

Governor's Advisory Council for Veteran Services

Arrowheads Community Club, Building 9-65
Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, Pennsylvania 17003
August 15, 2018

Aging Committee

Ms. Samantha Cossman
Chair

Aging Committee, Samantha Cossman (Chair)

Subcommittee met on: 6/20 conference call; July by email; 8/15 in-person

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Samantha Cossman	PDA (PA Link)
Joan Stakem	DMVA
Brian Natali	DMVA
Tim Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Kit Watson	American Legion
James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Ben Laudermilch	DHS (Housing)
Christopher Kemmerer	DCNR (State Parks)
Larry Furlong	Fish and Boat
Jamie Dunlap / Sarah Merritt	PA Council on the Arts

Aging Committee

❑ **Opportunities for Aging Veterans, their Family Members and Caregivers** (community involvement, socialization, outdoor activities)

A workgroup will be developed to explore partnerships between state agencies (that offer community involvement and volunteer opportunities) and SVHs as well as Veterans posts and programs. Look into pilot sites that would like to expand programming in order to engage more aging Veterans and their families and caregivers. Potential workgroup members include:

DCNR

Fish and Boat

PA Council on the Arts

PDA

American Legions

VFWs

Other VSO groups

State Veteran Homes

VA Geriatric Departments

Aging Committee

Expanding PA Link Initiatives for Aging Veterans

- Veterans Directed Care: 6/14/18 - currently no interest among VISN 4 VAMCs to expand VD-HCBS (Veterans Directed Care) in PA. This may change in future years depending on budgets.
- Veteran Community Partnerships: 6/21/18 introductory conference call with Veteran Community Partnership staff in VISN 4 to learn more about this initiative and see where PA Link may be able to help expand VCPs. Next meeting is currently being planned.
- Provided 2018 Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians booklet to CDVAs at their June conference. Enough provided for each CDVA office. Will do same at VSO conference in October.

Aging Committee

❑ Expanding PA Link Initiatives for Aging Veterans

- Introductory call between Alzheimer's Association PA Chapters and Veterans systems scheduled for August 21st
- 2018 PA Link Veterans Day message will be created starting in September. Potential focuses: suicide awareness and prevention or the PA Veterans Registry....thoughts from the GAC-VS?
- Promote communication and collaboration between County Directors of Veterans Affairs and AAA Directors (two step plan; 1st step almost ready to launch; 2nd step maintenance thereafter and ready to go)
- Educate SNF/Rehab facilities on Veteran and military culture, systems, supports, benefits (seeking interested parties to join a workgroup)

❑ Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Joint Committee met via webinar on 6/5/18 and 8/7/18

Workgroups have been developed to focus on:

- Transitional Housing
- Adult Day and LIFE programs
- Cross-system Collaboration and Resource Inventory

Workgroups are establishing vision statements and prioritizing focus areas and projects.

Education, Employment and Workforce Development Committee

Mr. Kory Auch
Chair

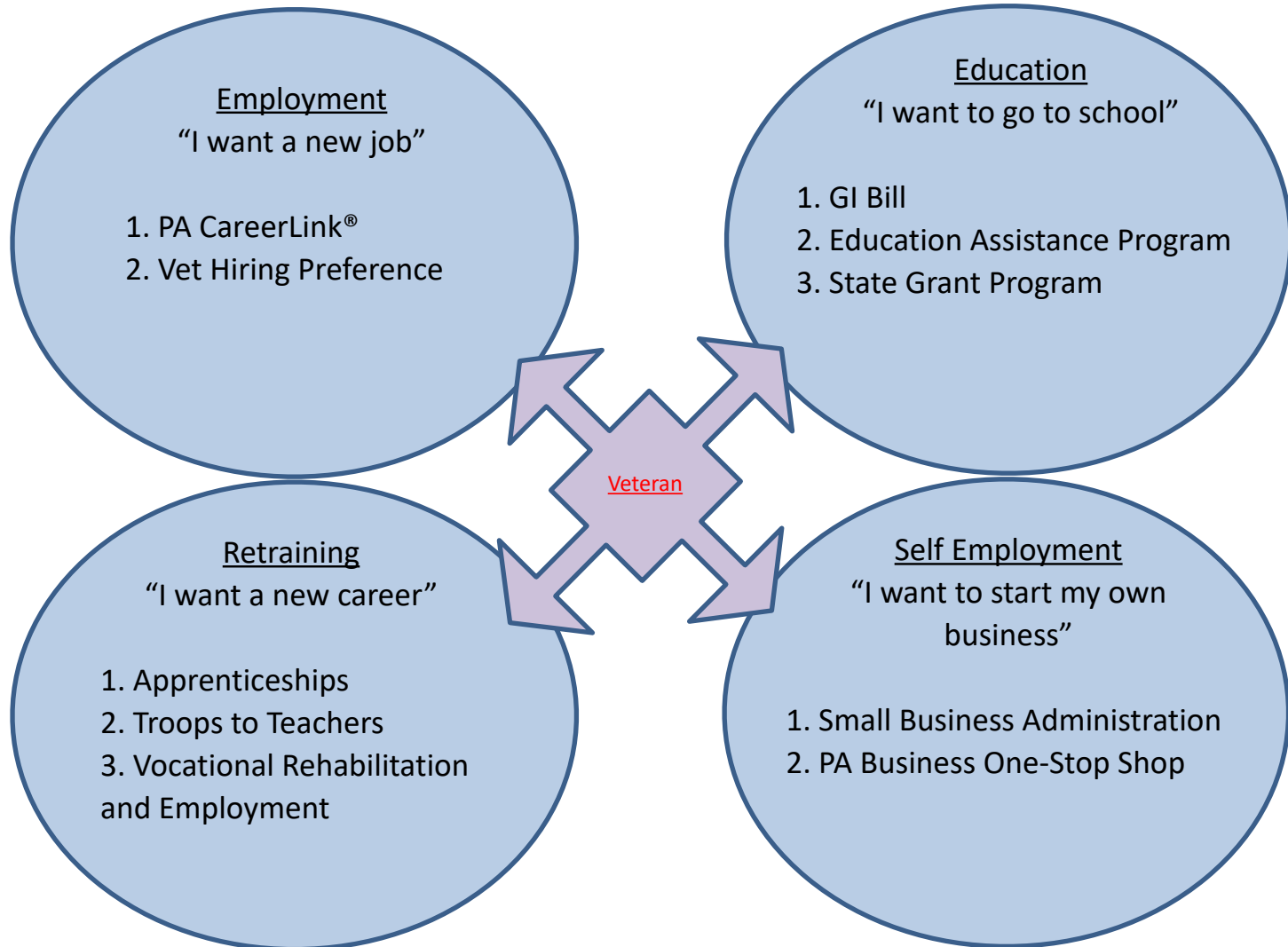
Agenda:

- Committee Members
- EEWFD Concept / Template / Battle Rhythm Update
- Event Highlights
- Program Reviews
 - GI Bill®
 - PA CareerLink®

Education, Employment/Workforce Development Committee (EEWFD)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Kory Auch	Chair / Office of Administration
Jeanne Block	Department of Labor and Industry
Christine Hawk	Department of Education
Bruce Foster	State Veterans' Commission
Cory Bender	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Bryan Lentz	State Civil Service Commission
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
Shelly Forte	Office of Administration
Mike McManus	Department of Community and Economic Development
Randy Wright/Billy Lanham	Veterans' Employment and Training Service



Recurring Briefing Rhythm

- First Quarter: {"I want a new job" programs}
- Second Quarter: {"I want to go to school" programs}
- Third Quarter: {"I want a new career" programs}
- Fourth Quarter: {"I want to start my own business" programs}

Event Highlight

Certifying Official Workshop -- Six Workshops ... 387 Attendees

Pittsburgh Technical College in Oakdale (picture)

PATTAN Center in Malvern

Mercyhurst University in Erie

PATTAN Center in Harrisburg

DeSales University in the Lehigh Valley

Community College of Allegheny County



Event Highlight

On the Job Training Approval Visit

➤ Black Valley Farm-Everett, PA

➤ Troops to Tractors

(PA Veteran Farming Project)

➤ Pictured

- Alana Schoffstall (owner)
- Joe Cappricci (Army Reservist)
- Dennis Renner (Vet Ed Advisor)



Upcoming Event Highlight



Capital Area
August 28, 2018 • 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Radisson Hotel Harrisburg
1150 Camp Hill Bypass, Camp Hill

Currently Signed Up:

- 27 Exhibitors
- 28 Employers
- 12 Service Organizations

Committee Entities Scheduled to Participate:

- Banking & Securities
- DMVA Outreach Van
- Small Business Administration
- OA – Commonwealth Hiring

Christine Hawk (PDE)

GI Bill®

Concept

- Earned Education Benefit
- US DVA eligibility/funding
- 6 programs for Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and Dependents
- Most Popular: Post 9-11 GI Bill
 - 2008 – Higher Education
 - 2011 – OIT/apprenticeships/certs

State Participation

PDE – “State Approving Agency”

- Active Facilities
 - Educ: FY17 - 457 > FY09 - 333
 - Trng: FY17 - 202 < FY09 - 229
- School Certifying Officials
 - 1,955 (1,184 Ed/771 Trng)

PA Key Data/Trends

- FY16 = 24,611 beneficiaries
 - 69% growth since FY08
- FY16 = \$375M VA Expenditure
 - 350% growth since FY08
- Post 9/11 ... 0 to 23K to 19K
 - Transfers trending within DoD

Key Changes/Initiatives

- PA: In-state tuition for participants; priority scheduling
- Feds: Colmery Act 2017 (31 changes)
 - Forever GI Bill vs 15 year sunset
 - Increase eligible Purple Heart; Guard/Reserve
 - PDE training surge for processes

Jeanne Block (L&I)



Concept

- 57 one-stop career centers statewide
-
- www.pacareerlink.pa.gov – online
-
- Services and programs for individuals and businesses

State Participation

- PA CareerLink[®] : *not* a state agency
-
- 17 mandated employment & training programs and numerous local programs provided
-

Data

- PA Monthly Workstats
-
- Annual “Veterans in PA” report
-
- www.paworkstats.dli.pa.gov

Embedded Principle

Priority of Service

Health and Behavioral Service Committee

Mr. Rick Hamp
Chair

Health and Behavioral Service, Rick Hamp, (Chair)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Rick Hamp	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Mike Stelacio	State Veterans' Commission
Jodi Skiles	Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Angela Keen	VISN 4
Belinda Albright	County Directors for Veterans' Affairs
Robert Rounce	Department of Health

Fairweather Lodge Updates

Venango County

Erie County (x2)

Cumberland Perry (Newville)

Lackawanna County

We are working closely with county officials to build stakeholder ship for a new lodge in Lackawanna.

They have a Benefactor and are finalizing financial requirements.

They have identified a provider and are formalizing their relationship

Lebanon County

They have opened a lodge but it is not Veteran-Centric, however they do accept Veterans. Currently they do not have any Veterans living in the lodge.

No significant updates to report

Dr. Darryl Jackson, Chief Medical Officer and SA Hamp represent the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on the CCBHC steering committee. Veterans are being tracked as a priority population during intake and we are starting to track some data that should help us with basic information on emerging Veterans needs.

Mental Health First Aid – Nothing significant to report

We continue to build partnerships with community organizations that are able to provide services to our Veterans with behavioral health challenges and co-occurring conditions such as Substance Use Disorders.

New Vitae Wellness and Recovery in the Lehigh Valley (Allentown/Quakertown)
Retreat Premier Addiction Treatment Centers – Lancaster, PA
Strive Healthcare/Veteran-First Responder (VFR) Healthcare – Greensburg, PA
Just For Tomorrow (JFT) Recovery House – Lemoyne, PA
York County Prison Veteran POD – York, PA
Veteran’s Recovery Home – York, PA

Women Veterans Committee

Ms. Jodi Zucco
Chair

Women Veterans Committee, Chair Jodi Zucco

**Subcommittee conducted conference calls on 5/24/18 and 7/27/18.
Town Hall and Expo 6/30/18 and AAR Town Hall and Expo 7/17/18**

Members:

	Affiliation
Jodi Zucco	Office of Attorney General, U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Retired
Constance Snavelly	State Veterans' Commission, U.S. Army Retired
JoAnn Tresco	ServiceMembers and Family Support Branch, PA Army National Guard (PAANG) Veteran Retired
Audrey Bergstresser	Vietnam Veterans of American, Inc.; Chapter 542, Service Officer, U.S. Army Retired
Lisa Kaye	County Directors for Veterans Affairs, U.S. Army Veteran
Patricia Conroy	Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

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

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
- Town hall Meetings and Expos
- Supplemental Information, Academic Research and Studies

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

Questionnaire:

- Survey link open 4/19/18-6/18/18
- DMVA Data Analyst compiling reported data
- 761 surveys, hundreds of comments
- Analysis expected to be complete 8/24/18

6/30/18 Town Hall and Expo (AHC):

- Moderation and Briefings provided by Committee
- DMVA Logistical Support and Keynote Speaker
- Extensive and Varied Outreach Support
- Need Additional Publicity

Women Veterans Committee (Continued)

Next Town Hall and Expo (Philadelphia):

- Women Veterans Center (VMC) Support
- Date 10/20/18 or 10/27/18, location TBD
- Theme “I’m Not Invisible”

Judiciary Committee

Mr. Ryan Yoder
Chair

Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

Members are as follows:

Name	Affiliation
Ryan Yoder	PA Department of Corrections (DOC)
Nicholas “Chip” Gilliland	PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Richard Podguski	PA Board of Probation and Parole
Terry Stokes	Veterans Court Advocate- PA VFW
Ward Adams	GAC-VS (Member at Large)
Carl Feldman	Department of Human Services

Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

**County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
2018 Annual Conference
Theater 8 (Gateway Theater)**



Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

CCAP Priority: Services to our Veterans: Theater 8 Gateway Theater

- A CCAP priority for 2018 is supporting veterans' services. This session included panelists who are active participants with CCAP's Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and partner with CCAP to review service needs, discuss solutions, provide education, and work on coordination of service delivery. They represent a broad array of programming on behalf of veterans and advocate on their behalf. The session also included updates and new information on veterans services programming at the state and federal levels. This was a great opportunity to network and develop working relationships with state leaders and professionals, while informing them of various Veteran service and support initiatives. Speakers for this panel included the following:
- Rod Ruddock, Commissioner, Indiana County and Chair, CCAP Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
 - **Major General (Retired) Eric G. Weller**, Deputy Adjutant General for Veterans Affairs, Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
 - Major Keith W. McKeon, Director of Service Member Family Support, National Guard
 - **Ryan Yoder, M.S.**, Statewide Veterans Coordinator & Identification Coordinator, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

DOC creates two additional Veterans Service Units (VSUs) in 2018

- SCI Muncy has announced a date of August 31st for the grand opening ceremony of it's brand new VSU. This will be the first all-female Veterans Service Unit in PA and perhaps in the country.
- Our newest prison, SCI Phoenix is now officially in operation and will house our 5th Veterans Service Unit (VSU.) Initially, this VSU will house 60 Veterans. The VSU housing unit (as seen below) is currently in the development phase, and updates will follow. This will be the second VSU within the Eastern Region of PA, along with SCI Dallas.



Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

WHAT IS A VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE ?

- Inmate Veterans who don't meet the eligibility requirements or don't wish to be a VSU participant, will be given the opportunity to voluntarily participate in our Veterans Service Office (VSO) program. VSO's are now in operation at all DOC facilities that do not offer VSU's.
- Based on the VSU/THU/RSO model, the Veterans Service Office (VSO) offers Veteran-related services and support for all institutions currently without a VSU Program. The VSO will be made available to any incarcerated Veteran who wishes to participate in reentry programming.
- Each VSO is supported by a Facility Veterans Coordinator, Reentry Coordinator, Social Worker, RPA and PSS. (Optional: AOD Facilitator)
- Each VSO should have access to a reentry/resource library. This library will consist of informative brochures, applications and binders containing both reentry and Veteran specific resource materials (Vet Court/legal materials, VA related applications/documents, PTSD/Mental Health assistance, Drug & Alcohol assistance and VSU related information.
- The VSO offers a centralized classroom setting. TV/DVD players should be accessible for programming needs. In addition, VSO participants should have regular access to computer lab stations and other educational tools to assist with reentry programming and resources.
- The Veteran Services Office (VSO) will be offered in unison with existing THU/RSO programming within each respective institution. Incarcerated Veterans will be provided the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the various existing reentry programs offered. In addition, supporting staff will offer Veteran-specific programming, which will include but not be limited to Seeking Safety, AA/NA, RAP discussion groups, PTDS/Mental Health and seminars offered by Veteran-related organizations.

Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

DOC Looking to Partner with Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs Inc.

- SCI Mercer recently hosted a meeting between Senator Brooks (PA), DOC Leadership, and the CEO of Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs Inc. (GAMSD)
- The meeting addressed the possibility of creating a partnership between the DOC and GAMSD. If approved, GAMSDS will provide their accredited Veteran service dog training program to incarcerated Veterans housed on the Veterans Service Unit. Successful training dogs will then be provided to PA Veteran recipients



Judiciary Committee , Ryan Yoder (Chair)

A Closer Look: Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs Inc.

- Veterans helping Veterans (Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs Inc. teams up with PA Department of Corrections: SCI Mercer's Veterans Service Unit)
- First program to be initiated outside of Florida (Headquarters)
- First program to be initiated in a correctional facility (SCI Mercer's Veterans Service Unit)
- 95% success rate in dog training completion (company breed European German Shepherds)
- 80% success rate in dog training completion (rescue German Shepherds used by the company)
- On-site training at least once a week by company trainers
- Accredited Dog Training Program, which can certify inmate dog trainers/ who participate in the program, resulting in the capability of inmate apprentices to earn a living wage and higher once released from prison
- Graduating service dogs will be provided to PA Veteran recipients
- Statistics show that on average, approximately 22 Veterans commit suicide each day, and first marriages are 62% more likely to end in separation or divorce. After nine years and nearly 300 service dogs paired, the company reports zero suicides and only one divorce among recipients of the Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs, Inc.
- Currently, the DOC is partnered with America's VetDogs Prison Puppy Program at SCI Dallas (VSU facility), which also trains service dogs for future Veteran recipients. In addition, various institutions have puppy/dog programs that are not Veteran specific.

Administration/Technology Committee

Ms. Sandra Patterson
Chair

Administration/Technology Committee - Sandy Patterson, HHS Delivery Center CIO

Name	Affiliation
Eric Felty	DMVA – Project Manager
Tim Irvin	DMVA – IT Director DMVA
Richard Hamp	DMVA – Special Assistant to Deputy Adjutant General of Veteran Affairs
Joe Smolok	DMVA
Brian Natali	DMVA
Christine Hawk	Department of Education
Susan Leevan	IES/SAP
Robert Rounce	Department of Health
Ryan Yoder	Department of Corrections
Penni Bernard	PennDOT
Steven Wolf	Department of Labor and Industry
Kory Auch	Office of Administration
Jordan Rummel	Office of Administration

Progress to Date

- 2nd Quarter (Apr, May, Jun) 1043 registered
- July 455 registered

- Admin Website created to count “Total number of Veterans – Not Interested in Enrolling in PA Veterans’ Registry” went live on 07/12/2018

- Project approved by Governor’s Communications Office on 07/30/2018 to include additional functionality to enhance Veterans’ Registry;
 - DD214 upload
 - Admin page
 - Reporting
 - Registrants ability to update info

Progress to Date continued

- Links to Veterans registry added to the following Agency Websites:

Education

Labor and Industry

Corrections

PennDOT

OA

Commonwealth of PA

Aging

Agriculture

Banking and Securities

Conservations and Natural Resources

Drug and Alcohol

Environmental Protection

General Services

Revenue

State

Fish and Boat

Game Commission

Governor

Lt. Governor

Historical and Museum Commission

Insurance

Liquor Control Board

State Inspector General

Budget

PEMA

State Police

Human Services

Next Steps

- Project Kickoff 09/07/2018
- Continue to work with business to identify future enhancements

Suicide Prevention-Peer (SPPEER) Committee

Mr. Rick Hamp
Chair

Suicide Prevention-Peer (SPPEER) Committee, Rick Hamp (Chair)

Members:

Name	Affiliation
Rick Hamp	Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Mark Todero	Pennsylvania National Guard
Sherry Peters	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Angela Keen, Ph.D.	Veterans Integrated Service Network, Mental Health Program Lead
Randy Loss	Department of Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Fred Nardei	VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Certified Forensic Peer Specialist
Ryan Yoder	Department of Corrections, Statewide Veteran Coordinator
Dave Measel	Pennsylvania Peer Support Coalition
Donald Danser, Ph.D.	Department of Veterans Affairs, Manager, BH VA and Specialty Clinics



SPPEER Committee

The Leadership Team remains engaged and focused on initiatives that help our Veterans maintain Wellness.

Making a Difference in our communities – CCBHC Providing Services where they count

Warm-Hand Off Opioid Survivors Initiative– Multi-Agency Task Force addressing the Opioid Crisis in PA

Veteran Behavioral Health Support Grant Program – A chance to make a real difference in how we help Veterans with Behavioral Health issues and co-occurring Substance Use Disorders.

Co-Chairs will represent the SPPEER Committee at formal sessions of the Governors' Advisory Council for Veterans Services (GAC-VS)



SPPEER Committee (continued)

Community Awareness and Communications

1LT Rose Brandberg, Mr. Mark Todero, Joann Tresco

Addition in Co-Chair: Joann Tresco, Alcohol and Drug Control Officer (ADCO)

Strategic Plan to be finalized NLT 30 September 2018

Working along side other sub-committees to develop the best marketing strategies to get Community involved and communication lists.

Working alongside American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), which has a MOU with the DoD to establish community partnerships with the intent of reducing the stigma, educating, and decreasing the number of suicides within our community and ranks.

Partnership with AFSP in the Out of the Darkness Walks (see handout). We welcome participation from Service Members, Veterans, and families.

Resource Fair on 7 SEP 18 (see handout).



SPPEER Committee (continued)

Prevention and Treatment Services and Strategies

Mrs. Sherry Peters, Working Group Chair

This subcommittee has compiled an impressive list of Suicide Prevention Resources That is now shared at the Prevent Suicide PA website <https://www.preventsuicidepa.org> Or in the Veterans/Military Families resources section of PA Recovery located at <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/parecovery/adultolderadult/vetmilfam/milresources/index.htm>

The work continues!



SPPEER Committee (continued)

Training and Education

Mr. Fred Nardei, Working Group Chair

- September is National Suicide Prevention Month
- Suicide Prevention Training Database
- The role of Peer Support in suicide prevention Supervisors training **September 19, 2018 from 3:00 – 4:00pm (ET)**
- AFSP Out of the Darkness Pittsburgh Suicide Prevention Walk **August 25, 2018**
- VAPHS Suicide Prevention Outreach Committee
- #BeThere Leadership Toolkit for Suicide Prevention
- VA recently released its National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide
<http://bit.ly/NtnlStrategy>
- SCI Dallas visit.



- Open Discussion
- Questions/Remarks

Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 1:00 PM

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