD: 2,755

### Program Activities in FY2023 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter

The Education Team oversees 368 facilities throughout the state of Idaho. Of the 368 facilities, each program approved by the Idaho's SAA\* requires continuous oversight by the Education Team in way of:

- New program approvals
- Program yearly program reapprovals
- Program modifications
- Program withdrawals

Program Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 Total Number of Idaho Facilities	Q4 Newly Approved Programs
IHL	21	19	20	21	1660
NCD plus Flight	48	41	43	41	247
Apprenticeships (APP)	175	175	187	167	20
On-The-Job (OJT)	137	137	137	134	2
Licensing & Certifications:	0	0	0	3	1
Preparatory Courses:	0	0	0	2	2
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>1932</b>

While 19 poor or low performing facilities were withdrawn in Q4, the number of programs approved grew due to existing and new facilities adding additional quality programs for veterans and beneficiaries to choose from.

## Current Projects in Education

Continued to focus on reinforcing timely submission of reapprovals for IHLs and NCDs. The education team is accountable to VA for timeliness, we are extending that accountability to the facilities themselves.

Team focused on increasing productivity in 2023 achieving a 99% reporting net increase in Idaho SAA productivity from this same time last year. In 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY2022, the education team responded to or participated in 23 various technical assistance requests, outreach, liaison, and training opportunities. In 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter FY2023, the team responded to or participated in 137 technical assistance requests, outreach, liaison, and training opportunities.

Continue to work actively with ITS project team to create IDVS education's first database and ap (power pages) to house facility information and workflows.

Training our TRS1 is dialing down. Wendy's probationary period will end in July; she has proven herself an asset for the team.

### Assigned 8 RBS (Risk-Based Surveys)

- 4 IHLs and 4 NCDs
- 50% of assigned facilities submitted to VA by the end of the (VA's) Q3
- 100% of the assigned facilities have been visited.
- Working to collect remaining RBS materials from school and submit final reports to VA by end of VA's Q4 (September)

FY23 Risk factor identified 8 Idaho facilities:

- 3 facilities with 85/15 program violations
- 4 facilities with 30% increase in tuition and fees from academic year '21 to academic year '22
- 1 persistence rate more than 55%
- We withdrew 2 NCD facilities (and their programs)
- One NCD school's RBS resulted in \$68K in overpayments to the school. This school elected to voluntarily withdraw their programs' approvals.
- We withdrew 1 IHL facility (and their programs) and approved 2 new IHL school (and their programs) for GI Bill® in Q3.
- A private, nonprofit IHL was referred to VA for a TRBR, Targeted Risk Based Review, due to multiple risk factors discovered during the RBS conducted by the Education team.

## **Business Support Report** presented by **Paul Spannkebel**

Reiterated implementation pains regarding the Luma launch. Our staff are working hard to smooth the process when possible and identifying issues outside of our control to the statewide Luma team for resolution.

IDVS is hiring a Business Analyst to better liaise between IDVS and ITS to better serve the Agency and our programs.

## **Central Support Office Updates**

## **Chief Administrator's Remarks** presented by **Mark Tschamp**

Continue to focus on outreach.

Receiving calls from his counterparts in other States inquiring how they can replicate programs Idaho has launched such as the online Idaho Veterans Resource Guide, project to identify all Veterans in state, a potential project to utilize ai to process data to connect Veterans at high risk for suicidal ideation to life saving resources.

Looking at ways to increase access to dental care for Veterans to address shortfall from the VA.

#### Staffing

Agency has had success in finding high quality team members to fill vacancies across our programs.

Our ability to offer scheduling flexibility has proven successful in attracting and retaining hard to fill nursing positions. (Three 12-day shifts for a 36-hour work week but maintaining the same pay as a 40-hour work week).

#### **New Business**

Discussed having the next IVAC meeting at one of the state Veterans Homes. After discussion decided to host the October IVAC meeting at the Pocatello Home. Tentatively scheduled for October 26.

**Acting Chairman Cash** is open to a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Davis** motioned to adjourn at 11:20 AM MT. **Commissioner Brown** seconded. The motion was approved with unanimous assent.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM MT

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Kevin R. Wallior  
Management Assistant  
Idaho Division of Veteran Services