



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
*PO BOX 41150 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1150 • 360-725-2167*

**Meeting Minutes**

<b>Meeting attended by (VAAC Member)</b>	Charles, Wharton & Bobo Garrison
<b>Date</b>	July 11, 2018
<b>Time</b>	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
<b>Location</b>	Omak City Hall 2 Ash Street N, Omak, WA
<b>Call to Order</b>	Meeting called to order by Bob Garrison Invocation by Charles Wharton Pledge of Allegiance - All
<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions:</b>	Welcome and Introduction – Bob Garrison  Mayor Cindy Gagne welcomed guests to their town and shared the commitment of her office and the city council to work with the community and partners in assisting veterans and their families that lives in the community.
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>WDVA Update – Alfie Alvarado-Ramos</b>  WDVA continues to work with our community partners to ensure veterans and their families are connected with their earned benefits. Agency updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outreach in Rural Areas</li><li>• Renewal of HVRP Grant from US Department of Labor</li><li>• Walla Walla Veterans Home – 80 bed long term care facility located on the grounds of Jonathan Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center. This facility just got certified by US DVA. Some of the beds that are in this facility are dedicated for memory care – this are for residents who are suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's, etc.</li><li>• YesVets Initiative – recently did celebration in Yakima. To date 2,800 veterans were hired under this program. To learn more about this initiative visit the website at <a href="https://esd.wa.gov/yesvets">https://esd.wa.gov/yesvets</a></li><li>• Korean Peace Medal – The Korean Consul General along with Alfie presented Korean Peace Medal to Korean War Time veterans from the Tri-Cities area. Along with the medal, the veteran also received Korean Commemorative Book. The next medal presentation will be done in Lynnwood, WA on July 23, 2018. Call WDVA if you know of a Korean War Veteran that lives in your area so that WDVA could keep a list of names and the possibility of doing a ceremony to formally present the veterans with the medal and book.</li></ul>

Legislative Updates: Link to veterans and military bills that passed this year:  
<http://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/legislative-updates>

### **Employment – Louis Torres**

WorkSource is available to everyone in Whitman County at:  
[www.worksourcewa.com](http://www.worksourcewa.com)

Veterans also have priority service by Disabled Veterans Outreach Coordinator or Local Veterans Employment Representatives in the Office. They can help reduce barriers to work by helping with transportation, wardrobe, work-required tools or other gear.

WorkSource also partners with WDVA to provide the Veterans Innovations Program and Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program benefits to veterans who qualify. (more info at [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov))

Other programs include the YesVets hiring initiative – [www.yesvets.org](http://www.yesvets.org)

### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) – Dan Overton**

TBI is defined as an alteration in brain function or other evidence of brain pathology, caused by an external force – such as – falls, exposure to blasts, being hit in the head, sudden and violent change in air pressure and more. Acquired Brain Injury is an injury to the brain which is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative or induced by birth trauma. An acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain that has occurred after birth and is often the result of lack of oxygen to the brain, poisoning, strokes, etc. The relationship between the two is that there has been injury to the brain which causes disruption and damage to this most vital and fragile organ. WDVA also develop an App called Max Impact – available on the App Store

Link to TBI Fact Sheet:

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/TBI%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet%20016.pdf>

### **WA Veterans Cemetery – Rudy Lopez**

Eligibility for interment in the Washington State Veterans Cemetery mirrors National Veterans Cemetery

eligibility requirements. In general:

- All U.S. Veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable;
- Spouses; and
- Dependent Children.

The Washington State Veterans Cemetery serves veterans and other eligible individuals from

Washington and other States.

More information on the National Veterans Cemetery Eligibility Requirements is available at:

<http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/bbene/eligible.asp> or by contacting a WDVA Benefits Specialist directly at 1-800-562-2308.

The State Veterans Cemetery provides for in-ground casket burial sites and cremation interments.

For cremation interments the following options are available:

- A columbarium niche that includes an inscribed, granite marker;
- An in-ground cremation inurnment that includes an upright inscribed, granite marker;
- A scattering garden with a flush-to-ground inscribed granite memorial marker

### **Veterans Center Update – Joe Dumlao**

Joe along with his partner travels to rural areas around Spokane with the mobile Vet Center providing counseling services for veterans and also telehealth.

The Vet Center Program was established by Congress in 1979 out of the recognition that a significant number of Vietnam era vets were still experiencing readjustment problems. Vet Centers are community based and part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In April 1991, in response to the Persian Gulf War, Congress extended the eligibility to veterans who served during other periods of armed hostilities after the Vietnam era. Those other periods are identified as Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, and Kosovo/Bosnia. In October 1996, Congress extended the eligibility to include WWII and Korean Combat Veterans. The goal of the Vet Center program is to provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to eligible veterans in order to help them make a satisfying post-war readjustment to civilian life. On April 1, 2003 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs extended eligibility for Vet Center services to veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and on June 25, 2003 Vet Center eligibility was extended to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and subsequent operations within the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The family members of all veterans listed above are eligible for Vet Center services as well. On August 5, 2003 VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi authorized Vet Centers to furnish bereavement counseling services to surviving parents, spouses, children and siblings of service members who die of any cause while on active duty, to include federally activated Reserve and National Guard personnel. For assistance after hours, weekends and holidays call: 1-877-927-8387.

### **WDVA Veterans Services Division – Steve Gill**

WDVA is a full service state agency that assist veterans and their families or survivors. We advocate and aggressively pursues all federal and state benefits earned. Our office is staffed with qualified serviced officer to assist veterans and their families in accessing their benefits earned: VA Disability Compensation Claim, VA Pension or Widows Pension, Aid and Attendance, Health Care Benefits. Using a case management approach, our staff attend to the needs of veterans by providing behavioral health counseling, referral services.

### **HUD-VASH Rural – Lance Fromm**

US DVA awarded approximately \$300 million in grants to 275 non-profit organization through Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) to help

thousands of very low income veteran families who are permanently housed or transitioning into permanent housing. In 2016 nearly 85% of those discharged from SSVF obtained permanent housing.

The National Call Center for Homeless Veterans received more than 128,000 calls and aided over 38,000 veterans and/or their families through homeless chat. **(877-424-3838 available 24/7 7 days a week)**

Over the course of the year, VA staff and community partners hosted more than 350 stand downs across the country.

The **HUD-VASH** Program combines the Department of Housing and Urban Development (**HUD**) Housing Choice **Voucher** (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans and their families with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at its medical centers and in the community.

**Eligibility for HUD-VASH** – Honorably discharged veterans, continuously homeless for a year or more or at least 4 episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, needs and agrees to participate in case management. **Priority are given to:** Veterans who are chronically homeless, Veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, Veterans with dependent children, Female veterans, and Homeless veterans at high risk. Veteran is referred to VA Medical Center – list of VAMC and participating PHAs on the HUD VASH can be found at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/vash>

#### **Veterans CHOICE Program – Kevin Ginter**

Choice Program is part of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACAA). This program began to cover non-VVA care for eligible veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare. Veterans have option to receive non-VA health care rather than waiting for a VA appointment or if specialty care is not available at the VA. This program is designed to supplement the care the veterans received at a VA facility not replace or limit the care. Use of this program is totally voluntary - no veteran will be required to seek care in the community using the card. Any veteran currently eligible for VA care will retain that eligibility even if he/she will use the CHOICE program to obtain care in the community.

For more information visit the Choice Website at: [www.gov.opa/choiceact](http://www.gov.opa/choiceact)

CHOICE Billing Questions/Collectoin Issues: 877-881-7618

CHOICE Line: 866-606-8198

#### **Veterans Assistance Fund – Eric Fritz**

Veterans and their families can apply for the different services by:

Via Phone: 509-486-2121 or via e-mail at: [vso@co.okanogan.wa.gov](mailto:vso@co.okanogan.wa.gov)

Services Available are:

- Case Management
- Crisis Intervention
- Financial Assistance – rental assistance, emergency shelter, energy and utility assistance, food assistance
- Mental Health Counseling (Thru the Vet Center of WDVA Contracted Counselor Jodie Fields via phone at 509-826-5731 and office is located at 101 E. Dewberry, Omak, WA)