

Macomb Veterans Action Collaborative Minutes
Macomb Community Action Training Room
21885 Dunham Clinton Township, MI 48038
Monday, October 7, 2019

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Laura Rios at 9:02 am.

Attendees:

Laura Rios (Co-Chair), Veteran Services
Christy Koons, Region 10 PIHP
Adrienne Gasperoni, CARE of SEMI
Katie Page, Vet Center
Darryle Johnson, Vet Services
Katie Carroll, MC Veterans
Lisa Marie Duncan-Edwards, MC Veterans
Madeline Habib, MCCMH/HSCB
Dawn Revyn, VOA
Jennifer Georgievski, MI Vet Employment
Kyle Pollet, Con Sander Levin Office
Sharon Urban, Veteran Services – Minute Taker

Nicole Gauthier (Co-Chair), Veteran Navigator
Charlene Myers, NCOA/DAV
Chris Reilly, Michigan Works!
Crystal Bersche, WD Vet Employment
Kara Fields, Macomb Community College
David Hannum, Vet Services
Liz Sergeant, Macomb Community Action
Joyce Moultrie, Macomb County Veterans
Kevin Hrit, Sen Peters Office
Gabriella Barthlow, Vet Services
Brian Webb, State of Michigan DHHS

II. **INTRODUCTIONS**

The committee members went around the table and introduced themselves and the service organization to which they worked.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The September 09, 2019 minutes were approved as a matter of record.

IV. **NEW/OLD BUSINESS/VCAT UPDATE**

No New Business.

VCAT Update: Kara Fields from Motor City Veteran Community Action Team (previously VCAT Region 10) is having their next event on Friday December 13th in Detroit at the American Red Cross Building. The focus of this event will be the Mission Act and holistic care. As soon as Kara has more information and/or an agenda she will send it out to the group.

V. **SPECIAL SPEAKER:** Laura Rios, Health Care Mission Act

Laura stated she could not secure a representative from the VAMC to present updates regarding the Health Care Mission Act. She stated the first step was for each veteran to go through their VA primary care physician to let them know they wanted to use a facility other than the VAMC

(community based care). Lisa Marie stated that it is up to each veteran to go to the VA.gov website to see if the Urgent Care facility (community based care) they want to use is listed as a VA partner. Only Urgent Care's listed on this website will be approved by the VA to use. There are also three (3) documents on the website that each veteran would need to print off and fill out before he/she could use the Urgent Care on the list. She hopes to be able to provide more information after the Motor City Veteran Community Action Team event in December.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Benefits/Communication: Laura Rios stated the Blue Water Navy claims will be processed in January 2020.

B. Employment: Mark was absent at the meeting but he sent Laura some flyers regarding the Hoops for Troops and the Veteran Stand Down. The Hoops for Troops will be held Wednesday November 6 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Little Caesars arena in Detroit. The 2019 Veteran Stand Down will be held October 16 and 17th from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The October 17th event will emphasize women veterans. The Stand Down will be held at the Michigan Light Guard Armory in Detroit. For more information go to: www.4vets.org. Crystal stated

C. Services: Madeline Habib wanted to let the group know that she is in the process of updating the Homeless Flow Chart; she is waiting for a final confirmation.

D. Membership: Shaun Taft was absent from the meeting. Laura stated Shaun will no longer be able to attend the MVAC meetings on Mondays and that she would like to step down as the Membership Committee Chair. She will still be a member of the MVAC but she will not be able to fulfill the duties of the Membership Chair. Laura asked the members present to please consider taking on this committee as it is open now. If you are interested about chairing this committee or would like more information about what it entails, please contact Laura.

E. Faith Based: Rodney Talbert was absent from the meeting.

F. Higher Education: Kara Fields stated GI Bill veterans should get a letter from VA around January 2020 regarding their payments. If they have overpaid, they can keep their money. If they have been underpaid, they will get a check in the spring. Macomb Community College has a Veteran and Military Service office (Resource Office) that helps veteran students with many different benefits i.e. jobs, school and VA. Oakland Community College hired their first Veteran Service's Coordinator. The Consortium of Michigan Veterans Educators had their annual conference that focused on social resources available for student veterans and veteran dependents. Please contact Kara for additional information about this or any other education questions.

VII. ROUND ROBIN

Laura stated that Dean Shunk from Voc Rehab will be retiring at the end of October. She does not know who will be his replacement in her office. Macomb Community Action has money for Rapid Rehousing. Disability Network of Macomb and has SSVF money. If you come across a veteran in housing crisis, please have them contact Katie Carroll from our office or Liz Sergent from MCA, both have the By-Name list and other resources to help the veteran navigate through the system.

She also gave updates regarding the new veteran's home that is being constructed in Chesterfield.

Grand Opening will depend on state certification. Construction will be done January 2021 and they expect a small amount of residents will be able to move in April 2021 (depending certification). This facility will be skilled nursing home ONLY. It will be open to war time veterans and peacetime veterans. If they are 70% service connected or higher they will not have a copay at all and the VA will pay their fees to live there. For everyone else it will be based on their income but still significantly less than what a traditional nursing home will cost. Average costs will be around \$3,500-\$4,500 on a sliding scale based on the ability to pay (they are still developing their fee schedule). They do expect to have their waiting list up and running in the next 6 months. Any veteran that is currently in Grand Rapids facility will get priority to move here if they choose to. Spouses will be able to come here but space will be VERY limited to only a few, possibly 5. Gold Star Parents are also eligible to live at the veteran's home. The jobs will consist of both state employee jobs and contracted jobs. The state is looking at hiring management starting in the spring of 2020.

The November MVAC meeting will be a BIG meeting. After the special speaker, the members will break out into 4 groups to discuss the future of the collaborative. Laura will be sending out weekly reminders and she urges every member to attend this very important meeting. There will be no committee reports introductions or round tables. Please bring handouts to the November meeting if you have information to share.

Brian Webb stated that Christy Koons is now working with him in Lansing as a State Regional Coordinator. The next Veteran Navigator Summit will be held October 24th.

Liz Sergent stated Macomb Community Action has Rapid Housing money for homeless veterans. The veteran has to be considered totally homeless, no couch surfing, to be eligible. Please call her at 586-463-2405 for more information.

Kevin Hrit stated he would take the information regarding the Mission Act back to Senator Peter's office. The Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2020 which supports a total of \$750 billion for national defense programs, including those at the Department of Defense and Department of Energy national security programs. They are pushing for full funding on the 2020 census. Back in July the VA Caregiver Act was passed. Please call him with any issues: 248-804-6020.

Chris Reilly stated if you have any veterans who were laid off from GM Tech Center please direct them to the Trade Act. The GM Tech Center was certified under trade dollars by the U.S. Government. This gives them extra training benefits. Please contact Chris for more information.

Madeline reminded the collaborative of the HSCB Information Exchange which will be held on October 24th. You may register online at: <http://mhscb.mccmh.net/TrainingEvents.aspx>.

Katie Page reminded the collaborative about her Battlefield Acupuncture and Trauma Sensitive Yoga. These are free and are held at the South Campus of Macomb Community College. There is also a Meditation group starting October 10th. She provided flyers for all these events. In September the Vet Center teamed up with Stack Up for a gaming event. This event included games like on the Xbox platform. She said it was small but a fun event. They are looking to try to expand on this in the future.

Kara Field is working with the VAMC to see what services can be brought to the college. This is for student veterans that for some reason cannot make it to Detroit to be seen.

Crystal stated they are making improvements to their program. If you or your organization would like to know more, please contact her. She can also come out to do a presentation to your group. Jason

Bruggeman is the Veterans' Employment Representative. He covers Macomb County, Oakland County, St. Clair County, and the City of Detroit. His role is to work side by side with our Michigan Works Business Account Managers or Business Service Professionals to aide a job ready veteran in gaining employment.

Gabriella Barthlow stated the MVAA has free financial counseling through a state pilot program. The MVAA's Michigan Veterans Trust Fund recently approved a 15 month agreement with Greenpath Financial Wellness, Inc. For more information please go to their website:

<https://www.michiganveterans.com/a/Michigan-veterans-to-get-free-financial-counseling>

She is also available for financial coaching. Please contact her at:

Gabriella.Barthlow@macombgov.org

Dean Shunk stated the VocRehab department had the best year ever. There were lots of changes coming soon.

NEXT MEETING

November Special Speaker: Diane Laskey, Grace Counseling
Planning Session immediately to follow.

December Special Speaker: Angela Bower, Yoga Medics

VIII. ADJOURMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 A.M.