

Pennsylvania State Veterans Commission

Meeting Agenda

October 13, 2023, at 1000 AM

Location: Arrowheads Community Club

1000	Call to Order	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Moment of Silence	Vice-Chair Connie Snavely
	Pledge of Allegiance	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Introduction of Commission Members	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Oath of Office:	MG Mark Schindler
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Timothy Alexander-DAVMr. Peter Verbos-MOPH	
	Chairman's Open Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	TAG's Opening Remarks and Comments	MG Mark Schindler
	Approval of 08 September 2023 Meeting Minutes	Requires Vote
	Reading of Official and Other Communications	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	DAG-VA Opening Remarks and Report	BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PPL, BVH, PIROPrograms Report	Requires Vote
	VISN 4	Mr. Timothy Liezert
	Committee Reports	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LegislativePensions/Relief/Grave MarkingsRETXTransportationVeterans' HealthWomen VeteransPAWVC Update	Mr. Robert Heister Mr. Larry Googins Mr. Jesiah Schrader Mr. William Hines Mr. Mark Baylis Ms. Lisa Kaye President David Gyger
	Unfinished Business	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Formation of MAL Committee	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	New Business	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Good of the Order	SVC Commissioners
	Agenda Items for Next Meeting	SVC Commissioners
	Presentation: Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories	Mr. Jolissaint/Mr. Bourke
	Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman	Mr. Joseph Batt
	Closing Remarks	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Next Meeting	
	December 8, 2023, at 10 AM	
	Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville	
	Retiring of the Colors	Chairman Nicholas Taylor
	Adjournment	Chairman Nicholas Taylor



State Veterans' Commission Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2023
10:00 AM to 11:50 PM

Arrowheads Community Center, Fort Indiantown Gap

Call to Order

Chairman Nicholas Taylor

The Pennsylvania State Veterans' Commission (SVC) meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.

Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairwoman Constance Snively led the moment of silence in honor Patriot Day September 11 victims, and POW Recognition Day September 15 to those who never came home. Chairman Taylor led a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commission Introductions

MG Mark Schindler	The Adjutant General
BG (PA) Maureen Weigl (Virtual)	DAG DMVA-OVA
Mr. Rick Hamp	Designee, DAG DMVA-OVA
Mr. Nicholas Taylor	SVC Chairman; Commander, Catholic War Veterans
Mr. David Gyger	Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mr. Paul Foresman	Commander, AMVETS
Mr. Timothy Alexander	Commander, Disabled American Veterans
Mr. Samuel Petrovich	Adjutant, Disabled American Veterans
Mr. William Albert	Commander, Blinded Veterans of America
Mr. Jesiah Schrader	President, PA State Association of County Directors of Veterans Affairs
Mr. Robert Heister	President, Military Officers Association of America
Mr. Larry Googins	President, Vietnam Veterans of America
Mr. Christopher Fidler	Director, Keystone Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America
Mr. David Brady	Designee, Marine Corps League
Mr. James Hogan	Adjutant, The American Legion
Ms. Lisa Kaye	Member-at-Large
Mr. Mark Baylis	Member-at-Large
Mr. Charles Jackson	Member-at-Large
Mr. Michael Brooker	Member-at-Large
Mr. Gerald Hawk	Executive Director, AMVETS
Mr. John Gets	Adjutant, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Mr. Stanley Majocka	Commander, Italian American War Veterans
Mr. Richard Fine	Commander, Jewish War Veterans
Mr. Constance Snively	SVC V-Chairwoman, Representative, Korean War Veterans
Mr. Michael Rang	Commander, Catholic War Veterans
Mr. Phillip Arnold	Commander, Military Order of Purple Hearts
Mr. Stephen Lavelle	Commander, The American Legion

Others Present

Mr. Tim Liezert	VISN-4 (on phone)
Mr. Michael Hillman	Democratic Executive Director, PA House VAEP
Mr. Chip Gilliland	DMVA-PRIO (Outreach and Reintegration)

Mr. Travis Davis	Executive Director DMVA-BVH
Mr. Joel Mutschler	Director DMVA-PIRO
Mr. Brian Natali	DMVA-PIRO (Programs and Services)
Mr. Dusty Durand	DMVA-PPL
Mr. Jeffery King	DMVA-PIRO (Programs and Services)
Mr. Seth Bengé	DMVA-PPL
Ms. Erica Moore	DMVA-PIRO (Outreach and Reintegration)
Mr. Michael Blecher	DMVA-PIRO (Outreach and Reintegration)
CSM Jon B. Worley	PANG-Army
Ms. Diane M. Stackhouse	MOAA
Mr. Thomas Coreau	PASACDVA-Dauphin County
Mr. Joseph Neild	PASACDVA-Dauphin County
Mr. Leonard M. Johnson	DAV
Mr. Sam D. Robinson	DAV
Mr. William Hines	DAV
Mr. Matt Hollenbeck	TAL
Mr. Richard Hudzinski	VVA
TEAMS Virtual Guests	46

Chairman's Opening Remarks	Chairman Taylor
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Chairman greeted all newly sworn in commissioners and requested they send a brief biographical to the SVC coordinator for the file. He mentioned the importance of the continued weekly update briefings from DMVA senior staff.

He thanked The American Legion for inviting him to speak at their July 2023 convention, and for the speaker gift.

Chairman passed on compliments of DMVA regarding the work the SVC has accomplished over the past two years and for it to continue. He then solicited suggestions from all members in how to improve the SVC operations.

Questions/Discussion

None.

TAG's Opening Remarks	MG Schindler
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TAG greeted the SVC members and thanked for all they in support of veterans and current soldiers and airman. The impact will have results on tomorrows veterans as well; everybody is just one day away from the other side of the uniform.

TAG briefed members on the PANG mobilization which is down to around a 100 due to the return of the 28th Division. Currently a few airmen from the 111th Attack Wing and 171 Air Refueling Wing are deployed. He noted that during the next quarter the PANG will have approximately 1000 soldiers and airman deployed through the theaters of operation.

TAG briefed on the PANG teams that have been doing demonstrations of their capabilities at various fairs and other locations throughout out PA, and how well it is being received. It is resulting in a growing interest in being part of the PANG.

TAG informed the members about his breakfast with Gold Star Families, meeting with younger veterans. The celebrating of 30-year partnership with Lithuania and PANG. The interaction with the Lithuanian President and Chief of Defense which culminated in the re-signing of the bilateral correlation.

TAG announced upcoming events, he will be in West Virginia in September for a Gold Star Family event and in Pittsburgh in October for Operation Enduring Freedom event.

Questions/Discussion

None.

Approval of the June 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion: Mr. Mark Baylis, MAL, made a motion to approve the minutes.

Second: Mr. Jesiah Schrader, PASACDVA, seconded the motion.

The body agreed; motion carried. Minutes approved.

Reading of Official and Other Communications

Chairman Taylor

Chairman Taylor announced that he was tasked by DMVA to request SVC members organizations to provide input into the Veterans Trust Fund Grants Program. He referred members to the email he had just recently sent. He asked the members to please have input ideas, suggestions to him within two weeks; he will compile the information and provide it to DMVA.

Chairman urged the members if they can attend PA State Senator DiSanto's veteran appreciation breakfast on Thursday October 19, 2023, from 830am to 1030am. Registration # 717-787-6801.

He directed SVC members to an earlier email sent regarding the VA Health Care extension deadline for veterans deployed to combat zones between September 11, 2001, to October 1, 2023. The deadline provides the eligible the chance to enroll directly into VA Health Care. www.VA.gov/pact or 1-800-myva-411

Questions/Discussion

None.

Deputy Adjutant General-VA Remarks

BG Weigl

DAG greeting the members and apologized for not being there in person but noted Mr. Hamp is well positioned to sit in on her behalf. DAG then turned the briefings over to BVH, PIRO and PPL.

Questions/Discussion

None.

DMVA Bureau of PIRO

Mr. Mutschler

Mr. Mutschler announced to members that September is Suicide Prevention Month throughout the commonwealth, and help is available. He urged members to speak openly about it in making people aware of the help that is readily available throughout all communities and our Veteran Advocates have resources available. He noted September 10 is Suicide Prevention Day as listed with the International Association for Suicide Prevention.

- 469,000 Veterans and survivors completed claims which lists PA in eighth place with claims. The PACT Act has increased claims by 153%.
- VETConnect has expanded resources increasing overall connections to over 17,000. The VETConnect Teams are making a difference holding 100 events since July 4, 2023.
- VA Suicide Prevention has reached over 1900 Veterans seeing mental wellness improve across the spectrum.
- Mr. Mutschler briefed on the upcoming yard sign awareness campaign that will launch shortly and requested active participation from all the service organizations. He informed the members he will have yard signs for distribution at the next meeting. He also noted the yard signs will have the new QR code.
- He briefed the members on the success of PIRO local forums being held with an average of 50 attendees every Monday meeting.
- Announced the upcoming October 11, 2023, resource fair and appreciation day.

- PIRO has held town halls and talking engagements.
- Mr. Mutschler announced information will be forthcoming on a Women veterans magazine initiative, and advised members their organizations would be able to pay advertising space. The magazine is designed to reach Veterans throughout PA.

Questions/Discussion

Mr. Brooker, MAL: you listed 1700 connections to 2000 resources, do you measure the metric outcome produced from these interactions? Is there a goal target for Veterans and/or families to reach what they are seeking? To show the value of the program.

Mr. Mutschler: PIRO is building the connections with the resources but not directly tracking each outcome due to over 150 Veteran Advocates that access our program to assist Veterans. As with the nonprofit organizations that are connected to Veterans, they do the case management.

Mr. Hudzinski, VVA: Is there any considerations being given to a Veteran family magazine? Mr. Hudzinski expressed the validity of a magazine which would enhance benefit information being better distributed as he noted in his personal interactions with veterans and their families.

Mr. Mutschler: We can look into something like that in the future.

Approval of State Veterans' Programs Reports

Motion: Mr. Mark Baylis, MAL, made a motion to approve the programs report.

Second: Mr. Stephen Lavelle, TAL, seconded the motion.

The body agreed; motion carried. Programs reports approved.

DMVA Bureau of Veterans Homes

Mr. Davis

Mr. Davis briefed the members on the number of inspections the six homes of the Bureau of Veterans Homes had undergone recently from the Department of Health, Department of Human Services and VA plus the internal inspections conducted by BVHs compliance team for facility assessments.

- Department of Health six annual surveys, five of six from Federal VA, one from Department of Human Services, and six internal service compliances completed so far this year.
- Medicare and Medicaid ratings: five of six facilities are 5-Star and one 4-Star, only 10% of the 700 facilities throughout PA get a 5-Star rating.
- The quality care metric has been and currently is in an upward trajectory. Staffing is maintaining and moving in the right direction.
- COVID: Mr. Davis noted one facility had a small outbreak, but it is well managed, all infected are in stable condition. Mr. Davis said BVH is prepared for an uptick in COVID as the surrounding communities are experiencing. BVH is also prepared to administer the flu vaccine, as flu season approaches.
- Census: 2023 started out at 940 Veterans and now is at 1077 about a 10% growth rate., our goal is 75% capacity. The current wait list stands at 194 Veterans and 63 spouses. There remain several hundred vacancies, this is impacting BVH even though staffing remains strong but is preventing filling all the available beds. Welcome Wednesdays are still in operation and working well except two homes, as well as job fairs and BVH is very active in trying to fill the vacancies.

Questions/Discussion

Mr. Hudzinski, VVA: Which homes isn't Welcome Wednesday working well at?

Mr. Davis: Erie and Southeast, but BVH is addressing the issue by increasing job fairs and speaking to staff about job fulfillment.

Chairman Taylor: What are the top vacancies BVH looking to fill?

Mr. Davis: Certified Nursing Assistants (CAN), Practical Nurses (LPN), the dietary and housekeeping.

Chairman Taylor: Are there mechanisms in place for an unskilled person to get trained in becoming a CAN?

Mr. Davis: BVH does have a CNA training program that is up and standing which is used to boost recruitment.

DMVA Policy, Planning, and Legislation

Mr. Durand

Mr. Durand reported that PPL had a brief update on HR 611 was passed. Mr. Durand said the legislature is still actively involved in fiscal negotiations with the administration but does anticipate working with the legislature in October.

He noted some PPL personnel changes: Mr. Michael Woody who was filling in for Mr. Bengé will go back to his private sector job, and Mr. Bengé's return from his duty station will again resume his role at PPL. Ms. Tammy Weaver a longtime PPL employee will be retiring in December.

Questions/Discussion

None

VISN-4

Mr. Liezert

Mr. Liezert briefed the members on the talking points and slides submitted in the read ahead.

- Briefed on the VA Health Care enrollment extension as previously discussed. He added VA is actively doing outreach making veterans aware of special sessions.
- Briefed on suicide prevention and informed members VA special authority and comprehensive access to care achievement act. Working on strong support from congressional advocacy.
- VA will pay for non-department facilities for community health care which means edibility is defined more broadly.
- He noted to members VA is seeking seamless mental health care and would welcome any information where this is not happening let VA know and they will react.
- Informed the members on the high rating of VA health care.

Questions/Discussions

None

Committee Reports

Governance Committee

Mr. Brooker

“Fellow Commissioners, as you know, the State Veterans Commission Bylaws and the Operating Procedures and Policies or OPP have been adopted. Along with the Statute, these documents provide the requisite guidance to effectively and efficiently perform our duties and mission of the SVC. Going forward, it is imperative that each Commissioner familiarize themselves with both documents. Toward that end, I would respectfully request that each Commissioner be provided written copies at the October SVC Meeting.

As Chair of the Governance Committee, I would be remiss if I did not personally acknowledge and thank two people who provided critical input over the last year. Rich Hudzinski and Rick Hamp were invaluable contributors and collaborators on the Governance Committee Team. Gentlemen, I tip my hat and offer a heartfelt BRAVO ZULU, or Well Done!”

Mr. Chairman, in your May 2022 Appointment Memorandum, you laid out the purpose of the Governance Committee was “to establish a set of operating instructions for meetings, committee procedures and responsibilities, reporting, and general administrative matters regarding the commission.” As we have successfully achieved your task, in accordance with Article V of the Bylaws and Section 7c of the OPP, I ask that the Commissioners disestablish the Committee until such time as it is again needed.

Questions/Discussion

Chairman motioned to dissolve the committee and body agreed with a vote of aye.	
Legislative Committee	Mr. Heister
Mr. Heister reported that there should be more outreach to legislators both state and federal regarding the increase in funding and planning of transportation for veterans. He stated the committee should explore how they can have more control over the drivers and vans.	
<u>Questions/Discussion</u>	
Mr. Baylis, MAL: requested to be able to participate with the legislative committee regarding veteran transportation which is a topic at the Long-Term Council meetings he attends on behalf of the SVC.	
Mr. Heister: agreed.	
Pensions/Relief/Grave Markings/State Military Cemetery Committee	Mr. Googins
No official report.	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None.	
RETX	Mr. Schrader
No official Report	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
None.	
Transportation Committee	Mr. Hines
Mr. Hines reported on the following statics: July 1, 2022, to June 3, 2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transported 21,037 Veterans • 54,672 Volunteer hours with 236 drivers with close to a million miles which included 27,316 additional miles to date. • Projected 22 vehicles out of service for new fiscal year, most are 16 to 17 years old. Currently 106 vehicles in service. • Projected to replace six or seven vehicles. 	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	
Chairman Taylor: Mr. Hines keeping in mind Mr. Baylis request to participate in the transportation discussions please keep his committee Veterans Health informed.	
Veteran Health Committee	Mr. Baylis
Mr. Baylis briefed on his involvement as the SVC representative at the Long-Term Council. He informed the members of the LTC planning effort to redesign senior care throughout PA, focusing on aging in place. This all ties into what the transportation committee is doing. He briefly discussed the LTC planning strategy based on the United Nations eight domains of livability which includes access to their homes: for example, wheelchairs, wheelchair ramps, bathroom access and other handicap features.	
Transpiration will be imperative in the future as the LTC plan develops over time of aging in place. It involves getting elderly veterans to the VA Hospitals, for outdoor recreational activities and treatment appointments for an overall umbrella approach for overall health and welfare of veterans as they age. The real challenge will be in servicing those elderly veterans in rural areas.	
<u>Questions/Discussions</u>	

There was a brief discussion which included Mr. Baylis, Mr. Hamp, and Mr. Hudzinski. Mr. Baylis stated that there were some congressional representatives at the last LTC meeting but no federal agencies involvement. It was explained that DAG, Mr. Hamp and Mr. Davis are also on the LTC.

Mr. Baylis stated he will send the master roster for the LTC for members to view.

VSO Grant Committee

Mr. Hollenbeck

No official Report

Questions/Discussions

None.

Womens Health

Ms. Kaye

No official report

Questions/Discussions

None

PAWVC

Mr. Gyger

No official report

Questions/Discussions

None

Unfinished Business

Chairman mentioned the yard signs will be available at the next meeting. He requested DMVA provide an amount number of signs they would like to provide to each organization represented at the SVC.

Mr. Mutschler estimated around 100.

Chairman informed members that the Vietnam Veteran MAL seat has expired that Mr. Jackson is currently occupying and will continue to do so until a replacement. They will have to form a new MAL committee to advertise and review candidates. He informed members there will be new guidance from the Governor's Office. The committee will present candidates to DAG for review then to the Governor's Office.

Chairman asked for volunteers to serve on the MAL committee. The committee must act quickly because the Governor's Office would like candidates by December.

Chairman mentioned that in the next meeting or two a group that has a new approach to PTSD will do a presentation to the members. He referred them to the read ahead for context.

New Business

None

Good of the Order

Mr. Jackson regaled a highly complementary encounter he had with the VA, and how the high quality of their medical care saved his life.

Ms. Snavelly, KWVA: Announced the General Smoker Beyond the Call Award which will be held in Lebanon, PA at the Hebron Fire Hall.

Chairman announced The American Legion MIA recognition annual ceremony.

Chairman informed members he is exploring having a helicopter tour of FIG as a SVC team building event.

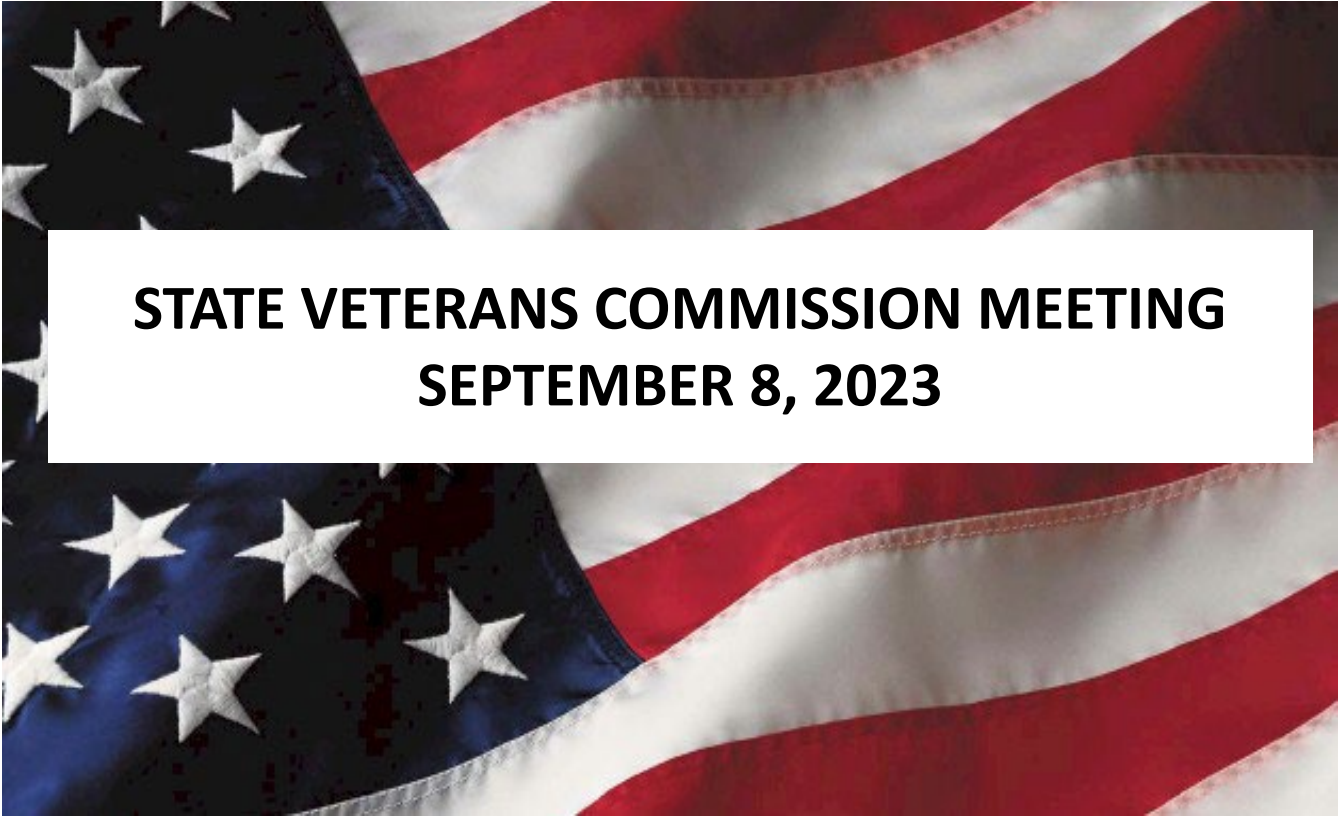
Mr. Johnson, guest DAV, asked what the current predication is for increase in pension for the Blind/Paralyzed pensioners.

Mr. Durand: said the best estimate based on the success of one of the three bills in process is an increase from \$150 to \$200.

Agenda for Next Meeting
None
Closing Remarks
None
Next Meeting
Friday, October 13, 10:00 AM Forum: Arrowheads Community Center, FIG

The minutes of this meeting are respectfully submitted by:

BG (PA) Maureen Weigl
 Deputy Adjutant General
 Veterans Affairs



**STATE VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2023**



DMVA MILITARY UPDATE

CURRENT AND FUTURE UNIT MOBILIZATIONS



2024											2025										
OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR			
1-224 AVN DET 1 B - SWB -23 PAX																					
	2-112 IN - HOA#1 -1099 PAX																				
						28 MP - GTMO -111 PAX															
										56 SBCT - JMTG-E -165 PAX											
										56 SBCT - HOA#2 -1099 PAX											
											213 PC - OSS -16 PAX										
											213 PC - OSS -20 PAX										
											213 PC - OIR -10 PAX										

ARNG Unit Soldiers in Theater: **102**
 ARNG Soldiers at MOB/DEMOB Site: **0**
 ARNG Individual Mob: **4**
 Total ARNG Mob: **106**

**Total PANG
 Mobilized: 806**

Current ANG Unit Airmen Mob: 113
Current ANG Individual Mob: 15
Total: ANG Mob: 128

CURRENT MOBILIZATIONS & TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS



PAARNG Current Deployments						
MDATE	MSAD	UNIT	OPN	PAX	MISSION	Projected Return Date
07 OCT 22	10 OCT 22	55 MEB	SWB	102	T10, 12302	10 OCT 23
ARNG Soldiers at MOB/DEMOB Sites				0	Various Missions	Various based on tour
Various Individual MOB Soldiers				4	Various Missions	Various based on tour
Total PAARNG Deployed: 106						

PAANG Current Deployments		
Unit	Opn	Pax
193 SOW	OFS-OIR-OSS, Other	8/1
111 ATKW	IPR (HS), OFS-OIR-OSS, TS	36/6/40
171 ARW	Alert Status (HS), OFS-OIR-OSS	37
Total PAANG Deployed		128

Total PANG Deployed 806

As of 27SEP23

> community > commonwealth > country

CURRENT AND FUTURE UNIT MOBILIZATIONS



MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN24	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	
148 ASOS (193)- Various- RTND																	
	111 SFS- Qatar- 12 PAX																
211 EIS (193)- Qatar- RTND							193 SOW- RCP- Various- 49 PAX										
			171ARW- Guam- 108 PAX														
	201 RHS-Lithuania-RTND						171 ARW-RCP-Variou- 14 PAX										
1)- Guam- RTND																	
171 ARW- ALERT STATUS (HS)- 37 PAX																	
111 ATKW- RPA (HS)- 36 PAX																	

Current ANG Unit Airmen Mob: 193
Current ANG Individual Mob: 16
Total: ANG Mob: 209

CURRENT MOBILIZATIONS & TOTAL DEPLOYMENTS



PAANG Current Deployments

Unit	Opn	Pax
193 SOW	OFS-OIR-OSS, SPP	1/4
111 ATKW	IPR (HS), OFS-OIR-OSS	36/17
171 ARW	Alert Status (HS), AFRICOM, OFS, PACOM, EUCOM	37/1/3/108/2
Total PAANG Deployed		209



**DMVA
POLICY, PLANNING & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
MR. DUSTY DURAND**



HB 325 (Staats) Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) in Department of Military Affairs, providing for burial benefits. **Set on H Tabled Calendar 09/26/23. Awaiting 2nd Consideration**

HB 611 (Harris, J) - Act to provide from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive, Legislative & Judicial Departments, the public debt & the public schools for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. (Big Budget Bill): **Signed in the Senate and approved by the Governor with his line-item Veto 8-3-23 -> (Act 1A).** **Fiscal Code HB 1300- Passed House and Senate. With House Rules Committee. Still no admin codes.**

HB 623 (Harris, J) - Act providing for the *capital budget* for fiscal year 2023-2024. **Set on Senate Calendar 8-30-23. 3rd Consideration**

HB 1091 (Williams, D) Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in veterans' pensions and benefits, further providing for blind veteran's pension and for amputee and paralyzed veteran's pension. **Set on H Tabled Calendar 09/26/23. Awaiting 2nd Consideration**

SB 531 (Baker, L) - Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs), in State Veterans' Commission and Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans' Affairs, further providing for Veterans' Trust Fund. (Has not crossed opposite chamber). **Rereferred to Senate Appropriations. On 3rd Consideration.**

SB 447 (Mastriano) / **HB 892** (Kaufer) **Identical.** Amends Title 51, re: PA VETConnect Program. **SB447 Received in House and referred to H VAEP Cmte. 05-10-23. HB 892 Received and referred to S VAEP Cmte. 06-26-23.**

Full Legislative Report can be found here: [SVC Legislative Report](#) (Bills that have crossed chambers: HB 157, HB 269, HB 363, HB 404, HB 877, HB 892, HB 1086, HB 1086, SB 126, SB 146, SB 248, SB 411, SB 477)



**DMVA BUREAU OF VETERANS HOMES
MR. TRAVIS DAVIS**



PVH Current Licensure Status

SVH Survey Table as of 21 Sept 2023

SVH	Regulatory Agency	Survey Reason/Type	Survey Date(s)	Status/comments
DVVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	03/01/23 - 03/06/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	09/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	05/30/23	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	03/21/23	Cleared
	VA	Recognition Survey	12/14/22 - 12/16/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification (next due Dec 23)	06/07/22 - 06/10/22	Cleared
GMVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/29/23 - 09/01/23	Results Pending
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	03/01/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints, Follow-Ups	09/22/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	10/18/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/14/23 - 02/17/23	Cleared
HVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/21/23 - 08/24/23	POC under development
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/08/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	06/15/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	04/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints	11/29/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	07/17/23 - 07/19/23	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	08/16/22 - 08/17/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	06/05/23 - 06/08/23	Cleared, provisional certification granted

**Ratings as of 22 Sept 2023 –Updated
30d/45d-QTR End**

Facility 5 Star Rating Facility 5 Star Rating

DVVH		PSSH	
GJMVH		SEVC	
HVH		SWVC	

Each DMVA Pennsylvania Veterans' Home is currently licensed by the PA Department of Health, PA Department of Human Services and certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. HVH, PSSH and SEVC have a Personal Care program.

Last updated: 8-24-2023

PVH Current Licensure Status



SVH Survey Table as of 21 Sept 2023				
SVH	Regulatory Agency	Survey Reason/Type	Survey Date(s)	Status/comments
DVVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	03/01/23 - 03/06/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	09/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	05/30/23	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	03/21/23	Cleared
	VA	Recognition Survey	12/14/22 - 12/16/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification (next due Dec 23)	06/07/22 - 06/10/22	Cleared
GMVC	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/29/23 - 09/01/23	Results Pending
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	03/01/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints, Follow-Ups	09/22/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	10/18/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	02/14/23 - 02/17/23	Cleared
HVH	DOH Nursing	Annual Recertification	08/21/23 - 08/24/23	POC under development
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	08/08/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	06/15/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaint	04/14/23	Cleared
	DOH Nursing	Abbreviated - Complaints	11/29/22	Cleared
	DOH Life Safety	Annual Recertification	07/17/23 - 07/19/23	Cleared
	DHS	Annual Recertification	08/16/22 - 08/17/22	Cleared
	VA	Annual Recertification	06/05/23 - 06/08/23	Cleared, provisional certification granted

Each DMVA Pennsylvania Veterans' Home is currently licensed by the PA Department of Health, PA Department of Human Services and certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. HVH, PSSH and SEVC have a Personal Care program.

Last updated: 8-24-2023

Resident COVID-19 Update

Resident COVID-19 Status: 22 Sept 2023		
Veteran Home/Center	Isolation	Quarantine
DVVH	60	0
GJMVC	0	0
HVH	1	2
PSSH	4	0
SEVC	0	0
SWVC	5	0

Staff COVID-19 Update

Number of Resident and Staff COVID-19 Positive							
COVID Data as of 22 Sept 2023	DVVH	GMVC	HVH	PSSH	SEVC	SWVC	TOTAL
Total # COVID (+) Residents	60	0	1	4	0	5	70
Total # COVID (+) Staff	25	1	1	3	0	7	37

Pennsylvania Veterans Homes COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 links for information related to the Veterans Homes and skilled nursing facilities.

- <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/LTCF-Data.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/SNF-Guidance.aspx>
- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19MpLoPxayE1MDwQJJYCZxISN64V4FJSJPGzfvVBb5Mw/edit#gid=1511961664>



**BUREAU OF VETERANS PROGRAMS,
INITIATIVES, REINTEGRATION, AND OUTREACH
MR. JOEL MUTSCHLER**



- Our Servicemember, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) Community
 - Comprises approximately 14% of Pennsylvania's total population
 - Top issues: Housing Insecurity/Homelessness, Transportation, Employment, Mental Wellness, Food Insecurity, & Benefit Awareness
 - Find resources and link to our team through PA VETConnect – dmva.pa.gov/vetconnect
- PACT Act Impact
 - 429,335 Total Veterans/Survivors nationwide completed PACT Act-related claims
 - Pennsylvania is 8th out of 55 state/territories in completed claims
 - 28,336 (2.78% of total claims) from PA Veterans/Survivors (8/10/22 – 9/15/23)
 - Visit www.va.gov/PACT to get the latest information and updates
- Expanding Outreach Efforts
 - Pennsylvania Salutes You for Your Service: www.pa.gov/welcome-back-veterans
 - Sign up for PA Veterans Registry and the *DMVA Digest* – register.dmva.pa.gov



PA VETConnect



We build relationships that amplify service to the SMVF community

- Provided direct support and assistance to the Elk Co CDVA with onboarding the new CDVA and the assistant who is also doing VSO accredited training. The team will continue to offer support as much as needed.
- The team received a call from an 86-year-old widow of a Korean War veteran, from Fayette County. She is moving a short distance to another apartment, on a very limited budget, with no family close by. Susan was able to find three legionnaires from two local American Legion Posts that assisted.
- Partnered with Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited to offer an evening of fly-fishing for veterans on 10/6, targeting our local law enforcement. Partnered with Mike Carrington for local SCI staff and Centre Co Sherriff to spread the word to local police.
- Organized and facilitated the Monroe County Veteran Suicide Prevention Roundtable discussion on Aug 23. A positive event with outcomes that will shape the Monroe County Suicide Prevention Coalition Veteran Subcommittee and what it will deliver to the community in the coming months. The event had 20 participants made up of community leaders and organizations that serve veterans in various capacities in Monroe County.
- The team while assisting a veteran who is struggling with his Mental Health discovered that he used to play the guitar years ago while in the service. They subsequently were able to connect him with the program Guitars 4 Vets.

■ Successes

- >17,000 Connections
- > 2,000 resources
- Building trust within the network



www.dmva.pa.gov/vetconnect

> community > commonwealth > country

Reintegration and Outreach Events Overview



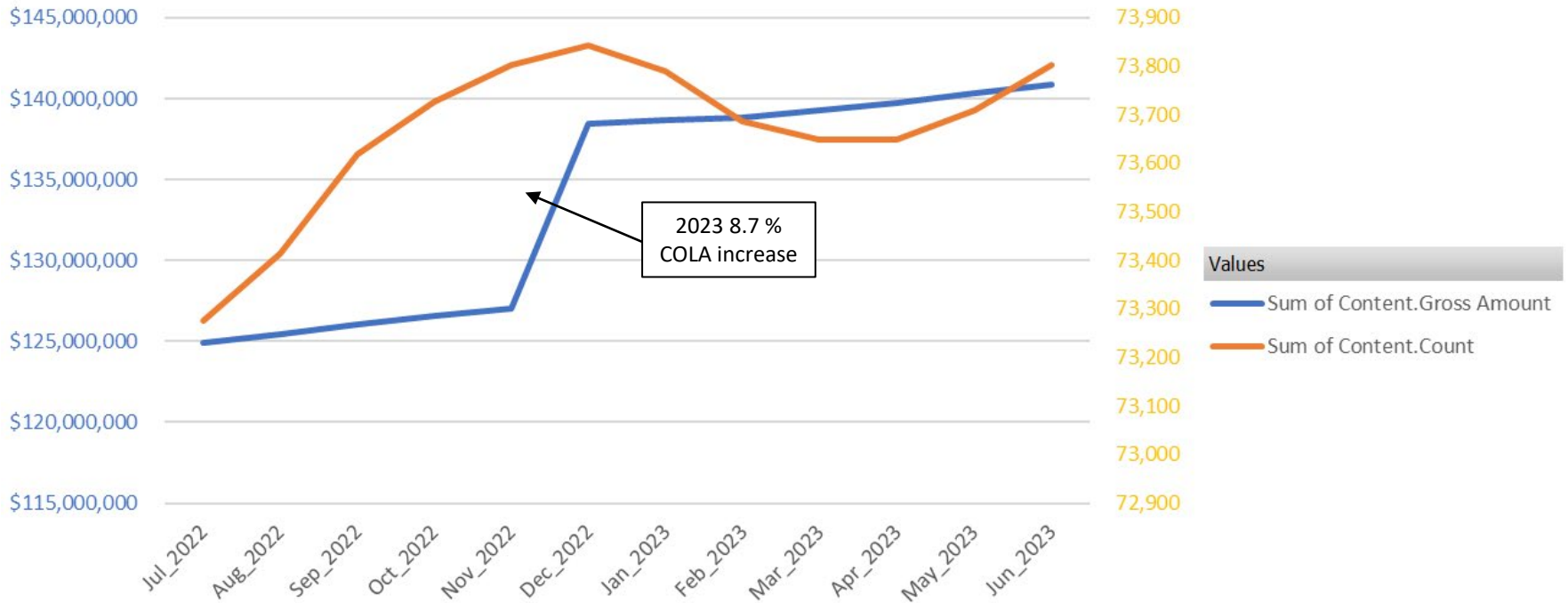
Outreach Statistics

	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	Year to Date
Outreach Events Supported	46				46
Mobile Outreach Van Events	6				6
Veteran Interactions	1,319				1,319
Claim referrals to County Directors and Service Organizations	391				391
Claim referrals to other state, county and local organizations assisting Veterans	369				369
Health Care Enrollment Referrals	326				326
Number of Veterans Registry Cards distributed	197				197
County Directors Office Attended	26				26
Legislative attended events	22				22

As of 31 August 2023

> community > commonwealth > country

OVA / VSO Grant Program Summary



Note: Data is derived from monthly Federal Veterans Affairs reports. Content Count is the number the of recipients receiving VA compensation and pension. Content Gross is the dollar amount associated with compensation and pension payments.

Veterans' Trust Fund



	Receipts	Expenditures	
Transfers to VTF	\$1,700,000.00		
HOV License Plate	\$56,573.00		
PA Monuments License Plate	\$0.00		
HOV Motorcycle License Plate Sales	\$3,706.00		
Honoring our Women Veterans License Plate	\$2,080.00		
Donations, Contributions, Gifts	\$230,038.63		
VTF Check Off	\$14,340,894.65		
VTF Online Donations	\$7,200.00		
SECA Donations	\$18,875.60		
County Juror Donations	\$76,619.05		
Casino Donation	\$48,987.09		
Interest	\$283,544.98		
Veterans Service Organizations		\$700,000.00	
PennDOT		\$776,000.00	
Veteran Programs Training		\$8,700.00	
Veterans Assistance and Veterans Temporary Assistance (VTA)		\$6,247,410.66	
County Director and VSO Grants (2023)		\$0.00	
County Director and VSO Grants (2022)		\$800,000.00	
County Director and VSO Grants (2021)		\$1,336,409.66	
County Director and VSO Grants (2020)		\$789,809.33	
County Director and VSO Grants (2019)		\$789,349.09	
County Director and VSO Grants (2018)		\$768,801.35	
County Director and VSO Grants (2017)		\$763,749.14	
County Director and VSO Grants (2016)		\$641,329.75	
County Director and VSO Grants (2015)		\$522,368.88	
County Director and VSO Grants (2014)		\$472,473.67	\$7,306,068.02
County Director and VSO Grants (2013)		\$421,777.15	
Working Balance	\$1,730,340.32		

Donate to the Veterans Trust Fund, Veterans Memorial Trust Fund, Military Family Relief Assistance, and Veteran Home Welfare funds at donate.dmva.pa.gov.

GDx Analysis Update FY 2010-2022



Year	Veteran Population*	Total Expenditures	Expenditures per Veteran
2010	964,132	\$ 3,824,046,165	\$ 3,966.31
2011	933,404	\$ 4,096,335,085	\$ 4,388.60
2012	980,529	\$ 4,075,363,910	\$ 4,156.29
2013	953,644	\$ 4,782,351,480	\$ 5,014.82
2014	939,069	\$ 5,260,391,172	\$ 5,601.71
2015	916,638	\$ 5,432,717,648	\$ 5,926.79
2016	845,507	\$ 5,480,864,013	\$ 6,482.34
2017	819,185	\$ 5,663,673,670	\$ 6,913.79
2018	793,321	\$ 5,547,696,283	\$ 6,993.00
2019	768,094	\$ 6,107,649,721	\$ 7,951.70
2020	791,914	\$ 6,439,247,984	\$ 8,131.25
2021	720,029	\$ 6,646,599,889	\$ 9,231.02
2022	719,233	\$ 7,782,109,558	\$ 10,820.01

Analysis:

- 104% Increase in expenditures= increase in claims processed
- 25% Decrease in Veteran population
- 173% Increase in expenditures per veteran
 - Increased ROI per Veteran, more claims per Veteran

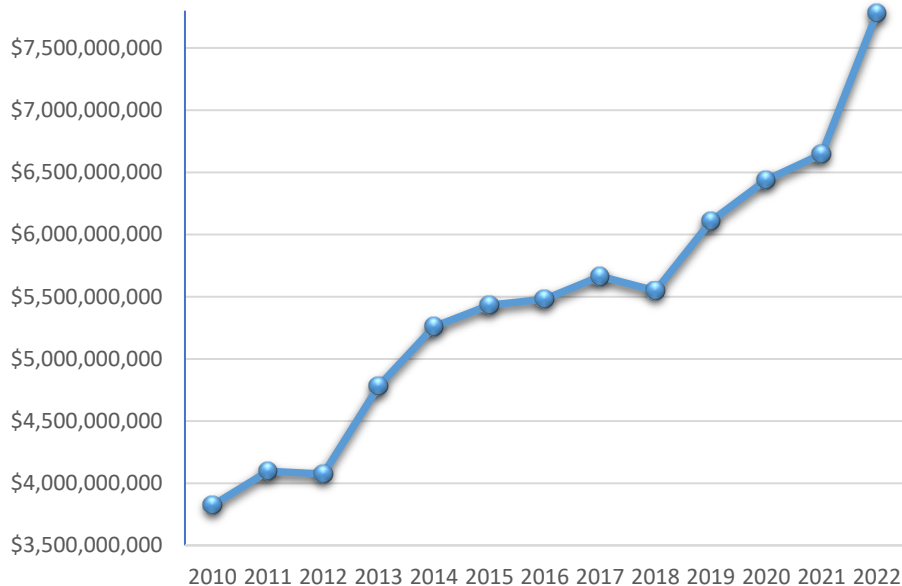
DMVA & Partners are:

- Serving more Veterans
- Serving Veterans more efficiently
- Generating significant increases in Federal Expenditures being spent on the Commonwealth's Veterans, despite a decreasing population.

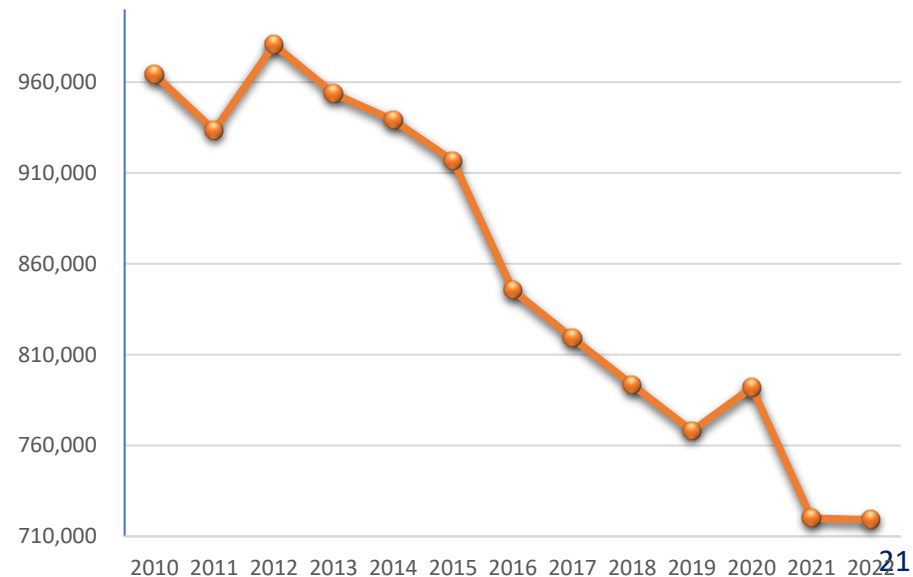
Pennsylvania FY22 GDx Changes:

- C&P expenditures up 18%
- Total expenditures up 17%
- Population down 6.7%
- Education & Vocational Rehabilitation/ Employment 12th to 11th, passing Arizona up 10%

Total Expenditures



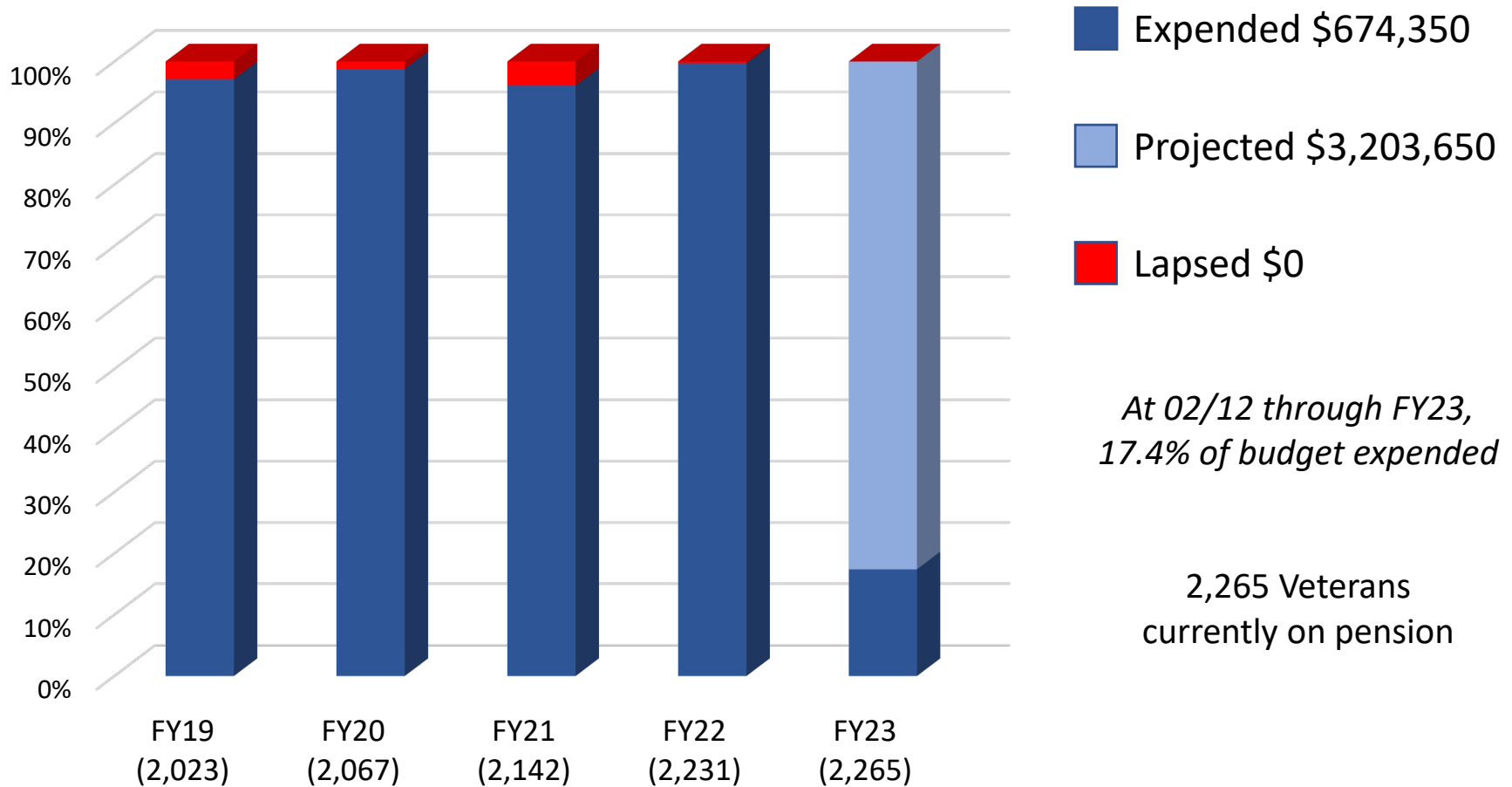
Population



AMPUTEE & PARALYZED VETERANS' PENSION



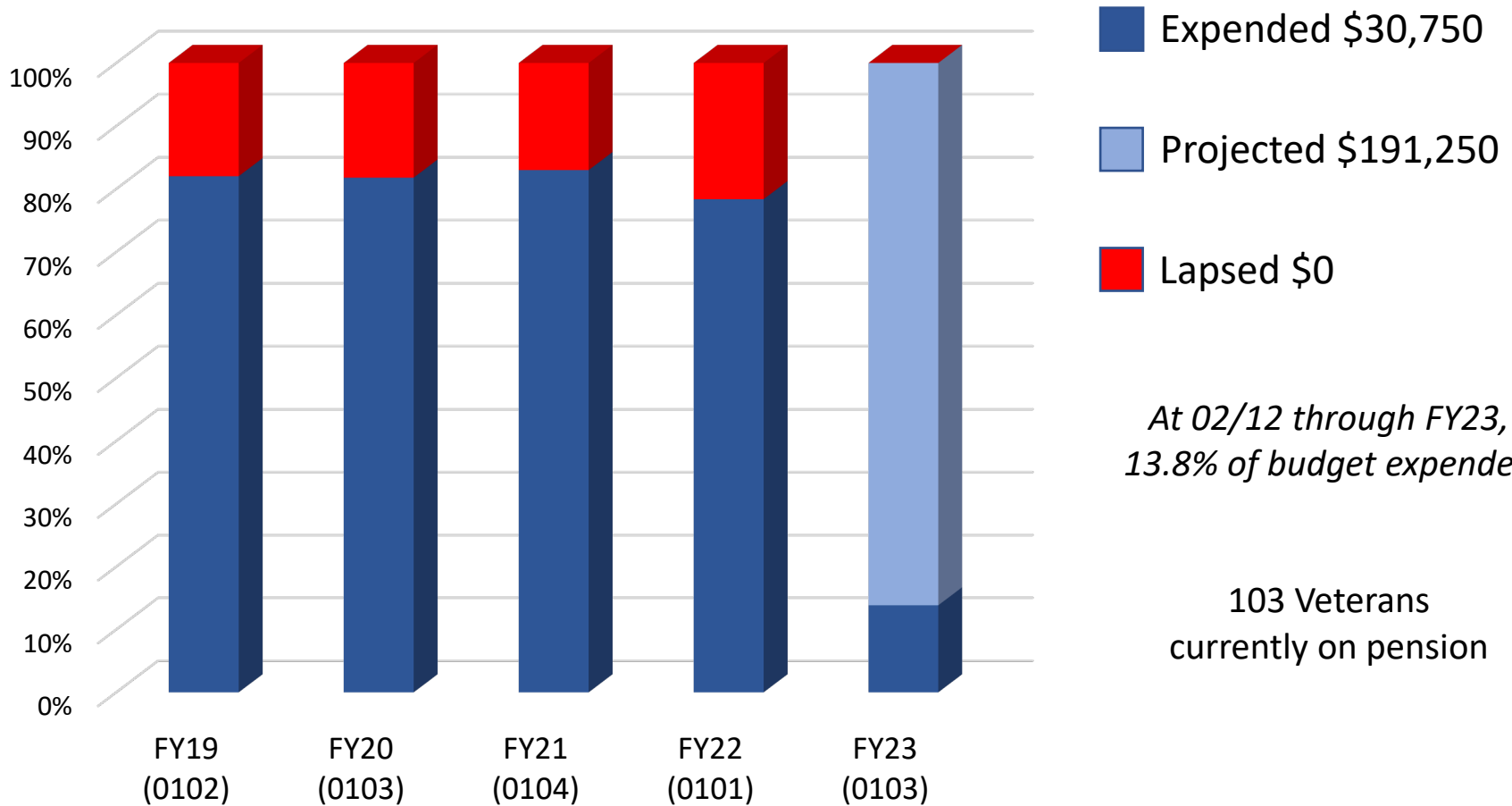
\$3,878,000



BLIND VETERANS' PENSION



\$222,000



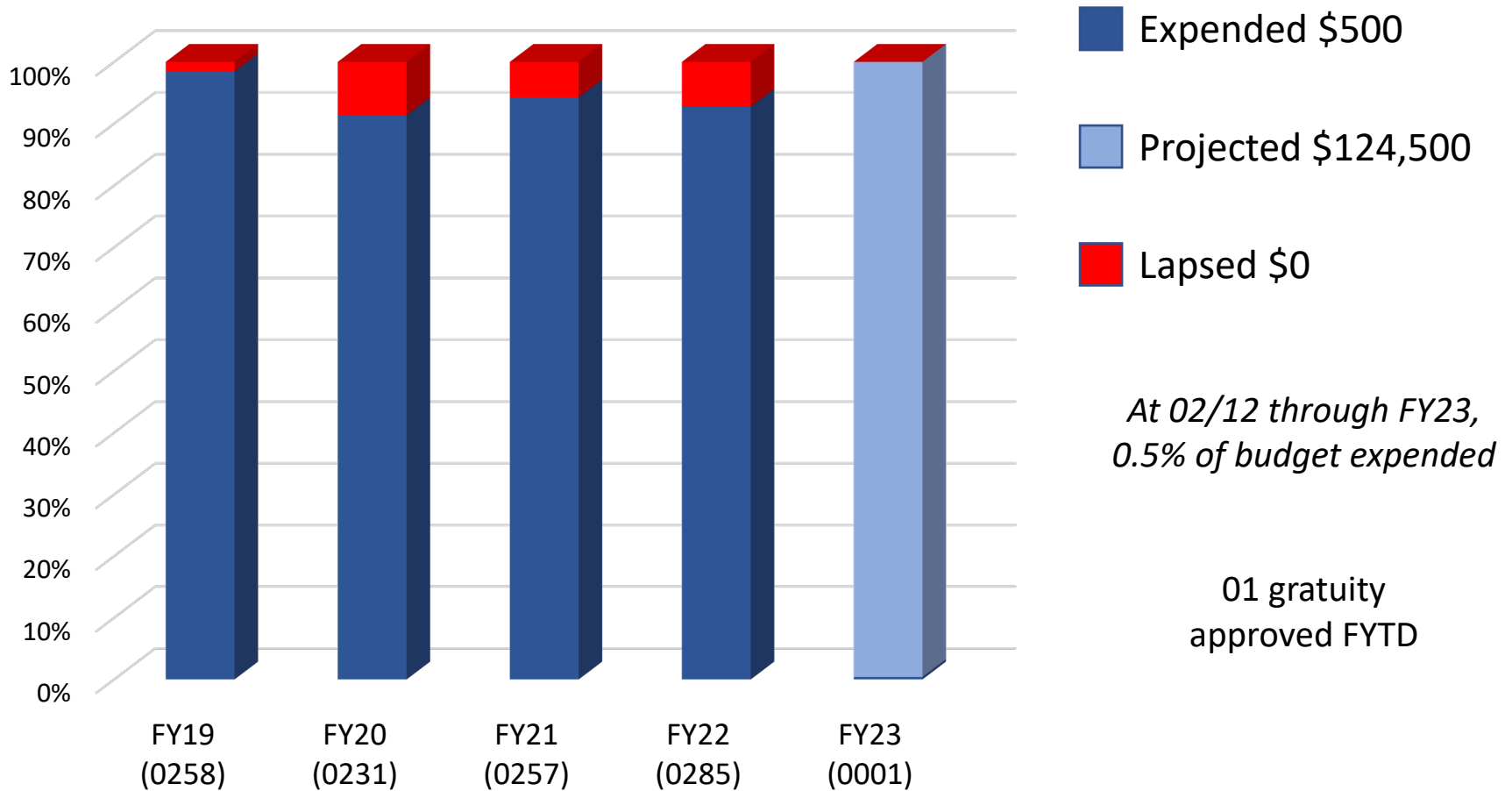
*At 02/12 through FY23,
13.8% of budget expended*

103 Veterans
currently on pension

EDUCATIONAL GRATUITY



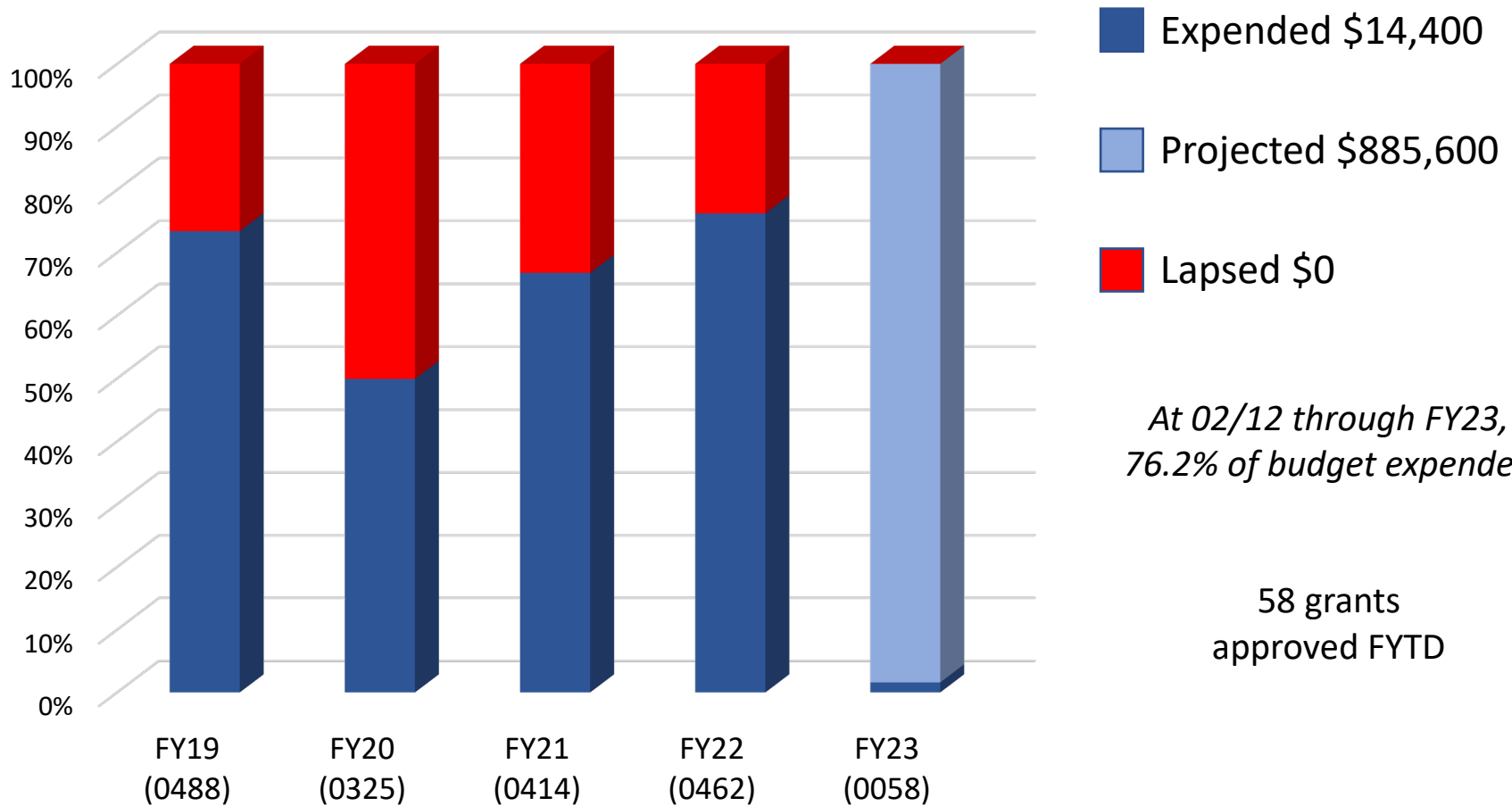
\$125,000



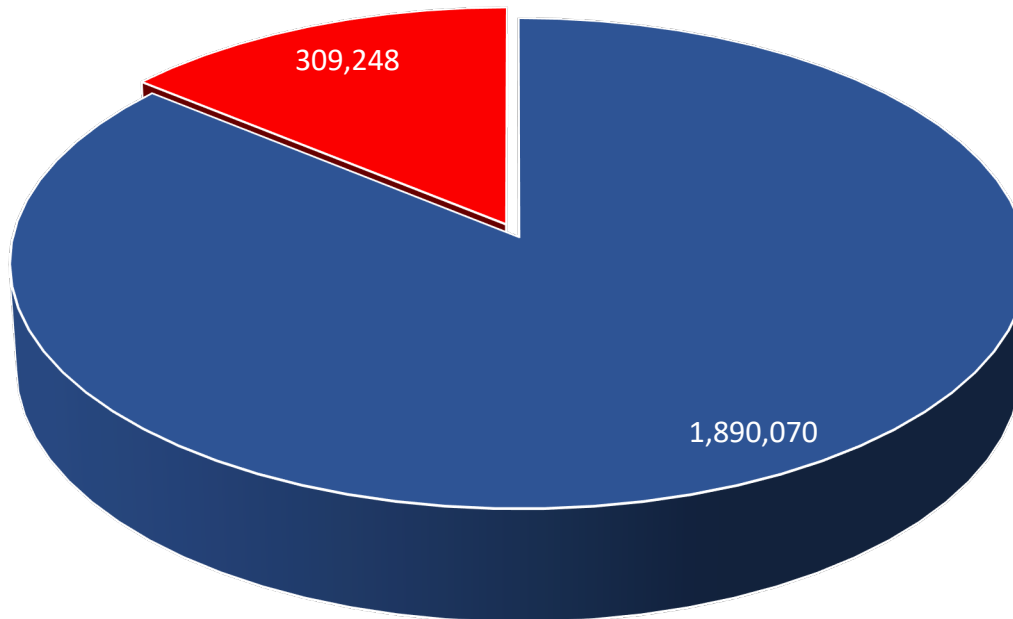
VETERANS' TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE



\$900,000 (VTF)



MFRAP Fund Balance \$1,207,816



Total Donations FY05-23: \$2,199,318

- Personal Income Tax Donations
- Private/Cash/Other Donations

Total Grants FY05-22: \$991,502*

FY23 Total Donations: \$974

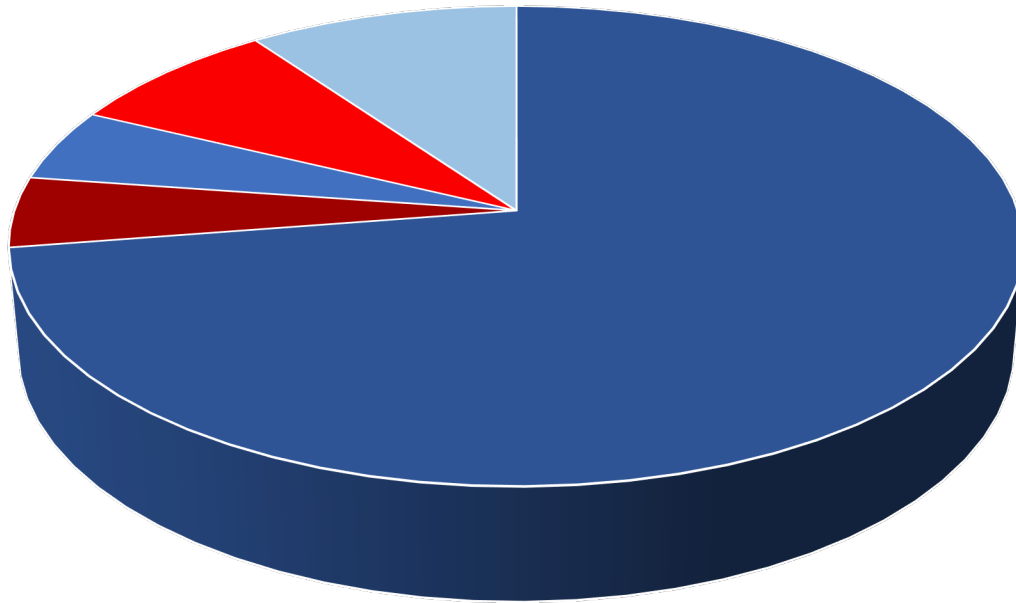
FY23 Total Grants: \$13,500

**PIRO anticipates surpassing \$1M in total grants in FY23.*

DISABLED VETERANS' REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION



1,515 Total Adjudications
from 26 May to 18 Aug 2023



- 1,099 Approved (72.5%)
- 72 Denied: Financial Need
- 74 Denied: Ineligible*
- 120 Removed: No Response
- 150 Removed: Eligibility Change

* 74 Applications Ineligible by Reason

- 11 – Veteran did not have total or 100% permanent disability during lifetime
- 14 – Property not owned solely by Veteran or jointly/estate by entirety with spouse
- 27 – Veteran did not have service during a period of war or armed conflict
- 01 – Veteran does not occupy property as principal dwelling
- 21 – Veteran's disability not rated 100% permanent due to future exams

DISABLED VETERANS' REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION

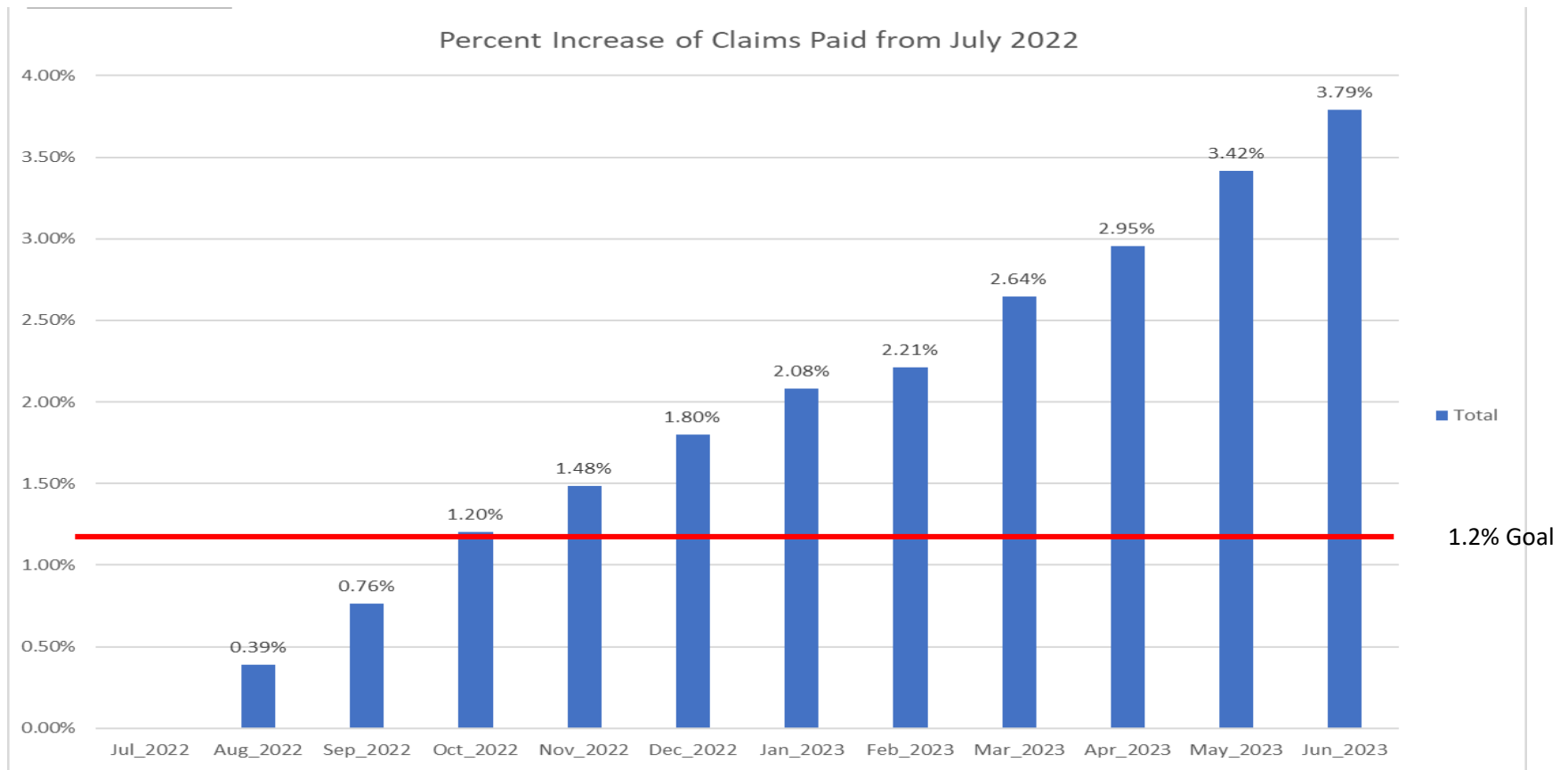


Estimated \$53.5M in real estate tax exemptions to disabled veterans and their surviving spouses.

As of 18 Aug 2023

> community > commonwealth > country

Claims Paid As Reported By VA Central Office (VACO)



% reflects the combined efforts of: AMVETs, DAV, DMVA (to include counties), TAL, VFW, and VVA in federal VA compensation and pension claims.



VISN 4

MR. TIM LIEZERT



VISN 4 Access – Fiscal Year 2023 Wait Times



Clinics FY23 thru Sept. 24	Number of Appointments	Average Wait
Mental Health	341,352	5.2
Primary Care	482,308	4.9
Specialty Care	956,704	10.1
Other	698,609	6.3
ALL	2,478,973	7.3

FY23 data updated 9/25/2023 with appointment info as of 9/24/2023.

VISN 4 Access – Current Average Wait Times



VISN 4 Facility	Primary Care	
	New Patients	Returning Patients
James E. Van Zandt VAMC	19	2
Abie Abraham HCC	13	1
Coatesville VAMC	24	7
Erie VAMC	24	3
Lebanon VAMC	16	4
Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VAMC	36	5
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (University Drive)	14	12
VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System (H.J. Heinz)	36	17
Wilkes-Barre VAMC	14	2
Wilmington VAMC	12	10

FY23 data updated 9/25/2023 with wait times as of 9/24/2023 for the last 30 days.

www.accesstocare.va.gov

October 2023 Update

> community > commonwealth > country

Improvements to the Access to Care website

Average wait times for all VHA medical centers and clinics are now calculated to include additional steps in the appointment process that had not been captured in the past.

- For **new patient** appointments, average wait time is calculated from the earliest time a request for care is consistently recorded in the scheduling system to the date the appointment is completed – or the date it is scheduled to occur if not yet completed.
- For **established patient** appointments, average wait times are measured from the date agreed upon between a Veteran and provider for future care and ends on the date care is received, or the date that care is scheduled to occur if it has not yet occurred.

The upgraded calculation makes the website more reflective of the complete process of requesting and receiving care. Averages are representative of general performance and may not represent individual experience. Average wait times are never used to determine eligibility for community care.

FY23 data updated 9/25/2023 with wait times as of 9/24/2023 for the last 30 days.

www.accesstocare.va.gov

VISN 4 Care in the Community



	Care in the Community Consults (Scheduled and Completed)	Non-VA Unique Patients*
FY 21	156,191	85,497
FY 22	168,184	89,683
FY 23 (as of 9/24/23)	186,581	99,870

*Number of unique enrolled Veterans who receive community care at VA expense

FY23 data updated 9/25/2023 with consult info as of 9/24/2023.

NEXT MEETING



**Friday December 8, 2023
at 10:00AM**

**Arrowheads Community Club
Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA 17003**

VISIT www.dmva.pa.gov/veterans/commissionsandcouncils FOR SVC INFO



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Healthcare—VISN 4

VISN 4 Update

October 13, 2023

Leadership Update

William Klaips has been appointed Assistant Director of the Wilkes-Barre VA effective September 24. Mr. Klaips previously served as the Executive Assistant to the Director.

Joseph Haverstick, VISN 4 Chief Financial Officer, has accepted a new position and his last day with our Network was October 6.

Paul Woodland, the Chief of Police at the Wilmington VA is currently serving as our Acting VISN 4 Security Officer.

VA Deputy Secretary Appointment

On September 22, Tanya Bradsher was confirmed by the Senate as VA's deputy secretary. In this role, Deputy Secretary Bradsher will help lead the Department of Veterans Affairs as it continues to deliver more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before in the nation's history.

Deputy Secretary Bradsher—who has been serving as VA's chief of staff since March 2021—is a fourth-generation Veteran and Iraq combat Veteran who served for 20 years in the United States Army before retiring as a lieutenant colonel. She is now the first woman deputy secretary of VA, the highest-ranking woman in VA history, and the first woman of color to serve in the position.

With this confirmation, VA now has a confirmed [secretary](#), [deputy secretary](#), [under secretary for benefits](#), [under secretary for health](#), and [under secretary for memorial affairs](#) for the first time since 2014.

Flu and New COVID Vaccines

VA Health and Wellness Clinics annually sponsor the [Flu Shot Campaign](#)—the flu vaccine is given at many VA facilities, as well as community clinics and pharmacies. A link is included of where eligible Veterans can receive their flu shots. VISN 4 facilities have already received 50% of our flu vaccines and anticipate receiving the rest by mid-October.

VISN 4 has begun to order the new COVID vaccine. Veterans are encouraged to contact their local VA if interested in receiving the new COVID Vaccine.

Patient Experience Update

VISN 4 continues to have the highest trust score in the nation at 93.9%. VISN 4 also has the highest number of compliments at 77.8 %. VISN 4 has the lowest number of recommendations at 10.5% and concerns at 11.8%.

PACT Act Update: PACT Act Key Data

The 2022 PACT Act expanded health care and benefits for millions of Veterans exposed to toxic hazards during their service, and their survivors – including many Vietnam-era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 Veterans.

[Veterans and their survivors have filed more than one million claims for toxic exposure-related benefits under the PACT Act](#) since President Biden signed it into law Aug. 10, 2022.

As of September 16, VA has processed more than 570,000 of these claims, granting 77.7% of them and awarding more than \$2.3 billion in earned benefits to Veterans and survivors.

[VA's public-facing PACT Act dashboard](#) is published every other Friday and has the latest data and information on how VA is implementing the PACT Act.

A link to the updated dashboard is included in the read ahead.

Claims and Benefits

On August 16, VBA completed the highest number of compensation claims of any year in its history, ending the day at 1,715,654, surpassing last year's total of 1,709,765.

Through September 16, VBA has completed 1,892,323 C&P claims and expects to complete between 1.9 and two million claims this year.

Right now, VA is delivering more benefits, more quickly, to more Veterans than ever before.

VA processed a record number of claims in FY 2021, then broke that record in FY 2022 by 12%.

In April, VA processed its millionth disability compensation and pension claim for FY 2023, putting VA 15% ahead of its FY 2022 record pace.

VA continues to encourage Veterans to enroll in healthcare and file claims under the PACT Act, resulting in increased numbers of new claims and new enrollees.

The number of claims filed, and the number of claims processed are increasing at a rapid pace. VBA is hiring aggressively, and using new automated tools, to expand claims processing capacity to deliver benefits to Veterans as fast as possible.

VA Hiring

To support VA's workforce in our mission to serve Veterans, VA is hiring staff at an unprecedented rate:

As of August 31, 2023, VHA has welcomed 54,056 new hires in the first 11 months of the year, the highest hiring level in the history of VA for that time period. This has resulted in a substantial 6.2% growth rate so far, this fiscal year, **exceeding** our FY23 annual goal of 3% increase in total employees onboard.

For retention, as of August 31, 2023, the loss rate in VHA is currently at 7.2% compared to an average of 8.9% and a 6-year maximum rate of 10.3% for same period (Oct.-Aug.). We anticipate this number to increase due to lags in recording of departures, and we expect to end the year near the average total loss rate of 9.8%.

From October 1, 2022, through September 9, 2023 (through pay period 18), VBA's workforce has grown by 5,572 employees (21.6%). VBA's total workforce is 31,347, the largest VBA has ever had and the highest growth rate in personnel in the past two decades.

We are continuing to hire aggressively, and we will not rest until every VA employee has the resources, they need to feel supported and deliver world-class care and benefits to Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

VA Expands Burial Benefits

On September 22, VA announced that Veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors now have access to expanded burial benefits to help with end-of-life expenses related to a Veteran's gravesite, burial, funeral and transportation of remains to their final resting place. Burial benefits are available to individuals who pay for a Veteran's burial and funeral costs that are not reimbursed by any other organization. The updated burial benefits are:

- Expanded reimbursement of transportation expenses, to include costs for transporting remains, to state or Tribal Veterans' cemeteries in addition to previously eligible national cemeteries.
- Instituted a more generous single payment rate for non-service-connected burial benefits.
- Extended the VA plot or interment allowance to Tribal organizations.

VA provides burial benefits for all legal burial types, including cremation, burial at sea, and donation of remains to a medical school. Eligible individuals include a surviving spouse or legal partner, surviving child, parent or executor of the Veteran's estate. Additionally, VA may pay burial benefits to a funeral home or third party who handled burial arrangements for a Veteran whose remains are unclaimed.

Veterans are encouraged to plan with end-of-life benefits provided by VA. These benefits include VA life insurance, care preferences, survivor benefits, and burial benefits that can be applied for in advance of a Veteran's passing.

Visit www.va.gov/plan-ahead to learn more.

There is no time limit to file for a service-connected burial, plot or interment allowance, or the transportation benefit. However, claims for non-service-connected burial benefits must be filed within two years of the Veteran's burial or cremation. A non-service-connected burial benefit is one where the cause of death was not related to military service.

Links were provided in the read ahead material to Learn more about [burial benefits](#) and additional information regarding [flags, headstones, and markers](#).

Connected Care Update

Telehealth

VA's Virtual Health Resource Centers (VHRCs) offer support to Veterans, their family members and caregivers, and VA staff looking to take advantage of virtual care tools. The VHRC has health technology experts to provide guidance, hands-on support, training, help troubleshooting, and other information regarding virtual care tools, such as VA Video Connect, My Health eVet, health apps, and devices. VISN 04 currently has VHRCs in Erie, Pittsburgh, Altoona, Lebanon, and Coatesville medical centers. Please encourage your Veterans to stop by the VHRC next time they are in these medical centers. A link to this informational video is included in your read ahead material.

<https://youtu.be/3FzIRJc79Sc>.

My HealtheVet

As you know, Veterans need to go to many different websites today to manage their VA-related tasks. To improve this experience, the Office of Connected Care is creating a new home for health tools on VA.gov.

The new portal, "My HealtheVet on VA.gov" will provide one place for Veterans to manage their health care needs. This new portal is being developed with Veteran feedback guiding every step forward to ensure the overall accessibility and

experience. My HealtheVet on VA.gov will combine the VA health tools and Veteran health data from the My HealtheVet website into one unified patient portal.

The transition to My HealtheVet on VA.gov is set to be complete by late 2024; however, the current My HealtheVet portal will remain available to Veterans until the transition is complete. The same tools and information available on My HealtheVet currently (including Secure Messaging, prescription refills, medical records, appointments and more) will be available on My HealtheVet on VA.gov.

The new portal will require one secure sign-in process to access all the VA health tools and information that will have the same, accessible design that works well across all digital devices, including mobile devices. There will be an updated one-time Terms of Use Veterans will need to accept. Features currently available on the new My HealtheVet on VA.gov portal include the Homepage and Appointments. The following features will be available soon: Secure Messaging, Medications, and Medical Records.

**GINO J. MERLI VETERANS' CENTER
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
August 17, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Travis Davis, Executive Director, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Bernie McDonald recorded roll call and attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS

Lisa Solarczyk, President - Marine Corps League (Excused)
William Smith, Vice President - The American Legion
Bernard "Bernie" McDonald, Secretary - AMVETS
Robert Cudworth - Military Officers Association of America (Excused)
Robert Smith - Military Order of the Purple Heart (Excused)
Russell Canevari - Veterans of Foreign Wars
Joe Sylvester - Disabled American Veterans
Abbey Russell for Rosemary Brown - PA State Senate
Kyle Donahue – PA State Representative
Tim Cleveland – PSACDVA
Lisa Kaye – PSACDVA
Roger Risner - GJMVC Resident Representative

DMVA

Major General Mark J. Schindler - Adjutant General, Pennsylvania (Excused)
Maureen Weigl, BG - Deputy Adjutant General, VA
Travis Davis – Executive Director, Long-Term Care
Barbara Raymond – Director, Bureau of Veterans' Homes (Excused)
Vito P. Ruggiero – GJMVC Commandant
Kathleen Ambrose - GJMVC Deputy Commandant

OTHERS PRESENT / INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Lynn O'Day, Recorder
Sarah Butler, Admissions Coordinator
Janice Mcallister, Volunteer Coordinator
Maria Coles, ADON
Erica Comine, Infection Preventionist
Beth Warner, Regional Compliance Officer
Dr. Kazmierski, Medical Director
Janice Gavern, The American Legion

MOMENT OF SILENCE

- A moment of silence was led by Travis Davis, Executive Director. Mr. Richard Green, Blinded Veterans, recently passed away.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Previous minutes accepted as written.

REVIEW OF MEMBER STATUS

<i>Jewish War Veterans</i>	<i>(Vacant)</i>
<i>Catholic War Veteran</i>	<i>(Vacant)</i>
<i>Military Order of the Purple Heart</i>	<i>(Vacant)</i>
<i>Blinded Veterans Association</i>	<i>(Vacant)</i>

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL

- General Weigl reported that 5 of our 6 homes are 5 stars and 1 is 4 stars.
- She stated that she attended the NASVH conference and gathered a great deal of information that she will be sharing.
- Next week is the National AM Vets convention in Pittsburgh.
- The motorcycle ride for Gino Merli will be this weekend.
- The Hollidaysburg project is going well.
- We will be starting to use ID badges to get on and off base.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LONG-TERM CARE

- Travis Davis reported that we will begin posting the meeting minutes from all homes on the website. They will be in draft form until signed off at the next meeting.
- Long-term care budget will receive an increase from DOH next year.
- Our homes have had over 2 dozen inspections and surveys over the past year as well as internal surveys by our compliance team.
- 5 of our facilities have acquired 5-star ratings. There are over 700 facilities in the state, and we rank in the top 10%. Star ratings can change month to month, and we are hoping and striving to maintain that status.
- We have had 1,060 admissions which is the highest in 3 years. There is an overall waitlist of 239 and 180 of them are veterans.
- We remain above the minimum for staffing. We have been focusing on recruitment and retention. We have a lot of overtime and agency staff being utilized.
- The project in Hollidaysburg is moving forward. We did have a few setbacks. We hit a powerline and had to transport some residents to the local VA. The team responded very well.
- We have a new commandant at Hollidaysburg, Christina Dambeck and we also have an open director of nursing position at Delaware Valley.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

- Dr. Kazmierski reported that the new strain of COVID is currently in house. We have 10 residents, 1 in the hospital and 12 staff positive. Initial indications are mild. They should be releasing a booster late this September or early October. It will be available for compromised individuals and those with respiratory issues.
- We are ready to administer immunizations against FLU. We had a strong FLU season last year.
- All usual vaccines are or will be available to staff and residents.
- We continue to reduce the use of antibiotics and catheters.
- We are continuing to reduce the use of antipsychotic medications.

REPORT OF THE ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

- Sarah Butler reported that our census is at 162. We had 31 admissions, 2 discharges and 20 expired. That is a 5% increase.
- We received 20 applications in July.
- Our waitlist is now at 3 to 4 weeks for veterans and 1 to 3 months for non-veterans.
- We ask that you continue to help with the application process within the community. Take application packets with you and give them when needed. The packets answer questions and have all the contact information in them.

REPORT OF THE COMMANDANT

- Vito Ruggiero reported that we are within the top 10% of the facilities in the state. He expressed his thanks for the leadership in the facility and asked that the council promote this status within the community.
- We have some construction and projects going on around the facility and grounds.
 - The trees are gone to make way for a new fence.
 - Utility lines are being laid for the corner LED message board.
 - We are repaving the parking lot.
 - We will be giving a facelift to the internal areas.
 - The canteen will be getting a facelift, it will be moved to a new area. It will have new items as well as indoor and outdoor seating.
- Our facility assessment went well. We need to put a plan in place by September 1.
- We are currently dealing with COVID and masking.
- Our annual motorcycle ride is this weekend. It will be at Harley Davidson in Dickson City. We encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the day.
- The golf tournament hasn't been finalized yet but we should have the numbers for you by the next meeting in November.

THE GOOD OF THE COUNCIL

- Janice Gavern presented the facility with photos and portraits to be displayed throughout the women's wing and the facility.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was announced: November 16, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.



SOUTHEASTERN VETERANS' CENTER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

July 13, 2023

The Southeastern Veterans' Center Advisory Council met July 13, 2023 at 10:00 AM in the All- Purpose Room at the Southeastern Veterans' Center.

Advisory Council Members Participating:

Barry Amole, Vietnam Veterans of America, President
Kenneth Schweitzer, American Legion, Secretary
Richard Doherty, Military Officers Association of America
Thomas Applebach, Lehigh County Office of Veterans' Affairs
Kenneth Nadwodny, Catholic War Veterans
Robert Richardson, Resident Representative
John Getz, Veterans of Foreign Wars
Thomas Brown, Veterans of Foreign Wars
The Hon. Tracy Pennycuick, PA State Senate
Daniel Kuper, Resident Representative

Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs/Southeastern Veterans' Center:

Maureen Weigl, BG (PA) – DMVA
Travis Davis, Executive Director, Long-Term Care - DMVA
Barbara Raymond, BVH Director – DMVA
Mike Hoover, Chief of Operations- DMVA
Josh Spigner, Regional Compliance Officer- DMVA
Erica Moore, Regional Program Outreach Coordinator- DMVA
Mike Belcher, Veteran Service Specialist- DMVA
Brian Gula, Commandant – SEVC
Lauren Stenson, Director of Nursing - SEVC
Jill Alwine, Admissions and Marketing Coordinator – SEVC
Sarah Klufas, Assistant to the Commandant - SEVC

Visitors:

Nikki Whitlock, Constituency Relations, Senator Katie Muth's Office
Lisa Walters, Chief of Staff, Senator Tracy Pennycuick's Office
Linda Neiman, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
Anna Brown

Excused Absence:

Mary Archey, Marine Corps League, Vice President
Jeffrey Elliot, PA AMVETS
Doug Forsythe, Disabled American Veterans
VACANT, PA House of Representatives
MG Mark J. Schindler, Adjutant General - DMVA
Robert Stone, American Legion

Call to Order:

The Advisory Council Meeting was called to order by Barry Amole at 10:00 AM. There was a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Approval of April 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by John Getz and seconded by Thomas Brown to approve the minutes of the Advisory Council Meeting held on April 13, 2023. Motion carried, and minutes were approved as written.

Report of the Medical Director:

Lauren Stenson, Director of Nursing, reported on behalf of Medical Director Dr. Monika VanSant. We are currently in our window for our Department of Health annual survey, so we have started doing some preparations. We have onboarded 3 nurses and 3 CNAs since the last Advisory Council meeting. We are currently recruiting for a full-time CRNP and another Assistant Director of Nursing, along with our continuous search for RNs, LPNs, and CNAs.

SEVC is moving forward on the collaboration with Reading Area Community College to become one of their clinical sites for their nursing program. We have another meeting with them next week. In addition, our nursing administration will be keeping an eye out for career fairs and other events at local colleges to attend to let our presence be known within the community.

We opened our 3 West unit of Coates Hall in May and are trying to fill as many of those beds as we can, while maintaining a healthy staff ratio for the facility.

Report of the Admissions and Marketing Coordinator:

Jill Alwine, Admissions Coordinator, provided the council with an admissions update. Jill reported that as of June 30, 2023, the facility had 201 residents, leaving us with 91 vacancies. The reasonings for the bed vacancies are due to staffing issues and our 3 East unit being reserved for quarantine. At this point we only have 2 available beds that we can fill, and we have admissions currently scheduled for them. Once we get a better complement of staff, we will be able to fill more beds. We have been working with the local VA medical centers to ensure we can get residents in here that need to be here. The Coatesville Medical Center recently closed one of their homeless buildings, so we received many referrals for our personal care unit and were able to admit some of those residents as well. There are currently 77 people on the waitlist, 64 veterans and 13 non-veterans/ spouses. The approximate waitlist times for skilled nursing and personal care are 3-6 months and 2-4 months, respectively. Our memory care unit is currently about a 15-18 month wait, due to it being our smallest area.

Richard Doherty asked Jill to repeat the waitlist times and wondered about how many admissions we do a year. Jill stated that year-to-date we have taken in about 36 admissions so far. Our waitlist is down from last year, which was about 120-150 people. Richard Doherty stated that he does not believe that the community knows much about our state veterans' homes and asked that we provide handouts to him to pass along. Thomas Applebach stated that the DMVA has 2 trifold that provides information on our homes. Jill Alwine stated that if anyone wants pamphlets about our home, that she can provide those after the meeting. She also stated that we do attend expos and work with social workers in the community to try and get the word out and educate everyone the best we can.

Report of the Deputy Adjutant General – General Maureen Weigl – DMVA:

General Weigl began by welcoming Senator Pennycuick to the council.

Gen Weigl stated that we are sitting at a census of about 1051 across all 6 homes. At the beginning of the year, we started at about 950.

Gen Weigl also wanted to offer kudos to her team and Christine, the new Commandant at Hollidaysburg. Construction for the new building at Hollidaysburg has been ongoing. Unfortunately, earlier this week while they were digging, they cut all the powerlines. Two buildings were affected, and some residents needed to be evacuated to the VA. Generators were brought in to keep the power going. Greg Lehman and the maintenance team were up all night working with the contactors to fix the issues. There were also other organizations in the community like Sheetz and Walmart that pitched in to help where they could.

Gen Weigl informed the council that Senator Pennycuick, who was in attendance, started a women's health taskforce initiative and signed into legislation Women's Veteran's Day to be celebrated on June 12th. Two pieces of legislation that are still pending are the increase in the paralyzed and blind pensions, going anywhere from 150 to 200 or even 250.

We are continuing to educate veterans in the community about the PACT ACT. We really want to try and get the word out. We will gladly come to your local chapters and sit down and talk about the benefits and even bring our mobile vans to help people do their claims. When we are in those smaller environments, we can have more intimate conversations and really determine what people need. We are also reaching out to all the homes to make sure that residents and staff know about their claims and benefits.

Kenneth Nadwodny stated that he has been receiving calls from spouses and children of veterans asking about what they can do for their loved one when they are incapacitated. Gen Weigl stated that we are trying to work on campaigns that put the word out about these programs to a broader demographic, including these caregivers. Thomas Applebach stated that there is a county office of veterans' affairs in every county in PA and his advice to everyone is to direct these people to call their county office for guidance. He also stated that the VA is mailing letters about the PACT ACT and the additional benefits to all the veterans in their system, and that they are getting a lot of calls from people inquiring about it.

Report of the Executive Director, Long Term Care – Travis Davis – DMVA:

Travis Davis started off by introducing Mike Hoover, Chief Operating Officer for the veterans' homes. Regarding the incident at Hollidaysburg, we had to utilize our Emergency Management plans. Our staff are trained on these each year and, although we hope to never have to use them, we did on Monday. The team responded very well, and all the residents were kept safe. We had 245 residents on campus when this happened, about 174 were potentially affected and we had plans in place to transport and place 147 residents at one point. Fortunately, we were able to restore power to some parts of the campus and we only had to relocate 19 residents to our local VA. Mike Hoover met with the team at Hollidaysburg and they discussed what went well, what we could improve on, and where communication can be improved in case this happens in the future. We are going to roll this out to all our facilities, so we are even better prepared to handle something like this in the future. The other 5 homes are equipped with newer generators where, if we ran into a similar issue here, the generators would be able to handle more than just your basic lifesafety measures. Because we are putting up the new building at Hollidaysburg, their system was not upgraded at that time. We expect to be back on utilities there by the end of next week.

We have had over 20 inspections from outside agencies take place across the 6 homes. In addition to that, the DMVA has also completed facility performance appraisals at 5 of our 6 homes.

Travis informed the council that we are going to be posting the Advisory Council minutes on the DMVA website to increase our transparency. They were posted years ago, but throughout Covid and everything, it has fallen by the wayside. After the meetings, a draft version of the minutes will be posted online. Once the minutes have been approved at the next meeting, they will be moved to an approved final status.

The state budget still has not passed. We do not quite know what it means for us and long-term care. We believe what we will likely see is a 1% increase for Medicaid. This could change, but this is what our advocacy groups and membership groups believe will happen. If that does happen, we will have some concerns, especially with the 17.5% increase last year for Medicaid. Our operating costs have significantly increased due to staffing shortages, increases in PPD, and the DOH increasing our minimum staffing requirements. So, depending on where the state budget goes next year, if we see a moderate to low increase in Medicaid, our question is where is that funding coming from to sustain year 2 of the increase. We typically staff higher than the state minimums, so we feel comfortable that we will be in compliance with the new ratios. However, it could limit our ability to fill our beds to some degree.

Thomas Applebach asked who sets the ratios. Travis replied that right now they are state governed, so the Department on Health sets those ratios, but CMS is looking at a minimum for the nation. Nothing has been passed yet. Thomas Applebach asked why they are increasing the ratios. Senator Pennycuick stated that there is a bill in the House and the Senate to require staffing minimums. Travis stated that we are in a good position right now with our ratios as we staff higher due to our population. However, we do not believe in a 'one-size fits all' approach to staffing. Senator Pennycuick agreed that one-size does not fit all and that is a huge issue, especially when we have such a nursing shortage.

Out of the 6 homes, there are 3 homes that are 5- star facilities, Delaware Valley, Gino Merli, and Erie. Our Hollidaysburg and Southwestern facilities are currently ranked at 4-stars, and Southeastern is currently a 3-star facility. There is currently no covid among residents or staff. Currently, we have a waitlist of 263 veterans and spouses from across the state. Recruitment and retention remain our biggest challenge. Our total complement for all 6 veterans' homes is just under 2200 and we currently have several hundred vacant positions. We are still hosting events, such as the Walk-in Wednesdays, to help recruit for these vacant positions. In each home about 30% of beds remain vacant and that is mainly due to staffing. The issue is not that we do not have enough staff to care for our veterans, it is that we do not have enough staff to fill all the beds.

Regarding some key positions, we recently named a new Commandant for the Hollidaysburg facility. We also have a new Director of Nursing at the Delaware Valley facility, and we are actively recruiting for additional help on the physician's service side here at Southeastern.

Senator Pennycuick stated that if Travis sends her the vacancies that she will post them on her webpage and her e-blast.

John Getz asked why Southeastern is only rated a 3-star facility. Brian Gula stated that he will talk a little more about that during his report.

Report of the Director of Veterans' Homes – Barbara Raymond – DMVA:

Barbara Raymond started by stating that since we last met, the public health emergency has ended. The vaccine mandate will officially be ending as of August 6th. However, the CMS has stated that they will not enforce the vaccine mandates prior to it ending. Right now, we are not including the vaccine mandate on any of our job postings. We were hoping to a slight uptick in the number of applications we received for our postings once it was removed. We have not seen this yet, but we did just take it off.

We are currently monitoring a strain of the Covid Omicron virus called XBB. It has been in the states since the fall timeframe. It is currently not the dominant strain, but it has been in the news lately. Unfortunately, this strain is pushing past immunities from having covid prior as well as those that are vaccinated. We have gone about 2 weeks since anyone at our homes has been Covid positive and about 3 months since any major outbreaks. Come the fall time, we are expecting to see an increase in cases just like with influenza. We had no influenza deaths this year and only 1 death attributed to Covid, although it was not the primary cause.

We did have new Department of Health regulations come into effect as of July 1, 2023. One of those regulations as mentioned prior was the increase in the staffing ratios. The other regulatory changes were primarily in line with CMS. At the homes we have gone through and undated our policies and procedures so that we are fully compliant with the new state regulations that just took effect.

Since we last met, we celebrated Nurses' Week, CNA Week, and Veterans Home week. Brian will touch on this more in this report.

In addition to the power outage at the Hollidaysburg facility, the Department of Health came in that day to the facility to conduct their annual survey. They were kind enough to step out and return the next day. In the end, they decided to exit and not conduct the survey this week. We are guessing they will be back sometime in the near future, probably next week.

Robert Richardson stated that he has yet to hear of anyone getting a PPD. Barbara Raymond stated that our rules are a little bit different. Upon admission or hire, you receive them. However, unless your county is in a high TB area, we are only required to check for symptoms. You should be asked about symptoms on an annual basis.

Report of the Commandant – Brian Gula– SEVC:

Brian Gula stated that along with his report, he will be giving an update on construction projects for Mildred as she is out on a planned leave.

To address the question posed earlier by John Getz, Southeastern is currently at a 3-star rating. This is a national rating system for all nursing homes and the information is available to the public. The three major categories that this rating is broken into is quality measures, health inspections, and staffing. Our current rating is really driven by the outcome of our health inspections. Currently, SEVC is at a 5-star rating for staffing, 3- star rating for quality measures, and 2-star for health inspections. Scores are refreshed quarterly. The good news is that when scores refresh in July, we will return to a 4-star rating. The issue is health inspections affect your star rating for 3 years. Every time the facility receives a deficiency, the deficiency is assigned a certain number of points based on the severity. The more points you have, the worse your star rating is for health inspections, the lesser amount of points you have, the better your star rating is. Back in June 2020, at the beginning of Covid, our facility unfortunately had a very tough survey and received 156 points for this survey. So come the refresh in

July, after that 3-year mark, those points will be dropped from our rating. In response to a follow-up question asked by John Getz, Brian further explained that during that survey, the facility received one of the highest severity levels for infection control and our protocols.

Travis Davis stated that of the 3 categories that the star ratings are based upon, most of are facilities are at a 5-star for staffing and we are really trying to focus on the quality measure piece. We have a quality team that helps support the quality teams at the homes and we are seeing improvements on those quality measure scores as well.

General Weigl reiterated that the surveys are public, and anyone can review the information and see what type of deficiencies a home has received. She stated that deficiencies can be in many different areas such as food not being at the right temperature, calendars for resident events not being updated, etc. It is not all lifesafety or neglect issues. Furthermore, she told the council that if anyone has any concerns or would like to view the findings of the health inspection surveys, that they can reach out to us, and we can direct them to where the results can be found or even offer explanations if there are ever any questions.

Construction project updates: We will be installing a security gate on Brown Drive to help prevent unauthorized vehicles from coming onto the property. Security will also be able to monitor the gates via a camera and even open the gates to allow vehicles in. If the gate is closed, staff will be able to open the gate with a swipe of their employee badge. We have plans to have one placed at the top of the hill on Dunlap Drive if all goes well.

We are currently replacing all numbered keypads in our CLC building with badge readers as well to enhance security and make sure that residents or unauthorized personnel are not learning the codes and able to access areas they are not supposed to.

Another big project coming up is the renovation of our staff break rooms. We will be renovating all the staff break rooms in both buildings including new floors, ceilings, fixtures, furniture, etc. We are currently getting staff input on what they would like to see in their breakrooms.

To reiterate what Lauren Stenson said, we are currently in our window for our annual Department of Health survey. We have audits and processes in place to prepare for that. We had our VA survey back in February. We were cited for a few minor items. We continue to work on our corrective action plan. There is education and auditing taking place and we will shortly present all this back to the VA in hopes it is approved and that we are placed back in compliance with their regulations.

We have filled 2 key positions since our last meeting, our Activities Director and our Facility and Grounds Director. We are very excited to have them onboard and are confident that they will be an asset to our staff and SEVC.

ADHC update: at our last meeting we received our Occupancy Permit, so we are finally able to utilize the space. We have been using it for staff meetings, trainings, and we used it to host our job fair. We are also looking into using it for a CNA training course.

We had a great month of June celebrating Nurses' week, CNA week, and Veterans Home week. Nurses' week and CNA week were filled with giveaways, games, gift basket raffles, all provided by staff, pizza, and other yummy treats. For Veterans Home week, our amazing Activities department and Volunteer

department put on a carnival with a pie-eating contest and dunk tank, Luau and pig roast, big prize Bingo and many more events!

Barb Raymond made sure to reiterate that the state is not permitted to use our state budget to do all the staff appreciation things, so everything that took place during those weeks was donated by SEVC staff.

Gen Weigl also mentioned we will be hosting a 100th birthday party in September for one of our World War II veterans who is in personal care. Nikki Whitlock mentioned that as a resident of SD44, they can provide a Senate Citation for his 100th birthday.

John Getz asked if they would have any issues coming in with the new security gates that will be installed. Brian Gula responded that we are going to see how everything goes, but we will most likely have them open during normal business hours. However, if they are closed for any reason, you will be able to ring a buzzer and someone at the security desk will be able to let you in. We are installing the first one on Brown Drive to test everything and see how it goes. Barb asked if we will be using pressure pads that will open the gate on the way out like some of the other homes have. Brian is not sure yet on all the details.

Compliance Update:

Josh Spigner provided a short compliance update. Currently, the exclusion checks that are being run at the homes are being done by staff at each home. We are trying to get on the Justifacts contract so we can automate this process and run the exclusion checks in a less cumbersome way. Josh also mentioned that the compliance team is doing contractual compliance reviews for Benchmark and Vistamed to make sure the contracts are being followed.

Comments from the Council:

Thomas Brown stated that everyone here is doing a fine job. Furthermore, he wanted to tell everyone to not lose sight of our main goal: helping veterans, including those out in the community that need our help. This should not only be a goal in our working lives, but in our personal lives as well.

Senator Tracy Pennycuick reiterated that they just passed the resolution for the Women Veteran's Health Taskforce, so they will be looking over the next 18 months at the women veterans in Pennsylvania and what they are getting for healthcare. She is hoping that taskforce will come up with recommendations to the federal VA to supply more money for the choice program. Additionally, there are some legislative actions, one is to remove the wartime service from the real estate tax exemption. That has been ongoing in several different ways, and we are trying to make that happen. There is also have a bill coming out that would lower the assessment on your real estate for tax purposes. Senator Pennycuick suggested adding informational briefs in the tax bills to help get information out there.

John Getz commented that the VFW has a retreat every year and this past year they had 165 women veterans attend. They are hoping to have another retreat in March. Overall, these retreats are very productive and many of the female veterans are learning a lot about healthcare benefits that they can take advantage of. He concluded by stating that everyday is Veterans Day.

Richard Doherty reiterated that everyone needs to push to get the word out to communities, but overall, he thinks everyone is doing an amazing job. He asked for clarification on the 100th birthday celebration. Richard also asked how old the veterans homes system is. Jill Alwine stated that this building opened in

1986 but was not fully operational until about 1991-1992. Gen Weigl stated that Delaware Valley just celebrated their 20th anniversary and Southwestern will be celebrating their 25th anniversary soon. Anna Brown comment that she used to come here to play Bingo back in the 1970s, it was a VA hospital at the time.

Robert Richardson stated that he has been noticing that there is nothing in the state for the Native Americans. He was wondering if we planned on doing anything or looking into that. Gen Weigl answered that there are some programs offered by the Federal VA that we push out, but the state has not done their own Native American function. She said she will look into doing something for Pennsylvania.

Nikki Whitlock stated that they are in the middle of planning Senator Muth's Annual Veteran's Expo. They are shooting for the fall and will let everyone know when there is a date nailed down.

Erica Moore introduced herself and stated that in the fall, they will be making visits to the local VFWs and American Legions to provide info to the community about various programs.

Old Business:

Nothing to Report.

New Business:

Nothing to Report.

Election of Officers:

President – unanimous nominations and election of Barry Amole to serve as President.

Vice President – unanimous nominations and election of Mary Archey to serve as Vice President.

Secretary - unanimous nominations and election of Ken Schweitzer to serve as Secretary.

Good of the Council:

Nothing to Report.

Time and Date for the next Meeting:

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made to end the meeting. Motion carried. The next regular meeting of the Advisory Council will be held on October 12, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Approved:

Kenneth Schweitzer, Secretary

Minutes submitted by: Sarah Klufas

Pennsylvania Veterans Homes Census as of Midnight August 31, 2023

Delaware Valley Veterans' Home, Philadelphia PA - Andrew Ruscavage - Interim Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	141	128	13	91%	4	1	2	43	11		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	1	0	0	16	6		
Total	171	158	13	92%	5	1	2	59	17		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				6%							
Gino J. Merli Veterans' Center, Scranton PA - Vito Ruggiero - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	156	127	29	82%	5	1	4	5	11		
Memory Care	40	34	6	85%	1	0	1	10	6		
Total	196	161	35	82%	6	1	5	15	17		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				15%							
Holidaysburg Veterans' Home, Holidaysburg PA - Christina Dambeck - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	231	165	66	72%	9	0	3	14	4		
Memory Care	26	18	8	69%	1	1	0	3	0		
Personal Care	167	70	97	42%	0	1	0	4	1		
Total	424	253	171	60%	10	2	3	21	5		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				15%							
Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home, Erie PA - Cheri Spacht - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	75	67	8	89%	4	1	3	6	1		
Memory Care	32	31	1	97%	3	0	0	2	3		
Personal Care	100	56	44	56%	1	0	0	6	0		
Total	207	154	53	74%	8	1	3	14	4		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				12%							
Southeastern Veterans' Center, Spring City PA - Brian Gula - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	208	141	67	68%	6	1	4	29	10		
Memory Care	30	30	0	100%	0	0	0	23	1		
Personal Care	54	33	21	61%	1	1	0	12	3		
Total	292	204	88	70%	7	2	4	64	14		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				9%							
Southwestern Veterans' Center, Pittsburgh PA - Richard Adams - Commandant											
Level of Care	Authorized Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	196	111	85	57%	6	2	0	20	5		
Memory Care	40	36	4	90%	3	2	0	1	1		
Total	236	147	89	62%	9	4	0	21	6		
Non-Veteran Census Percent				13%							
Summary / Pennsylvania Bureau of Veterans' Homes											
Veteran Census/Events	Auth Beds	Beds Assigned	Beds Vacant	Percentage Filled	Admissions	Discharges	Expirations	Waiting List Veteran	Waiting List Non-Veteran		
Nursing Care	1007	739	268	73%	34	6	16	117	42		
Memory Care	198	179	19	91%	0	3	1	55	17		
Personal Care	321	159	162	50%	2	2	0	22	4		
Totals	1,526	1,077	449	71%	45	11	17	194	63		
Veteran Status: Non-Veteran/Veteran	Total Non-Vets (f)	Male Non-Vet	% Non Vets (f)	Total Vets (f)	% Vets (f)	Male Vets	Total Male (f)	Female Non-Vets	Female Vets	Total Female (f)	VH Totals (f)
DVVH	10	0	6%	148	94%	147	147	10	1	11	158
GJMVC	24	1	15%	137	85%	135	136	23	2	25	161
HVH	37	1	15%	216	85%	205	206	36	11	47	253
PSSH	18	3	12%	136	88%	129	132	15	7	22	154
SEVC	18	1	9%	186	91%	175	176	17	11	28	204
SWVC	19	2	13%	128	87%	125	127	17	3	20	147
Totals	126	8	12%	951	88%	916	924	118	35	153	1,077

Summary of Current Applications (Exempt)

Count	No Activity	Review Process Started	Review App Received	New Apps Pending
17959	17297	621	41	265

Summary of Activity from 08/19/2023 to 09/28/2023

Apps Created: 531	
New:	317
Review:	214
Apps Approved: 530	
New:	318
Review:	212
Apps Denied (Need):	31
Apps Denied (Eligibility):	30
Apps Removed (No Response):	36
Apps Removed (Eligibility Change):	76

Summary of Ineligible Reason

Reason	Count
The property for which you claim exemption is not owned solely by you, or as an estate by the entirety with your spouse.	6
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that the veteran did not have a total and/or 100% permanent disability during their lifetime.	6
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has determined that the veteran did not serve during a period of war or armed conflict.	13
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs stated that you have a future exam , therefore, your disability has not been rated as total or 100% permanent.	5

Summary of Activity from 05/26/2023 to 08/18/2023

APPLICATIONS APPROVED	530
New	318
Review	212

APPLICATIONS DENIED	173
Financial Need	31
Ineligible	30
No Response	36
Change of Eligibility	76

OVER INCOME	45
New	18
Review	27

8%
6%
13%

APPLICATIONS CREATED	531
TOTAL ADJUDICATED	706