



Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

January 5th, 2015, 9:00am – 11:00am

Multnomah Building, Copper Conference Room, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97214

MEETING MINUTES Focus – Health Care

Welcome and Introductions

Task Force meeting attended by: Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Chris Aiosa, Medina Kurney, Andrea Jusino, Jill Behunin, Raychel Gary, Daphne Nesbitt, Ryan Waldron, Estanislado Quinones, Pete Pringle, Eric Ensley, Chris Mann, Dan Herrigstad, Seth Lyon, Andrea Gardner, Don Weber, DeAnn Smetana, Amy Conroy, Doug Kuhl, Casey Curry, Andy Smith, Diane Labant

TOPIC / PRESENTER	NOTES	Action
Update on Fairview CBOC, Recap of VA Veterans Town Hall Daniel Herrigstad <i>VA Portland Health Care System</i>	<p>In September of 2014, the central VA signed a lease to replace the existing East Portland Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), located on Glisan St. in the Gateway area. The new facility will be in Fairview on Halsey, and likely open in early 2016. The new facility will be 26,000-square-feet, over three times the size of the former East Portland location, and will have capacity to provide about 30,000 appointments every year. Services will include primary care and mental health treatment, and referrals for other local VA services.</p> <p>This new facility will complement others within the network, including a new Vancouver site that will quadruple square footage of that program, and CBOCs that just opened in Salem and Lincoln City. Last year there were 95,000 unique veterans served by the 12 sites in the system.</p> <p>Recently broke ground for Fisher House in Vancouver, which will house up to 16 family members of a veteran who has an appointment they traveled 50 or more miles for.</p> <p>Dan also gave an update on the quarterly town halls put on in partnership with the Benefits Administration. They typically alternate between locations in Vancouver and Portland, and the December 9th town hall was attended by about 40 veterans and 70 people total. The next one will be held on a Saturday and have more of an informational fair format.</p>	<p>Dan encouraged anyone who is interested in being added to his listserve and getting newsletter or information on the upcoming town halls to email him: Daniel.Herrigstad@va.gov</p>

<p>Overview of VA Choice Card Program</p> <p>Andy Smith <i>Association of Oregon Counties</i></p>	<p>In November, the VA officially launched the Veterans Choice Program for veterans waiting for an appointment or live over 40 miles away from a VA facility. On 11/5 Veterans Choice Cards were mailed to approximately 320,000 veterans who live 40 miles away or more. A few weeks later about 370,000 cards were sent to veterans who had waited over 30 days for an appointment. Around 5,000 veterans in Oregon are on the list for waiting over 30 days for an appointment, but that number is shrinking.</p> <p>Most of the delays are for new appointments, not those who are already in the system. About ten percent of VA care (roughly \$700m) is contracted out every year, and this \$10b expansion over the next three years will greatly improve access for veterans facing distance or waitlist barriers.</p> <p>The program will be administered by a 3rd party, TriWest, and Andy passed around handout describing other services and frequently asked questions. Handout link available on the Veterans Task Force Meeting Materials site.</p> <p>Comments and questions during group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TriWest has hired up so they have capacity to meet demand, but there may be some growth pains as this program starts. • An issue in the past was low rates that TriCare paid so there were limited options of providers who would take it. Likely going to be similar issues with TriWest, just like other programs that pay medicare rates. • The 40 mile distance is “as the crow flies”, not road distance to the nearest facility. Andy presented a state map with the areas over 40 miles from a VA facility shaded in. All of Multnomah County is within 40 miles of facilities, but a portion of Columbia County and a few pockets along the coast are eligible as well as larger sections of Central and Eastern Oregon. • One task force member expressed concern about working through a third party administrator, with possibility that a veteran may be stuck with the bill if there is a dispute. The County Veterans Service Office is a resource if this occurs. • Question came up about the type of care. The law is written such that if a veteran is within 40 miles from a VA facility they aren’t eligible, even if they need specialty care from a facility over 40 miles away. • Stories have emerged about scammers calling veterans and seeking private information for the Choice Card program. If this happens, call VA advocates. 	<p>More information on the Choice Act is available at: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact</p> <p>VA Patient Advocates: 503-273-5308</p>
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<p>Updates</p> <p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan announced that he is working on a project to help veterans get hired, with special emphasis on translating experience from military service to civilian positions. Ryan has partnered with 20-25 refuse haulers with openings for mechanics and drivers, and has approached HireVue to create a platform for businesses to post positions for Oregonians who are deployed. Ryan has talked with ESGR and has support pending confidentiality approval for internet access while overseas. HireVue offers an informative video overview on their site, hirevue.com, and enables employers to post a position and interview questions. Job candidates can complete applications and post video responses to the interview questions – similar to skype. • Transition Projects: with recent hired have almost doubled the case workers for SSVF program. • Eric reported that the County Veterans Services Office has increased access points across the county, including: 3 days/wk in East County (at Multnomah East) with walk-in hours Every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month; a service officer in Mid-county once a week; a service officer at PCC and PSU 3 days a week with walk-in hours; walk-in hours at the Lincoln Building in downtown Portland 3 days per week; and service officer at the CRRC every Friday. Will strengthen email presence for questions: veterans.services@multco.us Recently hired a new service officer and have another one posted until 1/23/15 at: https://multco.us/jobs • Lines for Life has job opening for a military helpline coordinator. • Central City Concern has an opening in the grants per diem program for a female veteran, with possibility of more openings coming up in March. With questions about eligibility please contact the Veterans' Office at 503-688-5098. • Seth gave an overview of the work done by a team from Operation 424 to end homelessness among veterans. The Home for Everyone board will review the workplan this week, then it will go to the executive committee next week. Plan includes action steps and requests. Current data suggests that the local partners have federal resources necessary to meet the goal, with requests likely being greater flexibility with housing-related costs that funds can be used for and the length of time that a veteran and their family can be eligible to receive support. Will share more information on this work at upcoming task force meeting. • Diane has a contact with supplies to help out veterans just moving into housing, such as sleeper sofas, bedding, and more. Contact diane@synergymc.com with requests. • Upcoming Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Clackamas County Stand Down on January 17th from 9-3 at Oregon City Christian Church ◦ Operation Homeless Connect on January 30th, at Sunrise Church in Hillsboro ◦ Returning Veterans Project screening of documentary "Is Anybody Listening". February 26, 6pm. mail@returningveteans.org 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are other agencies or private sector organizations interested in posting positions? 2. Is your organization able to help coordinate this and be conduit to HireVue for posting? <p>If you are interested in either of the action steps Ryan identified, please contact him at rwaldron@republicservices.com</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan noted that if you have any events you would like to have VA involvement at, such as stand downs or resource fairs, please email him and he will help coordinate.
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