

# WELCOME

**May 11, 2022**

## **Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans Services**

**Dept. of Agriculture  
2301 N. Cameron Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17177**

This session is being recorded for administrative purposes.

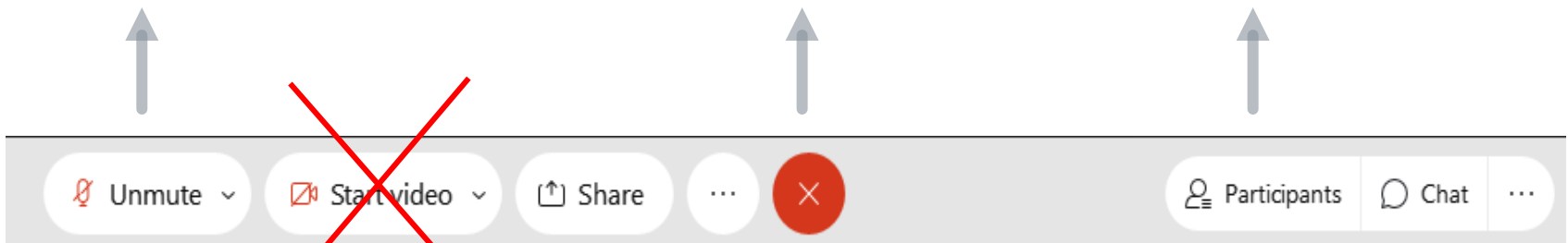
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### **Participant List**



### **Camera**

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attendance or ask a  
question.*



# INTRODUCTIONS

# OPENING COMMENTS

# OLD BUSINESS

# AGING

**Ms. Margo Coleman, Co-Chair**

## Goals/Initiatives

- Increase awareness of services and supports for aging veterans and their families and caregivers among professionals within PA's Aging and Veteran Services networks.
- Safeguard Pennsylvania's aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.



## Updates

- Adult Protective Service Toolkit, a media campaign by the Department of Human Services intended to provide awareness and resources on adult protective services shared with Committee ( [APS Media Toolkit \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/government/committees/aps-media-toolkit) ) and encouraged the member to share this resource with their agencies staff.
- Guest speaker in May for Tech Owl: Assistive Technology Act program serving Commonwealth. Nine resource centers across PA. Tech lending library.
- Working on connection with Papa Pals. Connect health plans with employers connect members to transportation, companionship and daily task services.
- Pension Poaching Awareness Campaign in June. A few new contacts added to list from last years reaching community organizations.

# HOMELESS

**Mr. Brendan Auman, Co-Chair**

## Goals/Initiatives

- Training/Information sharing on various programs to improve service delivery and available resources for homeless veterans
- Partner with Aging Committee to discuss potential solutions for aging veterans who experience housing instability and discuss ways to promote better communication with long-term care industry
- Partner with Judiciary Committee to discuss potential solutions for veterans exiting incarceration who have been historically hard-to-place
- Collaborate with Women Veterans committee to seek more solutions for women veterans experiencing homelessness

## Updates

- Training on Department of Community and Economic Development programs
  - Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
  - HOME/HOME-ARP
  - Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- HOME-ARP Consultation Meeting
- Point in Time Count 2022
  - [Eastern CoC](#): 10 Veterans identified (9 sheltered/1 unsheltered)
  - [Western CoC](#): 5 Veterans identified (5 sheltered/Did not conduct unsheltered count)
- Committee partners are continuing to work with their local Continuums of Care to ensure representation and receive referrals from the Coordinated Entry system.

## Challenges/Barriers

- Availability of affordable and habitable housing
- Lack of shelter capacity
- Collaboration with CoCs Coordinated Entry System for all Veterans

# EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Crystal Houser, Chair**

## GI Bill®

### Goals/Initiatives

The Veterans/Military Education Division of the Pennsylvania Department of Education has been designated by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the State Approving Agency for Training of Veterans/Eligible persons and reservists in the field of institutional training, correspondence training, flight training, apprenticeship training, and other on-the-job training.

### Updates

- FY20 = 20,890 Beneficiaries
- FY20= \$249,342,465 VA Expenditure
- Moving to Risk Based Surveys Effective 10/1/22

### Challenges/Barriers

New Legislation implementation:

- Debt now goes to the educational institution
- Veterans responsible for monthly verification
- Review of educational institutions a minimum of every 2 years (685)

## Education Assistance and Military Family Educational Programs

### Goals/Initiatives

- Provide educational assistance to eligible members of the PA National Guard (EAP) and qualifying family members (MFEP)
- MFEP requires additional 6-yr service agreement with the PANG
- [www.pa.ng.mil/education/](http://www.pa.ng.mil/education/)

### Updates

- The lesser of 100% of the tuition plus technology fee at the institution where enrolled;  
OR
- the annual tuition rate and technology fee charged to a PA resident at a state-owned university
- Application Process:
  - Log into [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org)
  - Must be done yearly



## PA State Grant Program

### Goals/Initiatives

- 2021-22 award year
  - \$5,000 maximum award
  - DE max award also \$5,000 at HQD institutions
- 2022-23 award year
  - \$5,750 max conditional award
  - Approx. 9,000 additional recipients

### Updates

- More than \$12.3 billion in grant awards since inception
  - Approx. 7.5 million awards
- 2020-21 award year
  - Approx. 118,700 recipients
  - \$4,525 max / \$3,478 avg. award
  - Veterans qualify for max award

### Challenges/Barriers

- Getting students to complete the application process

## PA Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP)

### Goals/Initiatives

- 2020-21 re-alignment of eligible programs using PA-IDOL will recur every 3 years moving forward
- 2021-22 changes to simplify for students and participating institutions
- Proposed 2022-23 commonwealth funding for PA-TIP at \$8.652 million

### Updates

- 22,426 unique applicants
- 12,859 unique award recipients
- 67 schools with recipients
- \$49,458,404 in grants awarded
- 91% of graduates gained employment
- 76% of recipients graduated

### Challenges/Barriers

- Appropriation

# WOMEN VETERANS

**Ms. Elizabeth Cooper, Chair**

## Goals/Initiatives

- Monitor the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) funding.
  - Title 38 of the U.S. Code, Sections 2021 and 2023
  
- Connection to the Women's Veteran Service Unit (VSU) at SCI Muncy.
  - VSU Programming offered
  
- Increase specialized counseling for women veterans through WoVeN.
  - SCI Muncy VSU Manager Celeste Bruchlacker will attend a WoVeN group to assist her unit veterans.

## Updates

- Change of Chair from Col Christine Munch to Elizabeth Cooper.
- SCI Muncy VSU Victory Garden.
- VA suicide prevention training provided the “Anchors of Hope” statistics.
- Currently drafting a statement to present to the women veterans honored in March by the PA Commission for Women.

## Challenges/Barriers

- Lack of specialized counseling for women veterans.
  
- Reaching enough women veterans to recruit women veteran advocates in each county who can undergo the WoVeN training and become Peer Leaders.

**--SHORT BREAK--**

# JUDICIARY

**Mr. Michael Carrington, Chair**



## Goals/Initiatives

- Improve outreach efforts to veteran staff within the Department of Corrections (DOC) through collaboration with DMVA
- Identify veteran inmates within the DOC at classification in order to place them in veteran designated facilities
- Increase the amount/availability of veteran-specific trainings for employees
- Promote/advocate for the creation/enhancement of veteran courts/tracks
- Offer training to courts on evidence-based practices and motivational interviewing
- Promote criminal justice careers to students and job seekers

## Updates

- Veteran Employee Symposium being planned for July at SCI Albion
- SCI Dallas recently held its first Veteran Inmate Resource Fair which included more than 10 Veteran organizations and guest speaker General Weigl
- DOC will test the new classification tool with a built-in Veteran component that will greatly assist tracking/early identification
- VSU housing unit guidelines were uniformly created and adopted at all VSU facilities
- DMVA and DOC IT still attempting to secure a viable option to deliver PA VETConnect to inmate Veterans
- Victory Garden at SCI Muncy

## Challenges/Barriers

- Pandemic restrictions continue to affect visitation, workshops, presentations for the DOC veteran population
- Working with IT departments in order to increase virtual capabilities for targeted population
- Limited knowledge regarding process necessary to advocate for/expand veterans courts/tracks within the commonwealth

## VETERAN OF THE QUARTER

Retired Command Senior Chief Troy Edwards is currently employed by the Department of Corrections as the Veteran Service Unit Manager at SCI Dallas.

He has served the department for 15 years and held prior positions as a corrections officer, superintendent's assistant, and corrections counselor.

He was instrumental in establishing the first female Veteran Service Unit (SCI Muncy) and first Reentry Services Office.

During this past quarter, he more than doubled the Veteran population at the Dallas VSU and held the first Veteran Inmate Resource Fair w/guest speaker General Weigl.



Troy Edwards

*Command Senior Chief  
U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
1985 - 2005*

# **GUEST SPEAKER**

**Mr. John Schwartz**  
**Center for Combatting Elder Financial Abuse**

CENTER FOR  
COMBATING  
ELDER  
FINANCIAL  
ABUSE

Mr. John Schwartz

Founder and President

CENTER FOR  
COMBATING  
ELDER  
FINANCIAL  
ABUSE

My Background

- Retired FBI Agent with 24 years experience
- Served as an active-duty Army officer for 9 years (Field Artillery)
- West Point Class of 1986
- Researched our nation's efforts to combat elder financial abuse since 2012

CENTER FOR  
COMBATING  
ELDER  
FINANCIAL  
ABUSE

Mission and Vision

- Mission of the Center: *Lead the way* in protecting the elderly and their families from predators who commit elder financial abuse.
- Vision of the Center: Help our nation reduce elder financial abuse by providing innovative **detection** and **prevention** solutions.
- Note: Currently, there are 54 million elders in the United States. There will be 70 million by 2030.



CENTER FOR  
COMBATING  
ELDER  
FINANCIAL  
ABUSE

HOW does the Center accomplish its mission?

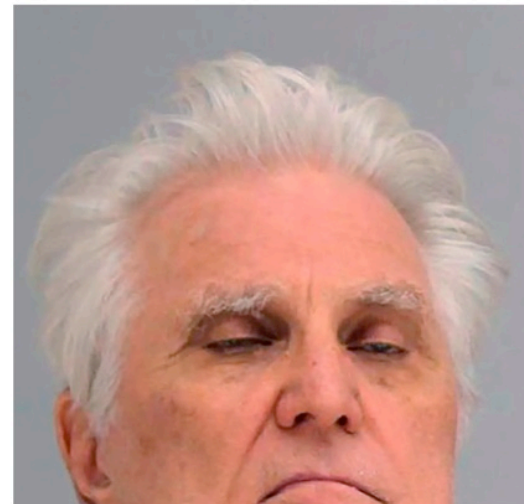
- We study predators and learn their fundamental principles
- We study the most successful *and* least successful predators who conduct elder financial abuse
- We observe patterns
- Understanding patterns help us detect predators

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The New York Times

## ***Texas Radio Host Who Bilked Listeners Out of Millions Is Sentenced to Life***

William Neil Gallagher, 80, took at least \$23 million from more than 190 people to fuel a Ponzi scheme using their retirement savings, according to court records.



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**Three Steps to Protect Vulnerable Elders**

1. Elders and family members should conduct an assessment on the vulnerability of the elder.
2. Early detection of a predator – what are the warning signs and patterns to look for.
3. Extract the elder from a predator if the attack has occurred and the predator has gained control.

The Center For Combating Elder Financial Abuse is a veteran operated, nonprofit organization.

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Center For Combating  
Elder Financial Abuse



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## OUR MISSION

Lead the way in protecting the elderly and their families from predators who commit elder financial abuse. Our federal tax ID number is 86-2379029.



# Center For Combating Elder Financial Abuse



# **GUEST SPEAKER**

**Mr. Seth Bengel**  
**DMVA Policy Office**

## Background and Purpose

### Background

- 13 States currently have “Ask the question” laws / 3 States have legislation introduced.  
[Ask the Question Campaign | Military State Policy \(militaryonesource.mil\)](#)
- Proposal modeled on Ask the Question and Nevada’s Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs:  
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-417.html#NRS417Sec0194>

### Purpose

- Identify service members, veterans and their families.
- Provide service members, veterans and their families with unique services and guidance based upon their status.
- Analyze collected data to identify gaps in services for service members, veterans and their families.
- Create data-driven policies for service members, veterans and their families.



## Proposal

**Format:** Executive Order signed by Governor Wolf.

**Programs:** Identified programs within each commonwealth agency (bullets 2-20).

- Some programs are specific to service members, veterans and their families, while others are general programs in which all commonwealth citizens can participate.

**Questions:** Four questions to be included on all commonwealth intake forms, unless the program specifically is for service members, veterans and their families.

**Numbers only:** Avoids issues of sharing personal information, even between commonwealth agencies.

**Report:** Every even numbered year, the GAC-VS will produce a report using the data from the previous two years. The report format and make-up is left up to the GAC-VS to determine.

## Review Process

**Feasibility:** Is the data available or could be available if the four questions were added to forms?

**Timeline:** Data due September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Report due January 1<sup>st</sup> each even numbered year.

**Programs:** Properly named and correct department.

### **Audience:**

1. Service members: currently serving active and reserve components.
2. Veterans: having previously served either active or reserve and having received an “other than dishonorable” discharge.
3. Their families: an immediate family member of either 1 or 2.

### **Questions:**

1. Do the questions make sense to those not familiar with the military & veterans' programs?
2. Are the questions adequate to identify SMVFs?
3. Do we remove the discharge requirement?

\*30 Days to review and provide feedback.

PPL director will present final product to the Policy Office for distribution to department leadership.

**Questions and Comments can be directed to:**

**Seth Benge**

PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Policy |  
Policy, Planning and Legislative Affairs Office

Bldg. 7-36 Fort Indiantown Gap | Annville, PA 17003

Phone: 717.861.8719 | Fax: 717.861.9457

[sbenge@pa.gov](mailto:sbenge@pa.gov)

# **NEW BUSINESS/ GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**DMVA WEBSITE: [www.dmva.pa.gov](http://www.dmva.pa.gov)**

**Sign up for the Veterans Registry and DMVA Digest!**

**[www.register.dmva.pa.gov](http://www.register.dmva.pa.gov)**

# **NEXT MEETING:**

**August 10** at 1:00PM

**Location: NCTC Classroom, Bldg. 8-63, FTIG**