

# **VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, & THEIR FAMILIES COORDINATION COUNCIL**

## *MEETING MINUTES*

*Tuesday, April 22, 2014*

*Meeting Called to Order at 9:30 AM.*

*Present:* Senator Marv Hagedorn, Idaho State Senate  
Representative James Holtzclaw, Idaho State House of Representatives  
David Brasuell, Idaho Division of Veterans Services  
Tamara Mackenthun, Idaho Division of Veterans Services  
Colonel Fred Gilson, IDARNG  
Ross Edmunds, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare  
Alacia Handy, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare  
Chris Ramos, Idaho Department of Labor  
Dr. Bill Goesling, Idaho State Board of Education  
Patty Weeks, Idaho Association of Counties  
David Wood, Boise VA Medical Center  
Kathy Malin, Boise VA Regional Office  
Colonel Timothy Cook, 366<sup>th</sup> Medical Group Mountain Home AFB  
Dana Kelly, Idaho State Board of Education  
Brent Ferro, Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS) US  
Department of Labor  
Sara Stover, Idaho Division of Financial Management  
Nick Landry, Idaho Division of Financial Management  
Kevin Wallior, Idaho Division of Veterans Services (minute taker)

*Next meeting:* August 2014

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### ***I. WELCOME – INTRODUCTIONS – ANNOUNCEMENTS***

- One by one, all attendees identified themselves and their organizations.

## **II. ORIENTATION BRIEFING**

- Background
  - The idea for this Committee arose during the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Policy Academy May 8-10 2013, attended by representatives from the Idaho Legislature, Department of Health & Welfare, Division of Veterans Services, National Guard, Supreme Court, and Association of Counties, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
  - The objective was and continues to be to create a sustainable, state-level strategic action plan that will:
    - Increase access to appropriate care;
    - Close service gaps in the system;
    - Build the system's capacity;
    - Increase interagency communication/collaboration; and
    - Incorporate evidence-based and best practices.
  - Challenges
    - Approximately, 11,000 veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, and an unknown number of their family members, will return to Idaho communities.
    - 16.5% of all Veterans have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
    - 19.5% of Veterans have a traumatic brain injury
    - Veterans' unemployment rate has been improving; however, many Veterans are significantly underemployed
    - An estimated 58 veterans committed suicide in Idaho in 2010, which cost taxpayers approximately \$68 M.
  - Specific Problems
    - We are data rich, but information poor.
      - Data is collected by several agencies, but we currently have no means for aggregating or

compiling into usable information for decision makers.

- Unable to quantify how many SMVF are currently receiving services across treatment systems.
- Limitations to behavioral & physical health service access for Idaho's SMVFs.
  - Geography: many Idaho Veterans live in isolated rural areas.
  - Availability: the number of service providers is limited throughout the state, but particularly in rural areas.
  - Awareness: services are dispersed across a number of agencies, which makes it difficult for those seeking help to find the right place to get what they need.
  - Eligibility: Guardsmen who have never deployed may have residual health issues associated with their service but may not have access to Tricare or the VA Medical Center.
- Recommendations
  - The SAMHSA Policy Academy team drafted a strategic plan to engage Idaho senior leadership.
  - The most significant action in this proposed plan is to create a formalized SMVF interagency council.
  - This group will leverage existing resources to unify the many agencies and organizations that focus on helping Service Members, Veterans, and their Families under one umbrella in order to:
    - Help eliminate duplication of services;
    - Develop outreach campaigns for existing services; and

- Gather reliable information to identify unmet and future needs.
- Initial concerns:
  - How many veterans are in the state of Idaho?
  - Where do National Guardsmen fit into the larger picture?
  - Idaho is in the top 3 states for attracting military retirees and veterans.
  - Idaho needs to do a better job advertising that it will take care of SMVF.

### ***III. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS***

- Determine which agencies will take point nominating remaining members of the committee as mandated by the Governor's Executive Order.
  - Initial Recommendations:
    - Active, reserve, or retired representative from each of the five services:
      - Army –
      - Marine Corps – IDVS
      - Navy – IDVS
      - Air Force – 366<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing
      - Coast Guard – IDVS
    - Current member of the Idaho National Guard – Idaho National Guard
    - Representative of a Veterans service organization – IDVS
    - Spouse of an active duty or Idaho National Guard member – Idaho National Guard
- Determine if members not included in Executive Order should be formally nominated.
  - Initial Recommendations:

- Idaho State Judiciary
  - Idaho Department of Corrections
  - Idaho State Police
- Committee Discussion/Recommendations for additional representatives:
  - ROTC
  - Representative from Fairchild AFB
  - Representative from the Spokane VAMC and the Salt Lake City VAMC, both institutions provide care to Idaho veterans.
    - Director Wood meets regularly with the directors of Spokane and Walla Walla VAMC and semi-regularly with the director of the Salt Lake City VAMC, and stated he could coordinate with those facilities.
  - Senator Marv Hagedorn suggested that a member of the Idaho State Judiciary represent the Judiciary, DoC, and ISP. It is not necessary to have a representative from every law enforcement agency. Ross Edmunds concurred.
    - It was suggested that Judge Michael Griffin from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Court would make a good representative.
    - Ross Edmunds suggested to avoid stepping on any toes to let the Idaho Supreme Court decide on a representative and recommend Judge Griffin.
  - Business Council Representative
    - The Coordination council should involve employers.

#### ***IV. SUB-COMMITTEES***

- Recommendations regarding subcommittee lead agencies:
  - Integrated Health Care (Physical and Behavioral Health) – Department of Health & Welfare
  - Military Issues – Idaho National Guard
  - Education – Idaho Board of Education

- Employment – Idaho Department of Labor
- Transportation/Rural Strategies – Idaho Association of Counties
- Justice – Idaho Supreme Court
- Women Veterans – IDVS
- Committee Discussion/Recommendations for additional subcommittees:
  - Political/Legislative Subcommittee – Senator Hagedorn, Representative Holtzclaw and Sara Stover
  - Demographic Collection & Reporting Subcommittee – IDVS lead agency, with support from Association of Counties, Dept. Health & Welfare, Boise VARO, and Boise VAMC
    - Inventory programs/efforts/initiatives that already exist. Before identifying need, it is important to know what is already out there.
    - Where are veterans located in Idaho?
      - Military recruiters track discharged veterans for the purposes of attracting former active duty into the reserves.
    - What is veteran population density in communities around Idaho?
    - Needs are shifting. A few years ago the biggest issues regarded the upheaval associated with large-scale deployments of Idaho National Guard and their returns.
    - The near future will bring a large scale draw down of active duty military as the US continues to transition out of a wartime status.
    - How many veterans are serving in elected positions?
      - Idaho Senate has 6 veterans
      - Idaho House has 10 veterans
      - Many of our current political figures are from the era between Vietnam and the Gulf War

- Expectation that that will change as more and more veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan eras run for office.

Ross Edmunds moved to officially add the Idaho Supreme Court to the Core Committee and ask them to take lead on the Judicial Subcommittee. Senator Hagedorn seconded. Unanimous approval expressed by all in attendance.

Senator Hagedorn moved to accept subcommittees as discussed. Chris Ramos seconded. Unanimous approval expressed by all in attendance.

## ***V. COMMUNICATION FLOW***

- Communication Structure
  - Subcommittees will take lead on collecting information on issues particular to that subcommittee and will forward reports to Core Committee.
- Formalization
  - Each subcommittee should have a charter
  - Initial feedback regarding the Charter Template of each subcommittee should be received by May 15.

## ***VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE***

- Meet in August to review subcommittee charters
  - Discuss and edit, as necessary.
  - Determine and finalize membership rolls of each subcommittee, ensuring that there is sufficient cross-pollination between different agencies.
    - Before the meeting in August, all core committee members shall provide their thoughts on subcommittee membership for all nine subcommittees. These suggestions will be compared and discussed to determine the final membership roll.
- Launch Event
  - Plan for September 2014

*Meeting Adjourned at 11:05 am.*