

## **Governor's Advisory Council for Veteran Services**

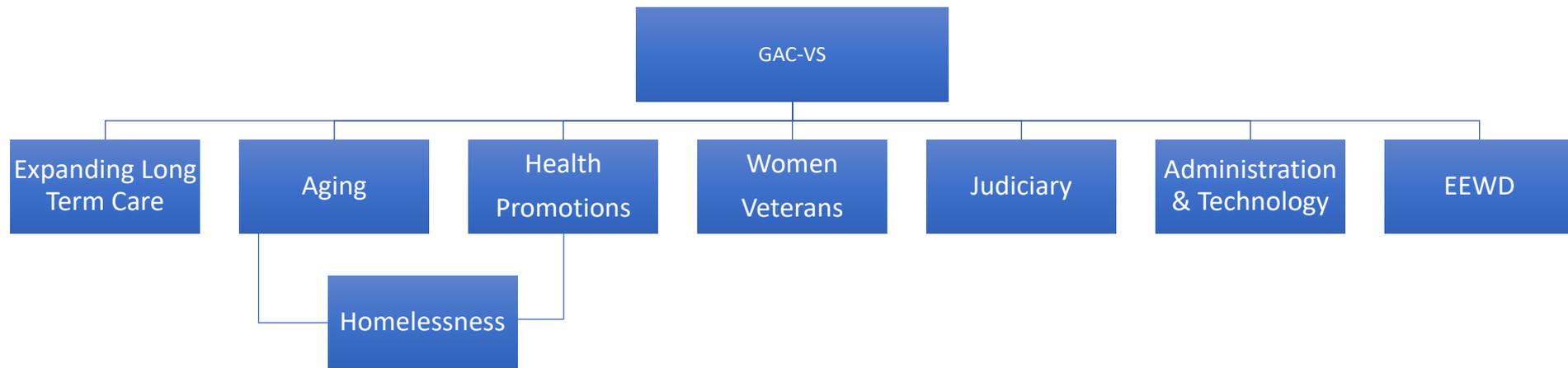
Arrowheads Community Club, Building 9-65

Fort Indiantown Gap

Annville, Pennsylvania 17003

August 21, 2019

# GAC-VS Committee Structure



- Accomplishments of each committee and recommendations to Governor Wolf during the November 2019 meeting
- Committee Goals
- Expanding Long Term Care Report completion by December 31, 2019

- Report requested by Governor's Policy Office by December 31, 2019 to:
  1. Provide recommendations to share information about long-term care programs, benefits and services to our veteran population;
  2. Identify opportunities to integrate Medicare and Medicaid systems into long-term care plans for veterans;
  3. Provide information on service delivery options including community-based options for long-term care;
  4. Explore options to maximize revenue streams and overcome billing constraints for veterans;
  5. Identify and facilitate options that support information referral and service delivery for veterans in need of key or specialty services; and
  6. Provide recommendations for legislative and regulatory support that improve long term care and services for Pennsylvania Veterans.
- Report to be provided to Governor Wolf for his consideration
- Request support of all committees to provide input to the Expanding LTC Committee through committee working groups
  - DHS Deputy Secretary Kevin Hancock and Dr. Darryl Jackson, DMVA Chief

# PA VETCONNECT

## A DMVA Regional Outreach Initiative

- Concept & Implementation Briefing Document distributed.
- Primed to hire Regional Program Outreach Coordinator for Region 5. Regions 1 through 4 to follow.
- Proof of Concept for Information & Referral Database has been launched in Region 5 (SE portion of the commonwealth).
- Resources continually be added to Information & Referral Database.
- Resource account for PA VET CONNECT now available:

[RA-MVVET-CONNECT@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVVET-CONNECT@pa.gov)

# Aging Committee

Ms. Samantha Cossman

# Aging Committee



**Aging Committee:** Samantha Cossman and Dr. Darryl Jackson (co-chairs)  
**Committee met on:** 6/19 and 7/17 (conference call); 8/21 (in-person)

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Dr. Darryl Jackson	DMVA / BVH, co-chair	Jamie Dunlap	PA Council on the Arts
Brian Natali	DMVA	Larry Furlong	PA Fish and Boat Commission
Kimberly Sell-Shemansky	VISN 4	Christopher Kemmerer	PA State Parks
Beth Ellis	DHS	James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Sierra Bilous	OMHSAS	Tom Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Kevin Longenecker	PDA	Kit Watson	American Legion
Samantha Cossman	PDA (PA Link), co-chair	Erin Walters	PDA

## Aging Committee Vision/Mission Statement:

Expand awareness of and access to services, supports, benefits, and opportunities for Pennsylvania's aging veterans and their families and caregivers so that they may live and thrive in their communities.

## 3 Main Goals

- 1) Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.
- 2) Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.
- 3) Safeguard Pennsylvania's aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

1) Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.

- CDVA/AAA intros
- Annual Veterans Day message; 'Practical Ways' updates/promotion
- Cross-system info sharing: webinars, publications (Benefits & Rights), submit info on programming to Digest, conf./meeting presentations
- DMVA/PACE partnership
- AAA/VA/Local veteran entities
- Alzheimer's Assoc./veteran systems
- Veteran Community Partnerships

2) Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.

- Submit 10 articles, social media posts, or blog posts about community activities, programming and events to veteran-centric publications and websites
- Host 10 webinars and/or programs about community engagement opportunities
- See if other groups can post info about REGISTRY on their sites or social media
- Increase subscriptions to DMVA Digest

### 3) Safeguard Pennsylvania's aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

- Convene workgroup(s)
- Pension poaching scam awareness
  - PALA, DHS, DOH, PA Homecare Assoc., PA Link
- Older Adult Protective Service program education among veteran systems
  - Webinar, materials, presentations, local staff introductions
- Collaborate with Health Promotion Committee to disseminate info on veteran suicide prevention to aging service providers like AAAs

# Joint Committee on Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Workgroup updates:

- Collaboration and Resource Inventory workgroup (Samantha)
- CoC and Veterans Data Management workgroup (Tom Peters)

## Collaboration and Resource Inventory Workgroup Update:

- Began researching available courses, workshops and programs to help veterans find, obtain and retain housing.
- Info put into informational paper for DAG-VA.
- More research may uncover additional resources.
- Info on what it takes to offer these locally (\$, space, materials, min/max attendance) needs to be catalogued to share with stakeholders.
- Ideas on other offerings can be directed to Samantha – [c-scossman@pa.gov](mailto:c-scossman@pa.gov)

PA Department of Banking and Securities (DOBS): educational courses and workshops to help individuals understand financial issues like budgeting, investing, planning for retirement, etc. [www.dobs.pa.gov](http://www.dobs.pa.gov).

Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA): assistance, resources and education for homebuyers, homeowners, renters, PREP. Veterans can leverage these. [www.phfa.org](http://www.phfa.org).

CareerLinks help with resume building, interviewing skills, job search skills

Bucks/Chester/Montgomery online “Becoming a Better Tenant” course template

## Joint Committee on Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Year	PA Homeless Veterans	Unsheltered
2018	982	72
2017	963	88
2016	1,136	48
2015	1,375	80
2014	1,411	75
2013	1,462	172
2012	1,456	135
2011	1,392	130

PA Change in Veterans Homelessness	
2011 – 2018	- 29.5%
2012 – 2018	- 32.6%
2013 – 2018	- 32.8%
2014 – 2018	- 30.4%
2015 – 2018	- 28.6%
2016 – 2018	- 13.6%
2017 – 2018	+ 2.0%

**Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress:**

<https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/2018-PIT-Estimate-of-Homeless-Veterans-by-State.xlsx>

### Joint Committee on Reducing Veteran Homelessness: Workgroup Update

- Develop a progress report that indicates PA's overall status with reducing and ending veterans homelessness:
  - Find and build a relationship with each local veteran task force, who is working toward the federal benchmarks and criterion for **ensuring veterans homelessness becomes rare, brief, and one-time**.
  - Develop a consolidated report that captures the progress of each localized region, i.e. Continuum of Care or entitlement county and summarizes the statewide posture.
- Workgroup focuses on identifying each task force's / community's barriers toward achieving the federal partner standards and collaborates with joint committee and other successful task forces with plans and support that can possibly foster mitigation strategies for overcoming those obstacles.
- Workgroup no longer forms as the transitional housing element, but now identifies as the "CoC and Veterans Data Management" Workgroup (or other idea that shares our collective goals, e.g. veterans collective impact workgroup, etc.).
- Recruit CoC veteran task force members into workgroup with the joint committee.

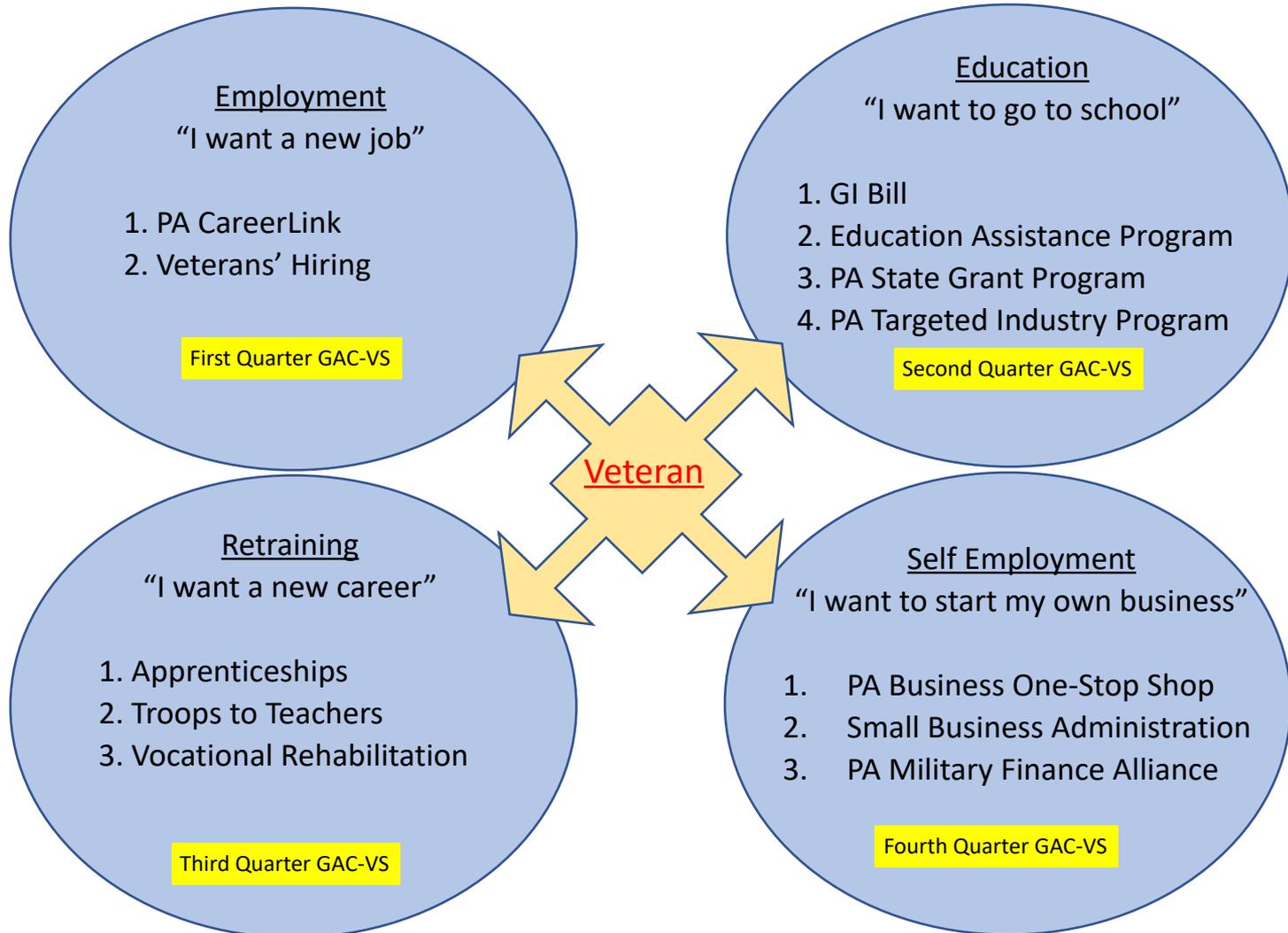
# Education, Employment, Workforce Development Committee

Mr. Kory Auch

## Education, Employment/Workforce Development Committee (EEWFD)

### Members:

Name	Affiliation
Kory Auch	Chair / Office of Administration
Jeanne Block	Department of Labor and Industry
Randy McKinney	Department of Education
Cory Bender	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Larry Furlong	Fish and Boat Commission
Tina Kotsalos	Department of Banking and Securities
Thomas Applebach	County Directors for Veterans Affairs
Scott Sheely	Department of Agriculture
Donna Tilley Hess	Department of Human Services
Jeremy Schlieve	Office of Administration
Mike McManus	Department of Community and Economic Development
Bruce Foster	State Veterans' Commission
Randy Wright/Billy Lanham	DoL Veterans' Employment and Training Service



## Committee Quick Updates

- Waterways Conservation Officer ... 10 of 24
- PA Chamber Day
- Hire Vets Medallion Program

## “I WANT A NEW CAREER”

1. Apprenticeships
2. Troops to Teachers
3. Vocational Rehabilitation

## Registered Apprenticeships

### Concept

- Registered Apprenticeship is an “Earn while you Learn” training model
- 
- Apprenticeship Program apprentices gain a National, portable credential upon completion
- 
- Built-In Wage increases

### State Participation

- Local, State, and Federal Workforce Development funds can be used to support On-the-Job Training and tuition reimbursement
- 
- DCED, L&I, Dept. of Ed., OVR, DHS, Dept. of AG, and Corrections are all involved in apprenticeship initiatives

### PA Key Data/Trends

- 17,000+ Apprentices and 790+ Apprenticeship programs (Top 10 Nationally)
- 
- Veterans make up 10% of all active apprentices
- 
- The largest single occupation registered is corrections officers

### Key Changes/Initiatives

- Helmets to Hardhats is a talent pipeline to building trades apprenticeship programs
- 
- A 2019 PAsmart initiative will be aimed at incentivizing employers to hire more veterans into apprenticeship programs
- 
- To learn more about registered apprenticeships, contact us at [RA-LIATO-APPR-TRAIN@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LIATO-APPR-TRAIN@pa.gov) .

## Troops-to-Teachers

### Concept

- Assist transitioning Service members with meeting the requirements necessary to obtain teaching certification.
- 
- Provide individualized counseling to assist program participants in exploring and selecting the best pathway to teaching based on unique needs, goals and skills
- 
- Address teacher shortage areas in the K-12 schools that service low income families in critical shortage areas

### State Participation

- Provide grant oversight to assure deliverables are met
- 
- Provide leadership within the Department of Education to assure cooperation and support for the program
- 
- Address barriers that prevent veterans from meeting teacher certification requirements
- 
- For information contact Jane Heiple, PhD Lyceum Group LLC [jheiple@lyceumgroup.com](mailto:jheiple@lyceumgroup.com) [www.lyceumgroup.com](http://www.lyceumgroup.com)

### PA Key Data/Trends

- Over 200 veterans have received specific and targeted information related to the program
- 
- To date, 43 program participants have been hired
- 
- Over 100 veterans have been provided one-one counseling regarding certification
- 
- 44 school districts are currently partners including the Pittsburgh Public Schools & School District of Philadelphia

### Key Changes/Initiatives

- Development of educational models to award academic credit for prior career experiences (reviewing Joint Service Transcripts)
- 
- Gain support for the Troops to Teachers program with outreach to statewide educational organizations
- 
- Contact additional vet organizations and military bases
- 
- Contact additional PA Institutes of Higher Education veterans affairs office

## Vocational Rehabilitation

### Concept

- Eligibility-based Program
- Evaluations-Vocational & Diagnostic
- Counseling
- Training
- Restorative Services
- Placement Assistance
- Assistive Technology
- Support Services

### State Participation

- 21 District Offices
- Designated Veteran Counselors
- Veteran designated Counselors
- Veteran Liaison Counselors
- Cooperative planning with Federal VR
- Cooperative planning with CareerLink staff

### PA Key Data/Trends

- State Fiscal Year 2016-2017
  - 2,230 Veterans served
  - 391 achieved employment outcome
- State Fiscal Year 2017-2018
  - 1,909 veterans served
  - 305 achieved employment outcome
- State Fiscal Year 2018-2019
  - 1,761 veterans served
  - 286 achieved employment outcomes

### Key Changes/Initiatives

- Comprehensive Workforce Collaboration
- Employer wage reimbursement
- On job training
- Assistance with purchase of tools, licenses & equipment
- Pre –apprenticeship programs with employers
- Worksite evaluations for disability compliance

# Health Promotion Committee

Ms. Donna Tilley Hess

# Health Promotion Committee Update



## Members:

Name	Affiliation
Donna Hess	Department of Human Services
Rick Hamp	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Joel Mutschler	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Daniel Ramey	PAARNG Psychological Services
Jeff Geibel	Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Angela Keen	VISN 4
Jessica Penn Shires	Department of Human Services
Leslie Neal	Pennsylvania State Assoc. of County Dir. Veteran Affairs
Justin Slep	Pennsylvania State Assoc. of County Dir. Veteran Affairs
Roy Remone	Veteran Compeer Corp
Virginia Mastrine	Department of Human Services
Govan Martin	Prevent Suicide PA
Mark Todero	PAARNG Suicide Prevention

## Members (continued):

Name	Affiliation
Joann Tresco	SM&FS/Alcohol & Drug Control Officer PAARNG
Matt Zamosky	Pennsylvania State Assoc. of County Dir. Veteran Affairs
Lana Venur	Pennsylvania State Assoc. of County Dir. Veteran Affairs
Andy Charpentier	Transition Assistant PAARNG
Lori Mentzer	Department of Human Services
Peri Rosen	Department of Human Services
Rose Brandberg	PAARNG Wellness Coordinator
Michael Volz	Veterans Benefit Administration
Dave Measal	Pennsylvania Peer Support Coalition
Liz Woodley	Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumer Association
Frederick Nardie	VA Pittsburgh
Douglas Snyder	Deputy Chief Counsel, Department of Health

**Mission:** The Health Promotion Committee will identify physical and behavioral health service providers, foster relationships, and build resource awareness among service members, veterans and their families across the Commonwealth.

**Vision:** Connect service members, veterans, and their families regionally with physical and behavioral health services to improve mental well being and whole health.

## GOALS:

- 1) Continue provision of trainings such as, MHFA, QPR, and ASIST to persons supporting service members, veterans, and their families, one per month regionally (3 per quarter annually).
- 2) Continue to work with community partners and stakeholders to establish 2 Fairweather Veteran Centric Lodges annually.
- 3) Provide evidenced based certified training annually (modality specific).

## UPDATED RESOURCE LINK:

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/parecovery/adultolderadult/vetmilfam/milresources/index.htm>

Resource list on PA Recovery via the above link, on the page that opens it is listed as Suicide Prevention Resources A-Z.

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES			
CRISIS RESOURCES			
RESOURCE	WHAT IS IT?	WEBSITE	WHO WOULD IT BENEFIT?
American Association of Suicidology	List of crisis centers by state	<a href="http://www.suicidology.org/Resources/Crisis-Centers">http://www.suicidology.org/Resources/Crisis-Centers</a>	Anyone contemplating suicide needing resources
 Veterans Crisis Line/ Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Crisis line available to civilians and veterans to call or text when in a crisis	<a href="https://www.veteranscrisisline.net">https://www.veteranscrisisline.net</a> <b>1-800-273-TALK (8255) Press 1</b> <b>or text to 838255</b>	Anyone contemplating suicide and in a crisis
PREVENTION RESOURCES			
RESOURCE	WHAT IS IT?	WEBSITE	WHO WOULD IT BENEFIT?
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	Website providing resources for people who have made an attempt of suicide	<a href="https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-made-attempt/">https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-made-attempt/</a>	Individuals who have made an attempt at suicide
	Website providing resources for people who are at risk for suicide	<a href="https://afsp.org/find-support/when-someone-is-at-risk/">https://afsp.org/find-support/when-someone-is-at-risk/</a>	Individuals who are at risk for suicide
	Support group finder in Pennsylvania	<a href="https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/find-a-support-group/?gmw_address%5B0%5D&amp;gmw_post=support_group&amp;gmw_form=2&amp;gmw_per_page=50&amp;gmw_lat&amp;gmw_lng&amp;gmw_px=pt&amp;action=gmw_post&amp;gmw_distance=60&amp;gmw_units=imperial&amp;gmw_state=Pennsylvania&amp;gmw_country">https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/find-a-support-group/?gmw_address%5B0%5D&amp;gmw_post=support_group&amp;gmw_form=2&amp;gmw_per_page=50&amp;gmw_lat&amp;gmw_lng&amp;gmw_px=pt&amp;action=gmw_post&amp;gmw_distance=60&amp;gmw_units=imperial&amp;gmw_state=Pennsylvania&amp;gmw_country</a>	Anyone looking for support groups
 Be There Peer Support Call and Outreach Center (DoD)	Peer Support line for veterans	<a href="https://www.betherepeersupport.org/">https://www.betherepeersupport.org/</a>	Individuals in the military - not needing urgent assistance - looking to speak with a Peer Counselor

 Military/Veteran Specific

1

ver. 03/27/2018

## Fairweather Lodge Supporting Veterans

- Venango County
- Erie County
- Cumberland/Perry (Newville)

Participated in a March 15, 2019, the Overview and Update of the PA State Strategy Session for Tobacco-Free Recovery webinar coordinated by representatives of the PA Departments of Health, Human Services, and Drug and Alcohol Programs.

### Key Points

- Expanded interagency partnerships
- Demonstrated effectiveness of creating collaboration among five states to better serve tobacco users with behavioral health disorders on quit lines
- Show how Philadelphia succeeded in policy change
  - Advancing Tobacco Use Treatment and Recovery in Behavioral Health Settings
- Expand efforts to work together to reduce tobacco use among individuals with behavioral health conditions

# Opioid Use Disorder Response – Veteran Related



SAMHSA awarded \$55.9 Million in federal grant funding to combat the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania. Of that funding the following initiatives directly relate to the Veterans' community:

- **Opioid Housing Initiative:** \$15 Million in SOR funding to DHS will fund pilot projects in eligible urban and rural communities throughout the Commonwealth to help individuals to become and remain engaged in evidence-based treatment interventions, provide individuals with the necessary support services to maintain housing stability, and provide pre-tenancy education services. Veterans are a priority population in this initiative.
- **Veterans in Crisis Outreach:** \$350,000 in SOR funding per year to support the development and implementation of regional programs focusing on the education, prevention or identification of OUDs for Pennsylvania Veterans, their families or caregivers and the identification of resources for treatment referral. This federal fiscal year DMVA is developing a communications plan to increase awareness of the resources that are available.

DMVA sits as a member of the commonwealths Problem Gambling Consortium. Members of this consortium that meets quarterly includes the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), the PA Lottery Commission, The Department of Agriculture (AG), the PA Gaming Control Board, the Council on Compulsive Gambling of PA and Rural PA.

The last meeting was held on Aug. 20, 2019 and it will meet again on Nov. 21, 2019.

- Senators Warren and Daines introduced the Gambling Addiction Prevention (GAP) Act of 2018, which required DOD to include gambling disorder screening questions in health assessments for members of the Armed Forces and in other survey and research efforts. In 2018, language based on this provision of the GAP Act was signed into law as part of the FY2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Senators are introducing an updated bill that would require the DOD to develop policies and programs to prevent and treat gambling problems, in coordination with the Department's other behavioral health efforts.

# Angela Keen & Leslie Neal Co-Chairs

# Suicide Prevention Sub Committee

**Vision: The committee will collaborate with federal, state, local government, and community partners to - identify effective prevention and treatment approaches, identify and share training and education resources, and promote communication of these resources to Pennsylvania Service Members, Veterans, and their family members and recommendations to the GAC/VS to assist in reducing the number of suicides in Pennsylvania.**



### VA National Suicide Data Report for 2005-2016: Key Points

- From 2015 to 2016, the overall Veteran suicide count decreased from 6,281 to 6,079 deaths and the Veteran unadjusted suicide rate decreased from 30.5/100,000 to 30.1/100,000.
- The frequency of firearm use as a method of suicide remains high. In 2016, the percent of suicide deaths that involved firearms was 69.4 percent.
- In 2016, rates of suicide were highest among younger Veterans (ages 18–34) and lowest among older Veterans (age 55 and older). Veterans age 55 and older nonetheless accounted for 58.1 percent of Veteran suicide deaths in 2016.
- The rate of suicide among Veterans who did recently receive VHA services is increasing at a slower pace than the rate of suicide among Veterans who did not recently receive VHA services.



## Important Figures



The rate of suicide was

**1.8** *times higher among female Veterans*

*compared with non-Veteran adult women.*

\* after accounting for differences in age



The rate of suicide was

**1.4** *times higher among male Veterans*

*compared with non-Veteran adult men.*

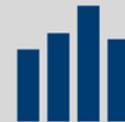
\* after accounting for differences in age



Male Veterans ages

**18–34**

*experienced the highest rates of suicide.*



Male Veterans ages

**55 and older**

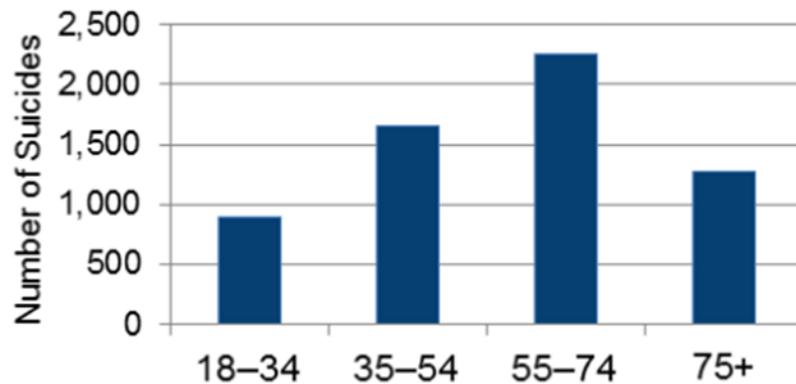
*had the highest count of suicide.*

**69%** *of all Veteran suicide deaths resulted from a firearm injury.*

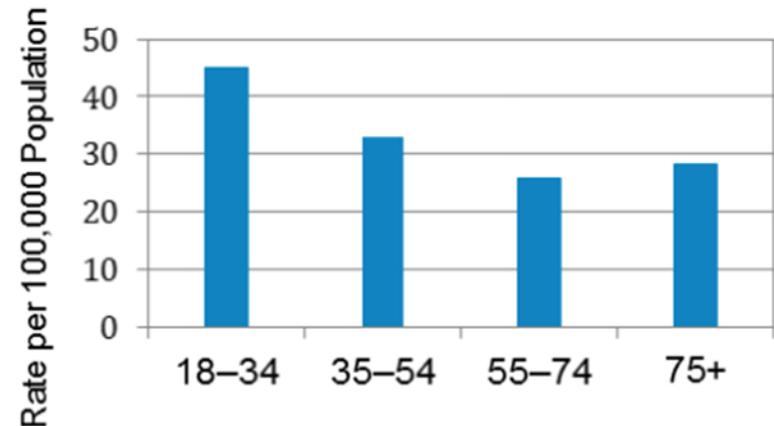


# Veteran Suicide Deaths: Count vs. Rate

## Veteran Suicide Deaths in 2016



Older Veteran population accounts for the bulk of suicide deaths due to population size.



Younger Veteran population includes more recently transitioned Veterans and has a higher rate of suicide.



### Current efforts underway within VA:

- Creating new cross-sector partnerships to involve peers, family members, state partners and the community
- Expanding the Veterans Crisis Line to three call centers to provide 24/7 support
- Suicide Prevention Coordinators at every VA medical center
- Launching the S.A.V.E. online suicide prevention video to help everyone play a role in preventing Veteran suicide
- Launching the REACH VET (Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health -- Veterans Enhanced Treatment) predictive analytics program to identify Veterans who may be at risk for suicide
- Expanding access to mental health care
- Partnering with the departments of Defense and Homeland Security, to support Veterans during their transition from military to civilian life



## **VA MISSION ACT of 2018**

### **The VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act**

To establish a permanent community care program for veterans, to establish a commission for the purpose of making recommendations regarding the modernization or realignment of facilities of the Veterans Health Administration, to improve construction of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2372/text>

#### **TITLE I—CARING FOR OUR VETERANS**

Subtitle A—Developing an Integrated High-Performing Network

CHAPTER 1—ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 2—PAYING PROVIDERS AND IMPROVING COLLECTIONS

CHAPTER 3—EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 4—OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

CHAPTER 5—OTHER NON-DEPARTMENT HEALTH CARE MATTERS

#### **TITLE II—VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW**

#### **TITLE III—IMPROVEMENTS TO RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

#### **TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE IN UNDERSERVED AREAS**

#### **TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS**



### MISSION ACT 2018 SEC. 506.

PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

**PROGRAM REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to establish not fewer than two peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs to promote the use and integration of services for mental health, substance use disorder, and behavioral health in a primary care setting.

**TIMEFRAME FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.**—The Secretary shall carry out the program at medical centers of the Department as follows:

Not later than May 31, 2019, at not fewer than 15 medical centers of the Department.

Not later than May 31, 2020, at not fewer than 30 medical centers of the Department.

**SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.**— The Secretary shall select medical centers for the program as follows:

Not fewer than five shall be medical centers of the Department that are designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.

Not fewer than 10 shall be medical centers of the Department that are not designated by the Secretary as polytrauma centers.



### MISSION ACT 2018 SEC. 506.

PROGRAM ON ESTABLISHMENT OF PEER SPECIALISTS IN PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM SETTINGS WITHIN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

**CONSIDERATIONS.**— The Secretary shall consider the feasibility and advisability of selecting medical centers in the following areas:

Rural areas and other areas that are underserved by the Department.

Areas that are not in close proximity to an active duty military installation.

Areas representing different geographic locations, such as census tracts established by the Bureau of the Census.

**GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.**— The Secretary shall ensure that:

The needs of female veterans are specifically considered and addressed; and female peer specialists are made available to female Veterans who are treated at each location.

**ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY PROVIDERS.**— The Secretary shall consider ways in which peer specialists can conduct outreach to health care providers in the community who are known to be serving veterans to engage with those providers and veterans served by those providers.



May 29, 2019, Gov. Wolf announced the statewide Suicide Prevention Task Force will develop the state's suicide prevention plan, a long-term strategy to reduce suicide in Pennsylvania, and let Pennsylvanians in crisis know their lives are valuable and help is available.

The Suicide Prevention Task Force will merge siloed efforts into one, statewide suicide prevention plan informed by the diverse perspectives and experiences of various state agencies, including in the departments of Aging, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol Programs, Health, Military and Veterans Affairs, Education, Corrections, and Transportation, the Pennsylvania State Police, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

July 10, 2019 – A Strategy Session, was held by DHS, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the Commonwealth Towers, in the Clothes Tree Conference Center with state agencies in attendance.



- **August 21, 2019 –Listening Sessions begin**, Conference Center at Central Penn College, 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM
- **Thursday, Sept. 12, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM** (NE Office - Erie)
- **Thursday, Sept. 26, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM** (SE Office - Philadelphia)
- *Thursday, Oct. 10 or Friday, Oct. 11 (Central Office – York or Lancaster County)*
- *Thursday, Oct. 24 or Friday, Oct. 25 (NE Office – Luzerne or Lackawanna County)*
- *Thursday, Nov. 7 or Friday, Nov. 8 (SW Office – **Jewish Healthcare Foundation Bldg.**)*
- **Friday, Nov. 15, 10:00 AM to Noon** (SE Office – Bucks or Montgomery County)

\* **BOLD FONT AFFIRMED**

\* *ITALICIZED FONT TENTATIVE*



## Guiding Principals of the State Suicide Prevention Plan.

- Clearly identifies our military and veteran population as an “at risk” population
- Modeled after the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention
- Goals and Objectives are clearly stated and followed with action steps that can be Tailored to meet the need.
  - Culturally and developmentally appropriate
  - Eliminate health care, race, ethnic, gender, education, income, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and geographic disparities
  - Early interventions to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors
  - Endorse suicide prevention as “Everyone’s Business.”
  - Promote “Zero Suicides” as an aspirational goal
  - Promote “People First” language and wellness
  - Advocate for, invest in and sustain all Suicide Prevention Efforts.



## Overview of the State Suicide Prevention Plan Goals.

- Reduce access to lethal means for those identified as a suicide risk
- Provide training on the prevention of suicide across multiple sectors and settings
- Promote screening that includes health care, behavioral health and educational settings
- Provide care and support to individuals affected by suicide deaths, promote healing, Implement community strategies to prevent further suicide
- Improve data reporting systems, along with the ability to collect , analyze and use the data
- Promote Responsible Media Reporting on suicide



- **July 15, 2019, Senator Regan and Congressman Perry held the first in a series of Veteran Suicide Roundtable discussions. August 13, 2019, Senator Regan, Senator Laughlin, and Congressman Kelly held the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the series of Veteran Suicide Roundtable discussions.**
- **August 29, 2019, Senator Regan, Senator Baker (invited) and Congressman Meuser are Holding a Roundtable in Wilkes Barre, from 11 am to 1 pm, at the Wilkes Barre VA, 1111 East End Blvd., Wilkes Barre, PA.**
- **September 3, 2019, Senator Regan, Senator Iovino, Congressman Reschenthaler, and Congressman Lamb are holding a Roundtable in PA's 14<sup>th</sup> District, location TBD.**
- **Other PA District locations TBD and announced.**



### Resources Available within SMFS

- Family Assistance Center Specialists / Family Readiness Support Assistant
  - FACS
  - FRSA: Their goal is to empower and connect military families with the tools and skills they need to successfully meet the challenges of the military lifestyle. They support Family Readiness Groups and family volunteers through training and hands on assistance so that FRG's can provide a positive, supportive environment and a vehicle for official information can be shared with families via the command.
- Transition Assistance Advisors (TAAs)
  - The purpose of the Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program is to provide education concerning benefits (Federal, State, County) and assistance to veterans, those currently serving (all branches and components) and their immediate family members. The TAAs are networked into the Veteran's Administration, PA Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs, County Directors for Military Affairs, National Guard Service member assistance programs and various community resources to ensure timely assistance with benefits and healthcare. We pride ourselves with the amount of outreach we perform across the state to ensure information concerning benefits reach the veterans, service and family members.
  - POC: Andy Charpentier - Email: [william.a.charpentier2.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:william.a.charpentier2.ctr@mail.mil), Phone: (717) 861-2813 Katie Johnson - Email: [Catherine.a.johnson4.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:Catherine.a.johnson4.ctr@mail.mil), Phone: (717) 861-8706



### Resources Available within SMFS

- Behavioral Health Services
  - 4 PHCs across the state
- Alcohol and Drug Services:
  - The PAARNG Substance Abuse team will provide Soldiers with assistance in obtaining substance abuse evaluations and treatment, conduct substance abuse prevention training at the unit level, and assist with Mitigating Strategies at the Command level.
  - Alcohol and Drug Services are available to Service Members AND they SAP team will assist Veterans and their families as well.
- Citizen Soldier for Life (CSFL)
  - My main focus is to help RSP soldiers, find employment, but we are open to helping, Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, Spouses and immediate family find employment. We help them with making a functional resume and cover letter.



## Upcoming Training and Education Opportunities

- Warm-Hand Off Opioid Survivors Initiative– Multi-Agency Task Force addressing the Opioid Crisis in PA. Round 2 of Warm Hand-Off Seminars are underway on various dates and locations throughout the commonwealth.
- ASIST training on September 4 & 5, 2019, FIG campus. This training is at capacity.
- SMFS Annual Resource Day, September 6, 2019, DEERS Parking Lot FTIG campus.

**September 13, 2019**

**Annual Community Mental Health Summit**  
*Lebanon VA Medical Center, Lebanon PA*

**Registration:** <https://13sept19cmhs.eventbrite.com>

**Topics include:**

• **Transition from Uniformed Services to Civilian Life:**

The common challenges in the transition process for both the Veteran and the family.

• **Substance Use & Abuse:**

Identifying when someone is using drugs &/or alcohol to cope, how to respond and where to turn for help.

• **Suicide Prevention:**

When warning signs of suicide begin to emerge & how family can help. Discussion pertaining to supports & local initiatives.

• **Serving the Whole Veteran from a Wrap Around**

**Perspective:** Connecting Veterans before, during and after VA care with community partnerships.

Please contact C. Brubaker ([Christine.brubaker@va.gov](mailto:Christine.brubaker@va.gov))



**Lebanon VA Medical Center**  
**Behavioral Health & Science Series:**

# Building the Bridge

Building the Bridge recognizes that Veteran-centered, recovery-oriented care requires both active and ongoing cooperation with Veterans, care givers, family members, community providers and VA providers. Please join us for education, collaborative discussion and workgroup sessions to further develop, strengthen and sustain working relationships.

★ **March 8, 2019** ★  
**Cumberland, Perry & Dauphin Counties**  
*U.S. Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle PA*  
**Registration:**  
<https://08mar19cmhs.eventbrite.com>

★ **April 12, 2019** ★  
**Lancaster & York Counties**  
*Luther Acres, Lititz PA*  
**Registration:**  
<https://12apr19cmhs.eventbrite.com>

★ **May 10, 2019** ★  
**Berks & Schuylkill Counties**  
*Penn State Berks College, Reading PA*  
**Registration:**  
<https://10may19cmhs.eventbrite.com>

★ **September 13, 2019** ★  
**Annual Community Mental Health Summit**  
*Lebanon VA Medical Center*  
**Registration:**  
<https://13sept19cmhs.eventbrite.com>

**Enrollment is available onsite!**

**Questions:**  
[christine.brubaker@va.gov](mailto:christine.brubaker@va.gov)  
(717) 272-6621 ext. 5726

**VA** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Lebanon VA Medical Center

# Women Veterans Committee

Ms. Constance Snavelly

## Women Veterans Committee, Chair Jodi Zucco

Members	Affiliation
Jodi Zucco	U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Retired
Constance Snavelly	State Veterans' Commission, U.S. Army Retired
JoAnn Tresco	Service Members and Family Support Branch, PA Army National Guard, Veteran Retired
Audrey Bergstresser	Vietnam Veterans of American, Inc., Service Officer, U.S. Army Retired
Lisa Kaye	County Directors for Veterans Affairs, U.S. Army Veteran
Patricia Conroy	Women Veterans Program Manager, Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
Rhonda Smith	Air Force Veteran- Veteran small business owner
Althea Cirillo	Mentor, Veterans' Court of Dauphin County, USAR Retired
Sierra Bilous	DHS, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services , PA Air National Guard

**Mission: *Women Veterans Outreach, Women Veterans focus in Annual Veteran Symposium, Identify emerging needs, Identify Gaps in benefits, programs and services for Women Veterans.***

**Vision Statement:** Increase visibility of PA Women Veterans including their contributions and accomplishments through partnerships, collaboration and participation. Identify, illuminate, and make recommendations to address issues of unique concern to PA Women Veterans. Actively engage in the military community to ensure situational awareness of relevant initiatives and issues. Seize every opportunity to provide education about our mission. Provide outreach to PA Women Veterans enabling them to address their concerns and take advantage of their benefits, healthcare, and other available support.

**Critical Need:** Identify Issues of Unique Concern to PA Women Veterans .

**Barrier:** Lack of Input from our Target Population (in excess of 60,000 female veterans).

**Mitigation:**

- Develop and Disseminate a Questionnaire - Completed
- Town hall Meetings and Expos - Ongoing
- Supplemental Information, Academic Research and Studies - Ongoing
- Seek out and coordinate with other women veteran organizations in Pennsylvania.

## **Next Town Hall and Expo Wilkes-Barre VAMC:**

- Lackawanna Work Force Development and Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center.
- Date August 24, 2019.
- Request for Outreach support

## **Veterans Expo at Parx Casino, Bucks County:**

- Huge event, intended to benefit Veterans from across the state.
- Dan Fraley, Director of Bucks Co. Office of Veterans Affairs is POC.
- Date November 8, 2019,
- Part of the event will be a Women Veterans town hall, lasting 1.5 hours.

## **Guest Speaker Events:**

- Military Museum Honoring Military Women.
- State Association of County Directors at June conference.
- Monroe County Criminal Justice Advisory Board meeting.
- Tobyhanna Army Depot Retirement Day .

## Highlights of Ongoing Networking/Collaboration:

- Lackawanna Work Force Development
- Wilkes-Barre, Butler, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg VA Medical Centers
- Women Veterans of Berks County
- Chair of Women Veterans Committee, Department of Pennsylvania ,American Legion.
- Veterans Leadership Program.
- PA Ambassador, Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA). WIMSA manages the Woman's Memorial at Arlington Cemetery.
- See Spots Run Fun 5K Walk/Run at Memorial Lake, Fort Indiantown Gap.
- State Association of County Directors.
- On-Line Publishers, Inc.
- Susquehanna Riverboat Society.

## Events Attended:

- VFW Women's Retreat
- PA Commission for Women Honoring Female Veterans

## Other Initiatives:

- DMVA pamphlet for women veteran specific services.
- Proposed update for Paralyzed Veterans of America Logo.



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

# Judiciary Committee

Mr. Ryan Yoder

## Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

### Members:

Name	Affiliation
Ryan Yoder, M.S.	PA Department of Corrections (PADOC Statewide Veterans Coordinator)
Nicholas “Chip” Gilliland	PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)
Richard Podguski	PA Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP)
Terry Stokes	Veterans Court Advocate- (PA VFW)
Ward Adams	GAC-VS (Member at Large)
Norm Marden	Office of the Attorney General
Andy Simpson	Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
Katie Merritt	Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs Office (DMVA)
Jessica Penn-Shires	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OHMSAS)
Lisa Grayson, Esq	Cumberland Co. Courthouse, Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans’ Court
Bill Hoke	New Vitae Wellness and Recovery (Vice President, Development)
Gelu Negrea	Veteran’s Justice Outreach Specialist (Lebanon VA Medical Center)

### Judiciary Committee (Continued)

#### **PENNSYLVANIA CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES (PCI)**

PCI is a bureau within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections tasked with operating factories within DOC institutions to provide inmates with vocational training and work experience in order to: reduce inmate idleness while incarcerated, assist with an inmate's successful reentry following release from prison and reduce inmate recidivism by providing them the work skills to find and keep meaningful employment.

The bureau operates without support of the state General Fund and is financially self-supporting through the sale of its products to Commonwealth agencies, other public sector entities, educational and non-profit 501c3 organizations.

The PCI Cares initiative is one of collective thoughtfulness for those in need or less fortunate. It is PCI's way of giving back to our community. As an organization it is important that PCI creates an atmosphere of compassion and community service among our staff.

The PCI Cares concept was originated by our Sales and Marketing Supervisor, Troy Vanatta. The intention is to support our local communities, starting with veterans. PCI employs approximately 166 veterans in its inmate work program. While the PCI Cares program is not limited to veterans we are happy to begin our charitable donation with a local veteran's social center. Our donations will be in the form of personal care bags. Each bag's contents will be comprised of largely surplus or discontinued items.

PCI hopes to enlighten others of its charitable works and to encourage awareness of the important work program wherein inmates are given a second chance to make a change in the course of their lives.

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

**PENNSYLVANIA CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES (PCI)**



## Judiciary Committee (Continued)

### PENNSYLVANIA CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES (PCI)



### Judiciary Committee (Continued)

#### Veteran Court Graduation in Dauphin County

The Dauphin County Veterans Court, presided by Judge Tully, celebrated a graduation with Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder as the keynote speaker on May 17. Yoder took time to personally recognize and thank a World War II veteran who was present at the event and also sang the national anthem. The inspiring ceremony encouraged everyone to support these courts and our veterans. The purpose of the veteran court is to focus on the root of the issue, and help veterans get in a specific rehabilitation program to return to the community better than when they left it due to a misdemeanor.

Bureau of Community Corrections Director Daniel McIntyre said, “[Yoder’s] testimonial was impactful and very much appreciated by all in attendance. He was encouraging and open to all the Veterans Court participants, sharing his own personal journey through the adjustment back to civilian life”.

## Judiciary Committee (Continued)

### Veteran Court Graduation in Dauphin County



**Judiciary Committee (Continued)**

**Veteran Court Graduation in Dauphin County**



## Judiciary Committee (Continued)

### Pennsylvania Administrative Office of the Courts Veterans Treatment Court Strategic Planning Workshop



*Crowne Plaza 23 S 2nd St, Harrisburg, June 26h and 27th, 2019*

- Introductions & strategic planning overview
- Background discussion: VTC landscape Pennsylvania & country
- Needs assessment: Methodology & Summary of interviews
- Needs assessment: Themes & Recommendations
- Statewide case mapping exercise
- Vision and mission
- Communication Plan
- Introduction to goals and objective
- Action planning
- Discussion of next steps
- Findings, Goals, and Objectives
- Actions Steps
- Persons Responsible
- Est. Timeline
- Performance Measures

### Judiciary Committee (Continued)

#### Volunteer Veteran Mentor Boot Camp - Registration

ATTENTION VOLUNTEER VETERAN MENTORS - DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY! The AOPC Problem-Solving Court Division is pleased to announce that Volunteer Veteran Mentor Boot Camp will be held on September 18-19, 2019 at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel, in Harrisburg, PA. This training will be delivered by Justice for Vets, a division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. To learn more about Justice for Vets, visit [justiceforvets.org](http://justiceforvets.org).

Registration is open to the first 100 veteran mentors on a first-come, first-serve basis. New and experienced volunteer veteran mentors are welcome to register. Training topics include a veterans treatment court overview, the role and boundaries of a mentor, suicide prevention tips, active listening strategies and more. This will also be a great opportunity for mentors to network and build professional relationships with colleagues from across Pennsylvania. Hope to see you there!

NOTE: If you are having difficulty viewing and completing this registration form supported by Google, please try modifying local security restrictions or access this from a different device such as a personal cell phone or another computer. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Simpson at AOPC: [andrew.simpson@pacourts.us](mailto:andrew.simpson@pacourts.us) or 717-231-3300 ext. 3824

## Judiciary Committee (Continued)

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

**“Veterans Courts in Pennsylvania: Making the Case for Veterans Courts”**

Friday, September 20, 2019

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Widener Law Commonwealth

Administration Building, Room A180

3737 Vartan Way

Harrisburg, PA 17110

**FREE EVENT - FREE PARKING - FREE LUNCH**

We are excited to have Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd and Pennsylvania Adjutant General Anthony Carrelli delivering keynote remarks during the program! The program will also include three separate panels comprised of veteran treatment court judges, VA Veteran Justice Outreach (VJO) coordinators, and county commissioners. It should be a great time to learn and network with professionals in your field.

3 substantive hours of CLE & CJE will be available. The event is being hosted by Widener Law Commonwealth. AOPC is a co-sponsor of this event.

Please register at: <https://commonwealthlaw.widener.edu/prospective-students/why-widener/events/register-for-events/>

# Technology Committee

Ms. Sandra Patterson

## Veterans Registry Statistics

Quarter	Counts
Q1	2,771
Q2	2,249
Q3	
Q4	
2019 Total	5,020
Total as of 08/2/2019	23,824

## Project Updates

- Voter Registration - We continue to work with Dept of State and engage our website vendor to automatically transfer voter registration from the Veterans registry to Dept. of State.
- Regionalization – DMVA Application Development Team continues to support this initiative with the development of an “one stop shop for veteran services” by developing a tool called:

**PA  VETCONNECT**



# Pennsylvania State Employee Military Service Recognition Campaign



The Pennsylvania State Employee Military Service Recognition Campaign was established with Executive Order 2019-03, signed by Governor Wolf on 14 June 2019.

This presentation will cover the following:

- Purpose of the recognition
- Who is eligible
- Agency presentation details
- Agency responsibilities
- What is VIPS Committee





## Purpose

- Annually recognize and thank Commonwealth employees who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, to include the Reserves and National Guard
- Award a lapel pin to eligible employees as a part of the Campaign
- Provide information and assistance to eligible employees regarding federal or state veteran benefits that these individuals may have earned
- Foster esprit de corps among Commonwealth employees by encouraging those who proudly served to wear their lapel pins at all the times; particularly in May for Armed Forces Day, July for Independence Day and in November for Veteran's Day
- Encourage patriotism, spark the call to service and stimulate civic engagement within the Commonwealth



## Eligibility

- Currently employed Pennsylvania Commonwealth employees who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, to include the Reserves and National Guard
- Any military service performed prior to or during their career as a Commonwealth employee
- Eligible employees will not be recognized with a lapel pin as part of this Campaign more than once during their time of employment with the Commonwealth
- Eligible employees may choose to opt out of the Campaign



## Presentation

- Where appropriate, lapel pin/s will be presented during recognition ceremonies held within Commonwealth agencies
- Accompanying remarks should reflect the Commonwealth's appreciation for their service and sacrifice
- The first ceremonies will take place in November 2019 in conjunction with the Veteran's Day holiday, and then every November for any new eligible employees
- Ceremonies shall be held at the discretion of each agency and presided over by an executive level employee
- Service lapel pins will be acquired from DMVA
- DMVA will provide draft ceremony agenda and agency remarks



## Responsibilities

### Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA):

- Coordinate the Campaign, support Commonwealth agencies with the administration of the Campaign and procure the Campaign lapel pins
- Establish a Veterans in Public Service Committee (VIPS) aligned under the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services (GAC-VS)
- Provide benefits information and assistance with benefits applications to eligible employees

### Office of Administration:

- Establish and maintain a database of eligible employees
- Assist agencies in conducting an annual review of the database
- Keep record of eligible employees who have received lapel pins or opt out of the Campaign
- Assist DMVA with facilitation of VIPS committee

### Commonwealth agencies:

- Identify eligible employees, acquire lapel pins from DMVA and hold recognition ceremonies
- Refer eligible employees to DMVA for benefit questions and applications and coordinate with DMVA to provide veterans outreach activities
- May identify a veteran representative from within the agency to serve on VIPS committee



## **Veteran in Public Service (VIPS) Committee**

- A committee aligned under the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Service (GAC-VS)
- Agencies may identify a veteran representative from within their agency to participate on the committee
- Agency VIPS committee member can assist agency with coordinating recognition ceremonies
- VIPS committee will focus on assisting other eligible members and outreach within the agencies

➤ **Questions/Remarks**

➤ **Next meeting:**

**Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at  
Governor's Residence**