



STATE OF WASHINGTON
VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Meeting Minutes

Meeting attended by (VAAC Member)	Bud Compton, Larry Alcantara, Sharon Kirkpatrick and Robert Garrison
Date	March 16,2017
Time	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Location	Lynnwood Library 19200 44 th Avenue West, Lynnwood, WA 98036
Call to Order	Meeting called to order by Bud Compton Invocation by Larry Alcantara Pledge of Allegiance led by Larry Alcantara
Welcome & Introductions:	Welcome and Introduction led by Bud Compton
Presentations	<p>WDVA Update – Liza Narciso</p> <p>WDVA continues to work with our community partners for transitioning service members. A 3 days Soldier for Life Summit was held last week at JBLM. The summit had brought together key federal and state agencies, influential military leaders, innovators in the business and employer community and local community leaders with transitioning service members, veterans and their families. The summit featured seminars, roundtables, panel events, recruiter training and facilitated discussions focused on improving competitive employment for service members, veterans and spouses in addition to networking opportunities.</p> <p>Washington state is home to 593,350 veterans, 65,000 active duty troops. Even with military downsizing majority of outgoing service members stays in Washington. Unemployment rates for veterans is lower than the national average (non-veterans)</p> <p>Incarcerated Veterans – Because of undiagnosed mental health, PTSD, TBI and other issues, often time veterans find themselves in trouble with the law. Nine percent (9%) of all individuals that are incarcerated are veterans. WDVA continues their work in the prison system as well as at work release. As a result, we have a veterans pod (unit) at Stafford Creek and Coyote Ridge staffed by DOC and VA. We have a support group in place for women veterans at Washington Corrections Center for Women in Purdy (Pierce County) and Mission Creek Corrections center in Belfair (Mason County). The women’s group is run by volunteers from our Women Veterans Advisory Committee and service organization staff. WDVA continues to work with incarcerated veterans on helping them with filing for benefits, obtaining</p>

copies of DD-214's, getting VA health exams, and verifying their service records.

YesVets - The YesVets Hiring initiative is the outcome of House Bill 2040 sponsored by Representative Gina McCabe during the 2015 Legislative Session. YesVets encourages businesses in Washington State to hire veterans and to improve veterans employment rate overall. Hiring veterans is good for our state businesses and it is also good for our country. YesVets launched last February and to date 524 veterans was hired and there are 365 employers participating. Staff members within the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, Employment Security Department, and Governor's Office, as well as several chambers of commerce, local associations and volunteers! Any employer can commit to hiring a veteran by signing up for YesVets at www.yesvets.org.

Veterans Homelessness – Because of the rising cost of rent and the lack of housing stock in various counties a lot of individuals have been forced out of their home as they could no longer afford the cost of rent. Our agency is working closely with various federal and state government agencies as well as non-profit organizations to find innovative ways to increase housing stock and appealing to landlords to set aside several units in their apartment complex for veterans.

Community Update – Nicola Smith – Lynnwood City Mayor

The City of Lynnwood have a Veteran One Stop Shop that is manned every week and also the inception of a

Have a Veterans Memorial Park and also a Korean Memorial Monument and the Korean Consul General presented Korean Vets with the Korean Medal.

Creation of Hero's Café. 100+ veterans and their families attended the grand opening. The Hero's Café is held every last Tuesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Verdant Wellness Center. This is a monthly gathering of veterans focusing on fostering outreach, interaction and their welfare within the community. Popularity of this is growing and soon they are going to need a bigger meeting place to hold this gathering.

Snohomish Veterans Assistance Program – Jerry Gadek

His office is the gateway for veterans and families to get assistance for their individual needs. His office works closely with over 18 service organizations in the county. The Veterans Assistance Fund is intended to provide emergency assistance to eligible veterans, widows and family members. Any veteran or family members can contact his office for eligibility information by calling 425-388-7255. Last year 310 VA claims benefits were filed and it resulted in \$400,000.00 back pay to veterans

and \$50,000.00 total monthly compensation. For the last 2 years they were able to assist 15,700 veterans get copies of DD214 and records

CHOICE Program – John Beckham

The Veterans CHOICE Program is part of the Veterans access, choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). In 2014 the Choice Program began to cover Non-VA care for eligible veterans enrolled in the VA health care. Veterans have option to receive Non-VA care rather than waiting for VA appointment or traveling to VA facility. The Choice Program is designed to supplement the care veterans receive at the VA medical facility not replace or limit that care. Use of this program is voluntary. Veteran currently eligible for VA care will retain eligibility even if they uses a Choice Program to obtain care in their respective community. A veteran is referred to Choice if it was determined the requested care is not offered at their local VAMC or through an existing referral pattern with another VAMC. Under the Choice Program, veterans are required to make co-payments in the same manner they would for care or treatment from the VA. In addition, Choice pays after any private health care insurance a veteran might have for non-service connected conditions. When a veteran's primary or first insurance covers the costs of care, the veteran may need to make co=pays or pay other expenses according to the terms of their private health insurance.

Everett Vet Center – Shawn Baza

The Vet Center provide counseling on mental health, employment, as well as services on family issues, education and outreach. Veterans who served in combat are eligible for care at the vet center at no cost as are their families for military related issues. Also eligible are veterans who were sexually assaulted or harassed while on active duty and the families of service members who die on active duty.

Employment – Ray Gopher

Worksource office is located in Everett. Ray works closely with veterans in job search, resume writing, mock interview. There will be a Snohomish County Regional Job and Resource Fair on April 12, 2017 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center located at 13613 40th Avenue NE, Marysville, WA. From 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. this will be open to veterans only and then from 11:00 – 2:00 p.m. it will be open to the public. There will be over 60 employers from the following industries: Aerospace, Law Enforcement, Public Utilities, Manufacturing, Transportation and Education. For more information contact: 425-258-6309

Housing Authority Snohomish County (HASCO) – Jackie Anderson

As any other county along the I-5 corridor, Snohomish county is also experiencing lack of affordable housing. In order for an individual to afford 1 bedroom unit that person has to be making at least \$29.00 an hour. HASCO works closely with other organizations to assist

homeless individuals or those that are on the verge of homelessness. HASCO owns over 2,000 units of rental housing in Snohomish County and administers over 3,000 Section 8 housing vouchers. There are over 5,000 households who are currently waiting for housing assistance. HASCO partnership with the US DVA has resulted in 60 veterans receiving housing since 2009. Each Section 8 Coordinator/Assistant team handles a caseload of 590 clients.

WaServes – Mike Schindler

Is a coordinated network of services, resources and care that provides direct access for veterans, service members and their families. WAServes Greater Puget Sound is the local AmericaServes network for Washington State. Each local AmericaServes consists of vetted service providers that are connected through a Coordination Center. This means that veterans and military families are connected to providers who understand their unique situation and provide the services they need and that providers are able to refer veterans and military families they are unable to serve to the care they need without taking on the time burden associated with linking to another provider or following up. WAServes Greater Puget Sound is available from 8 Counties: Thurston, King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap, Mason, Lewis and Island.

Behavioral Health – Peter Schmidt

Akers Counseling is WDVA's contracted counseling service in Snohomish county. Their office is located at 3931 Colby Ave., Everett, WA (425-388-0281). Akers counseling providers have extensive backgrounds in counseling veterans from all eras. Providers are experienced in treatment of anxiety, depression and trauma related issues including combat related PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma. Services provided include couples counseling and individual counseling.

Smokey Point Behavioral Hospital – Larisa Klein

Smokey Point Behavioral Hospital will be a 115-bed psychiatric hospital that will provide specialized acute care for behavioral health and addiction treatment.

Smokey Point Behavioral will provide specialized, evidence-based treatment for children, adolescents, adults and senior adults designed to meet the needs of our community. Inpatient, day hospital and intensive outpatient programs will be provided and as a community service, the hospital will provide mental health assessments 24/7, at no charge. Opening June 2017.

Education – Chris Szarek

Chris works for Edmonds Community College. He is responsible in the day to day running of the college's Veterans Resource Center. The

	<p>center offers the following services for student veterans as well as active duty student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistance in applying for financial aid from our full-time VA benefits coordinator• Counseling services from our full-time Veterans Support Specialist/Counselor• Computer Lab• Silent Study Area• Lounge Area• Drop-in Tutoring• Seminars and Information Sessions• Coffee and Snacks• Job listings from companies actively seeking student veterans• Resources and Information• Student Veterans Association Club Meetings
Issues Discussed	NONE