

Governor's Advisory Council for Veteran Services

Arrowheads Community Club

Building 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap

Annville, PA 17003

November 19, 2019

Aging Committee

Dr. Darryl Jackson

Ms. Samantha Cossman

Co-Chairs

Aging Committee: Samantha Cossman and Dr. Darryl Jackson (co-chairs)

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	VA (VISN 4)	Christopher Kemmerer	PA State Parks
Beth Ellis	DHS	James Fearn	DHS (OLTL)
Sierra Bilous	OMHSAS	Tim Cleveland	Tioga Co. Veterans Affairs
Kevin Longenecker	PDA	Kit Watson	American Legion
Erin Walters	PDA	Raymond Soto	Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
Samantha Cossman	DMVA, outgoing co-chair		

Mission/Vision:

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.

Goals:

- 1) Increase awareness among aging and veteran system professionals about the services and supports available to aging veterans and their families and caregivers.
- 2) Increase awareness of opportunities for community engagement among aging veterans, their families and caregivers, and those serving them.
- 3) Safeguard aging veterans from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-harm.

Since 1 Jan 2018, cross-system awareness and partnership development activities have occurred between PA's aging network and veterans' systems to promote better customer service for veterans and servicemembers reaching out for help.

- PACE/DMVA partnership (2,362 mailings about PACE sent across 5 DMVA regions)
- 7 PDA programs presented during PAANG Family Assistance Center calls
- 3rd consecutive year for PA Link Veterans Day message
- 19 AAA Director and CDVA introductions upon position turnover (100%)
- Benefits and Rights for Older Pennsylvanians books given to VSOs, VAMCs & SVHs
- Veteran pension poaching awareness initiative planned (commitment from PDA, DHS/OLTL and DOH as well as PALA and PA Homecare Association to leverage their communication avenues in order to share information with professionals who interact with veterans)
- 10/1/19 go-live for Veterans Directed Care in Washington County area

Since 1 Jan 2018, raised awareness of community engagement opportunities for aging veterans and their families and caregivers available through sister state agencies

- Fish and Boat issued 53 special activity permits for veteran's fishing events in 2019
 - 15 of those were issued a letter of authorization exempting the fishing license requirement for attendees.
 - A chapter of Trout Unlimited in Bellefonte, Centre County, completed one permit for 14 of the Veterans events held in Fisherman's Paradise on Spring Creek.
 - Lehigh County fishing event had 56 attendees including 8 disabled veterans and 2 disabled first responders.
 - https://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/FishingLicense/Documents/fact_disabled_lic.pdf
- 40 attendees from 14 Senior Centers in York Co. learned about programming available through Fish and Boat, State Parks and PA Council on the Arts
- Presentation on Senior Center Programming to 13 FAC-Ss
- Submission of articles on available programming to veteran-centric publications

- Awareness campaign to promote asking “Have you or a family member served in the U.S. Armed Forces?”, not “Are you a veteran?”. And then making a referral to VSO based on answer.
- Cross-system conference to promote knowledge sharing, service gap identification and innovative solution planning (stakeholders and advocates from veterans systems, aging network, long-term service and support system, and veteran representation).
- Educational videos jointly presented by aging and veteran system stakeholders to explain programming and resources available to aging veterans and caregivers (e.g. caregiver support, in-home care programs, pension poaching, protective services, insurance, medication). Post to social media, YouTube, and willing department/advocate/stakeholder websites.
- Launch veteran pension poaching awareness initiative.
- Regional aging veteran and veteran caregiver town halls/listening sessions.

Joint Committee on Reducing Veteran Homelessness

Joel Mutschler
Samantha Cossman
Co-Chairs

Joint Committee on Reducing Veteran Homelessness



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Joel Mutschler (co-chair)	DMVA	Samantha Cossman (co-chair)	DMVA
Brian Natali	DMVA	Tom Applebach	Lehigh Valley Veterans Affairs
Tom Peters	Veterans Multi-Service Center	William Reed	YWCA Greater Harrisburg
Missy Russell	Lawrence Co. CAAP; Western CoC	William Cress, Mary Siegel Michael Wehrer, Kelly Tuteurice,	VISN 4
Danielle Rudy	PHFA	Julie Seby, Beth Gerber, Uyen Nguyen, Margo Muchinsky, Dowel Lomax	PDA
Jeff Geibel	DDAP	Donna Tilley-Hess; Sierra Bilous	OMHSAS

Mission/Vision:

Collaborate with federal, state, and local government, as well as community partners to identify and build resource awareness for veterans experiencing or at risk of housing instability.

Goals:

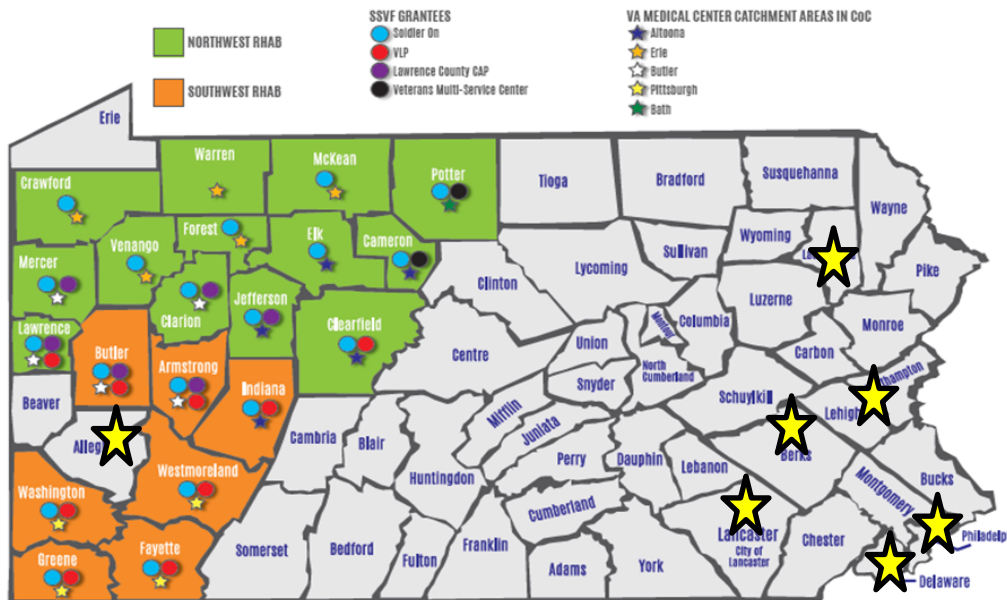
- 1) Establish and maintain relationships with all Continuums of Care serving PA.
- 2) Assist DMVA and CDVAs in collaborating with community providers and county resources to identify and address needs and service gaps affecting veterans who are experiencing or are at risk for housing instability. Promote partnership development across public & private sectors.
- 3) Routinely obtain and analyze data from VISN, PA CoCs, and SSVF grantees.
- 4) Identify the models and best practices utilized by CoCs that have successfully met USICH criteria and benchmarks to achieve an end to veteran homelessness. Serve as a forum in which these best practices and strategies can be shared and innovative solutions can be identified.

- Collaborations/Partnerships
 - YWCA of Greater Harrisburg
 - Veterans Multi-Service Center
 - VISN 4 Homeless Coordinator and Care Teams
 - Continuums of Care
 - PA Housing Finance Agency
- Resource Papers
 - Programs to help veterans find, obtain and retain housing
 - Landlord relationship best practices
- Obtained data sets from VISN 4

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) approved the declaration that the Western PA CoC effectively ended veteran homelessness.

After four years of work by the Western CoC's Veteran Committee, these 20 counties, indicated in green or orange below, have successfully come together to build a system that can quickly identify and house any veteran experiencing homelessness with the ultimate goal of veteran homelessness in this region being *rare, brief and non-recurring*.

WESTERN PA VETERAN STAKEHOLDERS



In addition to the newly added Western PA CoC, USICH includes seven other PA CoCs in its list of communities across the U.S. that have met the criteria and benchmarks for achieving the goal of ending veteran homelessness. These include the following and are denoted by the yellow stars:

- Philadelphia County CoC
- Lancaster City and County CoC
- Reading/Berks County CoC
- Lehigh Valley CoC
- Scranton/Lackawanna County CoC
- Upper Darby, Chester, Haverford/Delaware County CoC
- Pittsburgh/McKeesport/ Penn Hills/Allegheny County CoC[i]

[i] Communities That Have Ended Homelessness. US Interagency Council on Homelessness. Accessed October 18, 2019. Available from: <https://www.usich.gov/communities-that-have-ended-homelessness>.

Data Sets: 2019 Point-In-Time Count for Balance of State

Western PA CoC (blue):

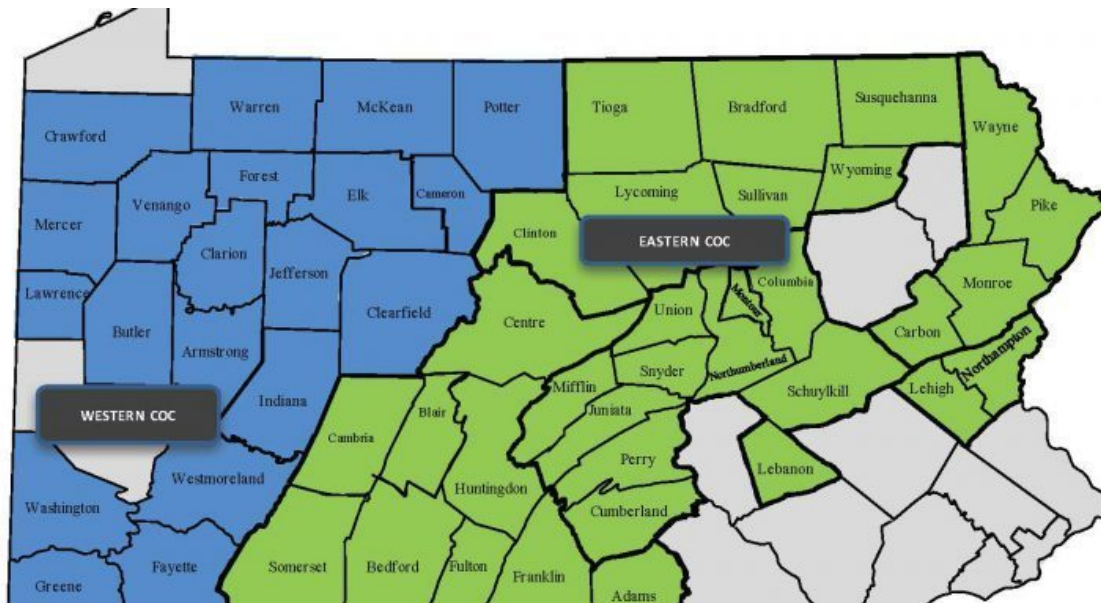
88 veterans

↓ 26% from 2016

Eastern PA CoC (green):

71 veterans

↓ 36% from 2016



Data Sets: Estimates of Permanent Housing Placements from VHA Homeless Programs (2017-2019)

Programs include HUD-VASH, SSVF RRH, GPD, HCHV (excl. Case Management), DCHV and CWT/TR.

Information below was compiled from data provided by VISN 4 source: HOMES, SSVF Dashboard and Homeless Registry Data as of September 17, 2019.

CoC #	CoC Name	2017	2017 avg/mo	2018	2018 avg/mo	2019 (Aug)	2019 avg/mo
PA-500	Philadelphia CoC	478	39.8	444	37.0	236	29.5
PA-501	Harrisburg/Dauphin County CoC	80	6.7	92	7.7	54	6.8
PA-502	Upper Darby, Chester, Haverford/Delaware County CoC	15	1.3	13	1.1	10	1.3
PA-503	Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Luzerne County CoC	95	7.9	72	6.0	47	5.9
PA-504	Lower Marion, Norristown, Abington/Montgomery County CoC	11	0.9	11	0.9	3	0.4
PA-505	Chester County CoC	422	35.2	365	30.4	251	31.4
PA-506	Reading/Berks County CoC	48	4.0	44	3.7	21	2.6
PA-507	Altoona/Central Pennsylvania CoC	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
PA-508	Scranton/Lackawanna County CoC	68	5.7	46	3.8	20	2.5
PA-509	Eastern Pennsylvania CoC	311	25.9	264	22.0	128	16.0
PA-510	Lancaster City & County CoC	42	3.5	39	3.3	21	2.6
PA-511	Bristol, Bensalem/Bucks County CoC	22	1.8	23	1.9	5	0.4
PA-512	York City & County CoC	33	2.8	27	2.3	21	2.6
PA-600	Pittsburgh, McKeesport, Penn Hills/Allegheny County CoC	294	24.5	243	20.3	150	18.8
PA-601	Western Pennsylvania CoC	254	21.2	252	21.0	135	16.9
PA-602	Northwest Pennsylvania CoC	4	0.3	8	0.7	8	1.0
PA-603	Beaver County CoC	26	2.2	20	1.7	6	0.8
PA-605	Erie City & County CoC	41	3.4	49	4.1	27	3.4
	Total across all Pennsylvania CoCs	2,244	187.0	2,012	167.7	1,143	142.9

- Develop an awareness campaign to improve access to benefits and services by encouraging organizations to ask, “Have you served in the military?”
- Once service gaps are identified, leverage a cross-system team to identify and communicate innovative solutions to these gaps (Joint Committee)
- Strategic referral process for connecting veterans in need with available resources (PA VETCONNECT)

Education, Employment, Workforce Development Committee

Mr. Kory Auch
Chair

Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Kory Auch	OA	Tom Applebach	County Directors
Cory Bender	DMVA	Jeanne Block	L&I
Larry Furlong	Fish & Boat	Donna Tilley Hess	DHS
Tina Kotsalos	DoBS	Billy Lanham	US DoL
Randy McKinney	PDE	Mike McManus	DCED
Scott Sheely	Ag	Shelly Forte	OA

Other Affiliated Organization:

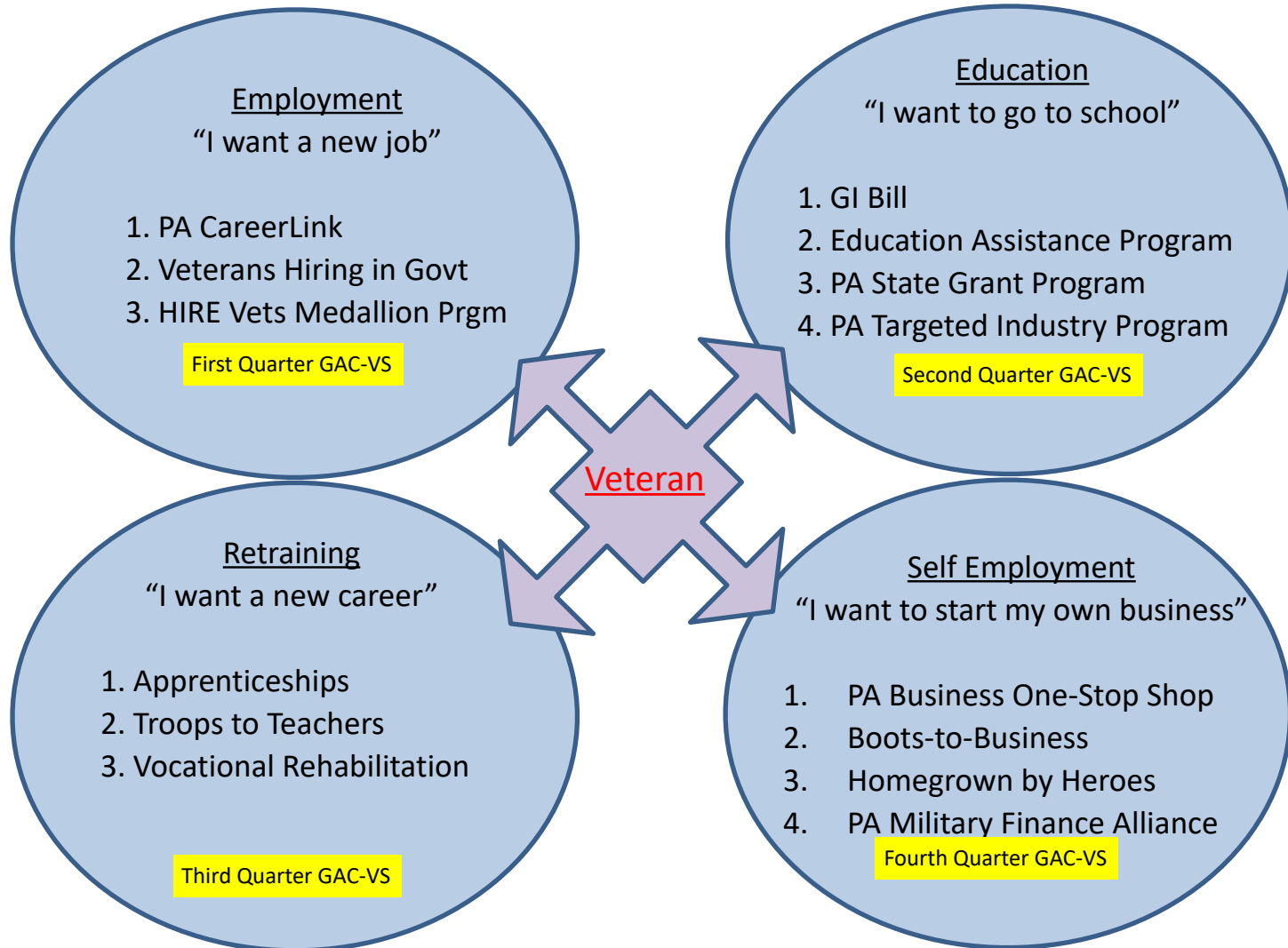
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency
 Pennsylvania National Guard
 US Small Business Administration
 US Department of Veterans Affairs
 US Department of Defense

VISION

Create greater awareness and synergy among agencies serving veterans when they are asking themselves “What do I want to do next?”

GOALS

1. Establish a recurring rhythm to present program information, magnitude, results and initiatives to the GAC-VS
2. Use program understanding to better connect the information to the entities that need it most ... those that engage veterans daily
3. Fully synergize agency programs into the PA VETCONNECT model





Employment “I want a new job”

PA CareerLink (L&I)

57 offices statewide / priority of service to all veteran / 6,555 served

Veteran Hiring in Government (OA)

1,083 veterans hired for full-time commonwealth positions

HIRE Vets Medallion Program (US DoL)

27 PA businesses recognized / 3rd most in the nation

www.employment.pa.gov





Education

“I want to go to school”

GI Bill (PDE)

26,362 beneficiaries receiving \$354M

Education Assistance Program (PHEAA / PA National Guard)

2,059 recipients receiving \$12.1M

PA State Grant Program (PHEAA)

2,311 veterans awarded \$5.6M

PA Targeted Industry Program (PHEAA)

135 veterans awarded \$525K



Retraining “I want a new career”

Registered Apprenticeships (L&I)
Veterans are 10% of all active apprentices

Troops to Teachers (PDE)
30 veterans hired / 44 school districts participating

Vocational Rehabilitation (L&I)
1,761 veterans served / 286 achieved employment outcomes





Self Employment “I want to start my own business”

PA Business One-Stop Shop (DCED)
71 veteran-owned businesses served since launch

Boots-to-Business/Re-Boot (US SBA)
386 participants @ 32 events across PA since 2014

Homegrown by Heroes (Ag)
24 farms in 16 counties (Farmer Veteran Coalition); 3 Apprenticeships

PA Military Finance Alliance (DoBS)
1030 participants @ 12 events across PA since 2014



- 1. Awareness ... create understanding with those in contact with veterans**
 - Embrace the PA VETCONNECT Model ... referrals at the local level
- 2. Discovery ... continue to incorporate other governmental programs**
 - Embrace the PA VETCONNECT Model ... ready inventory of programs
- 3. Analysis ... determine if and where gaps may exist**
 - Embrace the PA VETCONNECT Model ... share best practices/resources

Health Promotion Committee

Donna Tilley Hess, Chair

Suicide Prevention SC

Angela Keen & Leslie Neal,
Co-Chairs

Health Promotion Committee Members



Name	Affiliation	Name	Affiliation
Donna Tilley Hess	DHS, OMHSAS	Daniel Ramey	Psychological Health
Angela Keen	VISN 4	Jennifer Hagaman	VSO, Clinton Cty.
Leslie Neal	VSO, Elk Cty.	Justin D Slep	VSO, Franklin Cty.
Frederick Nardei	Pittsburgh VA	Matthew Zamosky	VSO, West Moreland County
Rose Brandberg	Resilience & Risk Reduction Prog. Coordinator, PAARNG	Ginny Mastrine	DHS, OMHSAS
Mark Todero	Suicide Prevention Program Contractor, PAARNG	Jessica Penn Shires	DHS, OMHSAS
Joann P Tresco	Alcohol & Drug Control Officer, Contractor, PAARNG	Lori Mentzer	DHS, OMHSAS
LTC Gerard M Wrazien	SMFS Director, PAARNG	Doug Snyder	DOH
Rick Hamp	DMVA	Govan Martin	Prevent Suicide PA
Joel Mutschler	DMVA	Liz Woodley	PMHCA
Jeff Geibel	DDAP	Roy Remone	Compeer/Vet2Vet
William A Charpentier	PAARNG-TAAS	Perri Rosen	DHS, OMHSAS, Contractor
Laura Cunningham	Retreat	Michael Volz	VBA
Dave Measal	PA Peer Support Clt.	Lana Venur	VSO, Elk Cty.

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.

Suicide Prevention Sub Committee's Vision: 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.

Goals:

- 1) Continued provision of trainings such as: Mental Health First Aide (MHFA), Question Persuade Refer (QPR), and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Trainings will occur through DMVA's regional program, 3 per quarter annually (1 per month based on region would be a minimum starting point).
- 2) Create 2 Fairweather Lodges annually.
- 3) Hold evidenced based training annually providing a specific modality known to be an effective treatment for veterans, and continue collaborative MH/BH training summits in PA.

Federal Partnership & Collaborative Efforts since November 2018

VA Suicide Prevention Efforts Included the:

#Be There Campaign and **outreach toolkits**, which were shared broadly.

OPERATION S.A.V.E., and **REACH VET**, an algorithm program that Identifies the top .1% of veterans most at risk for suicide in Computerized Patient Recording System (CPRS).

Veteran X program ongoing expansion.

There were **12 Mental Health Summits provided** in communities across PA (VISN4).

MISSION ACT of 2018 key points for Veterans:

Expands options for Veterans to **receive care in the community**

Includes an **urgent care benefit** for eligible Veterans

Provides more **Veteran to Veteran Peer Specialists**

Expands the **Veteran caregiver program** (implementation timeframe deferred)

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

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.

Since November 2018 the Health Promotion Branch of Service Member Family Support has worked in collaboration with community resources to ensure our Service members, who are community members 28 days out of the month, are able to recognize risk/warning signs and get the next level of care as needed.

Some of the things we have accomplished over the past year are:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) - 6 trainings with a total of 104 Army Service Members, 17 Air Service Members and 13 Civilians
- Ask Care Escort-Suicide Intervention (ACE-SI) Train the Trainer with a total of 63 Trained
- Resource Fair at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA held on 6 SEP 19 with a total of 250 Attendees
- Out of the Darkness Walks, supported 10 walks with at least 2 staff members and a Chaplain
- SafeTalk Training for FRG Volunteers, FRSA team and SMFS Staff with a total of 24 Trained
- Master Resilience Trainers, trained 24
- Master Resilience Trainers, Level II Facilitators, trained 3 Soldiers
- Supported local community resource fairs as well as other FRG events.
- WITF invited us to complete a 60 minute live radio broadcast on Suicide prevention within the National Guard.

**Follow PNG Service Members & Family Support Division on Facebook
to see upcoming events for Veterans and families.**

Since November 2018 DHS OMHSAS, has worked collaboratively with federal, state, county, and community partners/stakeholders to provide education, awareness, and training sessions that are known to promote health and wellness, and be effective in supporting trauma informed care, suicide prevention, and intervention.

- Compeer Corp Veteran Training, 50 participated
- Question Persuade Refer (QPR) P.S.PA/20 trainings – 600 trained (Bradford, Clearfield, Dauphin, McKean, Lancaster)
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) Training, 40 trained
- ASIST Train the Trainer Training, 15 trained
- 7 Trauma Summits, 1980 trained (Erie, Lackawanna/Luzerne, Lancaster, Reading, Dauphin, Lehigh, York)
- Question Persuade Refer (QPR) Train the Trainer, 12 trained
- Question Persuade Refer (QPR) training, 1325 trained
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Train the Trainer, 30 trained

(P.S.PA & SERG)

Suicide Prevention Resources A-Z on PA Recovery below link:

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

Ongoing efforts and collaboration with our various partners from Nov. 2018 through present.

- Approximately \$2M in State Opioid Grant funding was allocated to bring awareness to substance use disorder (SUD) and to address SUD and the co-occurring conditions that are often associated with this health and behavioral disorder.
- SW Suicide Prevention TF has held 8 listening sessions providing extensive feedback.
- We continue to gain community partnerships such as New Vitae, Retreat, Strive, Just for Tomorrow, York County Veteran POD, Allegheny County Veteran POD, and Veteran's Recovery Home
- We continue our efforts to grow the Veteran FairWeather Lodge Program such as the Venango, Erie, and Cumberland/Perry lodges.
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), Year 1 – Veterans 210, Active Duty 3, National Guard/Reserves 2, Year 2 - Veterans 426, Active 3, National Guard/Reserves 17

Health Promotion Committee Recommendations



Key to these efforts and recommendations are: they be all encompassing of all branches and all types of SM/Veterans (whether deployed or not), follow through, consistency, attendance and community partners/stakeholders be involved providing available resources. Such efforts are known to help SM/Veterans along with fighting MH stigma. Education, and awareness of various resources may help with the “wait time” factor discussed along with the ongoing challenge that service members continue to fear speaking up thinking it may impact their career adversely.

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Regionally conduct a resource and information event quarterly focusing on Service Members/Veterans, their family members and significant others. The event will focus on, but not limited to, federal benefits, state benefits, county benefits, family programs, suicide prevention programs, drug and alcohol programs, and current health and wellness resources. This program will encompass all branches of service and components that are in Pennsylvania, deployment status not applicable, event is designed to support everyone. Must ensure that both military family assets for, both Army and Air Reserve are incorporated into program. It is essential for the chain of command and NCO support chain of command to have absolute buy in and be a stakeholder in supporting these events.

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Work with Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) to include current health and wellness information at the initial “intake processing day”, within the enlistment packet provided. The recommendation is that state G1, with oversight from Chief of Staff Office take the lead on this initiative, and to ensure consistency the Inspection Generals Office can add this into their

inspection cycle.

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Work with Recruitment Sustainment Program (RSP) to ensure Service Members have current health and wellness information. In addition, provide suicide prevention and resiliency training to PA Recruiters, new recruits, Officer candidates, and Warrant Officer candidates.

RECOMMENDATION 4 – Update Commander’s and First Sergeant’s courses with health and wellness resource information, at both the DMVA level and existing family member support assets.

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Provide current updates, health and wellness resource information in digital form on television screens in every Pennsylvania Armory. This is a cost-effective technique that could have a quick turn around since the TV’s and DVD’s have already been purchased.

RECOMMENDATION 6 – Place the VA Crisis Phone Line information on every State Agency’s webpage.

RECOMMENDATION 7 – Provide a “Safety and Wellness” Brief at closing formations, drill, annual training or any other Pennsylvania Military event. Recommended topics are: resiliency, suicide prevention, drug and alcohol use, financial assistance, employment outreach, and wellness information.

Women Veterans Committee Jodi Zucco Chair

Women Veterans Committee



Members	Affiliation
Jodi Zucco	U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Retired
Constance Snavely	State Veterans' Commission, U.S. Army Retired
JoAnn Tresco	Service Members and Family Support Branch, PA Army National Guard, Veteran 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.

Goals:

- 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.

Mission Successes:

1. Survey

- 761 survey responses, hundreds of comments
- Top issues identified: gender bias, access to medical care and Veterans benefits at every level, and lack of inclusiveness in Veterans Organizations.

2. 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 .

3. Town Hall Expos:

- Philadelphia VA Medical Center
- Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center
- Parx Casino, Bucks County

4. Highlights of Established Partnerships:

- Lackawanna Work Force Development.
- Wilkes-Barre, Butler, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg VA Medical Centers.
- Women Veterans Center of Veterans Multi Service Center, Philadelphia.
- Veterans Leadership Program.
- State Association of County Directors.
- PA War Veterans Council.
- PA State Veterans Commission.

5. Highlights of Member Initiatives/Networking:

- Coordination with Homeless Veterans Tiny Home Village project in Cumberland County.
- Coordination with POC at Muncy for identifying other opportunities to support women veterans.
- Representation at all Lebanon VA Summits - Building the Bridge to identify resources for female veterans.

5. Highlights of Member Initiatives/Networking (Cont):

- Mentored female veteran in agribusiness with business plan and marketing plan creation. Assisted in filing grant application for equipment for farm.
- Participated in the agribility farm tour- presentation on challenges/obstacles facing female veterans with disabilities.
- Attend mentor trainings sponsored by Dauphin County to improve skills to work with vets involved in vets court.
- Initiated two legal actions in the name of the Commonwealth by Office of Attorney General both resulting in Civil Penalties and Costs of Investigation in the amount of \$10,000 and Injunctive Relief on the subjects of Stolen Valor and Pension Poaching.
- Proposed update for Paralyzed Veterans of America Logo. To be presented at PVA National Conference in December. If adopted would be the first National level VSO logo with a woman veteran.



Paralyzed Veterans
of America



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

6. Events Attended to Spread Word of Committee and Network:

- VFW Women's Retreat
- PA Commission for Women Honoring Female Veterans
- Philadelphia Honor Flight
- Prison visit to Muncy for ribbon cutting on Women's Veterans' Unit.
- Women's Roundtable Discussion with Congresswomen Susan Wild.
- Allentown VA Outpatient Clinic Orientation Visit with Congressman Conor Lamb.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a brochure describing the Council and its related committees that could be utilized by every committee as an outreach handout which includes a committee e-mail address and contact number.
2. Support a combined outreach/networking initiative whereby committee members, in conjunction with DMVA Staff, request a roundtable event at a portion of a meeting with select VSOs with associated Women's Groups, to: educate them on what the mission of the committee; to discuss how we can work collaboratively; inquire as to what emerging issues they see.
3. GAC-VS pamphlet for women veteran specific services.
4. Create database of organizations focused on women veterans.

Judiciary Committee

Mr. Ryan Yoder, M.S.
Chair

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)
Jessica Penn-Shires	Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OHMSAS)
Lisa Grayson, Esq	Cumberland County Courthouse: Chair, PA Bar Association, Military & Veterans Affairs
Bill Hoke	New Vitae Wellness and Recovery (Vice President, Development)
Gelu Negrea	Veteran’s Justice Outreach Specialist (Lebanon VA Medical Center)

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

MISSION STATEMENT

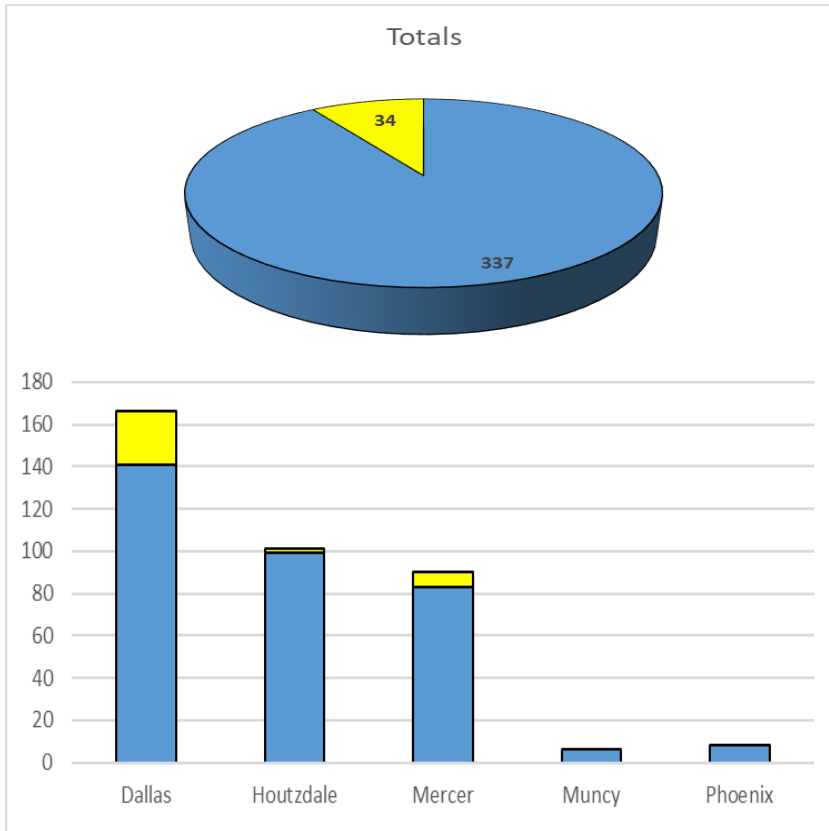
The mission of the Judiciary Committee is to build productive and sustaining relationships with GAC-VS committee members and other veteran-related organizations in order to collaborate and expand services and support for justice-involved veterans in such a way to promote public safety, reduce recidivism and costs while improving the lives of veterans, their families, and our communities. All veterans deserve the opportunity to be identified, educated and provided services and support regardless of background and circumstance. We will leave no veteran behind.

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

Veterans Service Unit (VSU) Statewide Fact Sheet 2019

- The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections currently has approximately 2829 verified Inmate Veterans, who represent approximately 6% of the total inmate population within our facilities. This data reflects a consistent decrease in population since 2016, which reflected a population of 3352 incarcerated Veterans or 7% of the total DOC population.
- Once an Inmate Veteran is identified during reception, he/she is documented in the mainframe as a Veteran and provided an Inmate Veteran Information Packet. The Lehigh Assignment Tool is then used by the Office of Population Management to help identify Inmate Veterans within our mainframe system and assigns eligible candidates to one of our Veterans Service Units (VSU's) from the diagnostic centers.
- The DOC has established (5) regional Veterans Service Units (VSU's) which are designed to prepare Veterans for successful transition back into the community. Currently, the VSU's are located at SCI- Mercer (Western), SCI- Houtzdale (Central), SCI- Muncy (Central), SCI-Dallas (Eastern) and SCI- Phoenix (Eastern.)
- The VSU's provide Veteran-specific programs, workshops and services to include acquiring a DD214, forms of identification, life skills, substance abuse, home/ employment plans, education/vocational programs, mental health services (to include PTSD) and assistance with VA benefits and services. Each unit is comprised of a Unit Management Team, Facility Veterans Coordinator, Psychological Services Specialist, Re-entry Parole Agent and a Social Worker.
- Since November 2018, DMVA has assisted 120 incarcerated Veterans with one on one Veteran Service Officer counseling services through outreach visits within the VSU's.
- Inmate Veterans who do not meet the eligibility requirements or do not 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 currently offer VSU's.
- SCI Dallas is our longest running Veterans Service Unit and was initially put into operation in 2014. They currently have 128 Inmate Veterans residing and participating on the unit.
- SCI Houtzdale was developed in 2016 and is our largest Veterans Service Unit. They currently have 175 Inmate Veterans residing and participating on the unit.
- SCI Mercer was developed in 2017. They currently have 120 Inmate Veterans residing and participating on the unit.
- SCI Muncy was developed in 2018. They are the first all-female residential VSU in Pennsylvania, and perhaps in the country. Initially, this specialized unit houses up to 8 Inmate Veterans with the potential to expand capacity.
- SCI Phoenix was developed in 2018 and is our newest VSU. Initially, this unit houses up to 60 Inmate Veterans with the potential to expand capacity.

Judiciary Committee (Continued)



	Total Released	Recidivism Rate
Dallas	141	25
Houtzdale	99	2
Mercer	83	7
Muncy	6	0
Phoenix	8	0
Totals	337	34
Recidivism Percentage		10%

Judiciary Committee (Continued)

Department of Veterans Affairs Compensation Service Guidance for Medical Disability Examination Program Office (MDEPO) Compensation and Pension (C&P) Examination Scheduling for Incarcerated Veterans

Those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces are entitled to file a claim for benefits for disability compensation they feel they may be entitled to due to injuries or illnesses that were incurred in, or caused by, their military service. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a duty to assist Veterans who are seeking to obtain evidence that will further substantiate their claim for disability compensation per 38 U.S.C. 5103a. The VA has developed procedures to ensure our guidance complies with the terms of a Veteran's confinement and allows incarcerated Veterans to receive the same level of care and consideration given to fellow Veterans. The VA is required to make every effort to afford incarcerated Veterans with a C&P examination when considered necessary by the VA Regional Office (RO). Previously, VA was required to conduct these examinations exclusively by providers who worked for the VA. Often, this required the Veteran to be transported to the VA facility, incurring transportation and security costs. In April 2018, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) MDEPO began allowing contract vendors to provide these examinations. MDEPO has contracted with four (4) contract vendors who are authorized to conduct C&P examinations on VA's behalf. The current contract vendors are:

- Logistics Health Incorporated (LHI)
- Quality Timeliness Customer Service (QTC)
- Veterans Evaluation Services (VES)
- VetFed Resources, Inc. (VetFed)

The VBA contract vendors will coordinate the C&P examination scheduling with the designated point of contact (POC) from each Federal or State correctional facility. These exams may consist of an interview with the Veteran, a review of the medical records, and in some instances new diagnostic and evaluation testing. At the time of scheduling, the contract vendors will determine the appropriate methods for the examination. One of the following methods will be used:

- Acceptable Clinical Evidence (ACE) evaluation through review of medical records by a VBA contract vendor examiner.
- Video teleconference with incarcerated Veterans and VBA contract vendor examiner.
- In person examination at the correctional facility by an examiner who works for the VBA contract vendor.

Important Notes: The VA will seek to obtain informed consent from the Veteran and assistance from the correctional facilities when requesting applicable documents that will be utilized during the examination process.

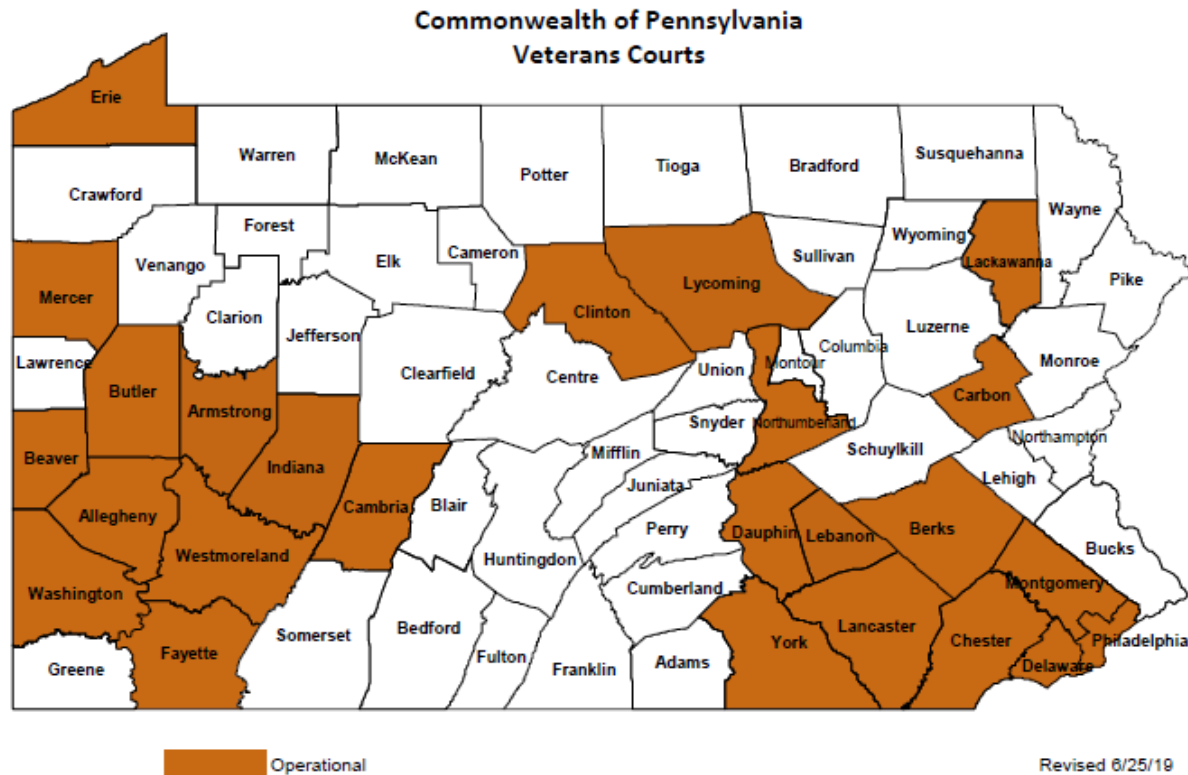
Judiciary Committee (Continued)

Department of Veterans Affairs Compensation Service Guidance for Medical Disability Examination Program Office (MDEPO) Compensation and Pension (C&P) Examination Scheduling for Incarcerated Veterans

PROCEDURE FOR SCHEDULING C&P EXAMINATIONS:

1. Veteran files a claim for VA benefits, and the RO decides a C&P examination is required.
2. RO Exam Liaison sends a request to a VBA contract vendor to schedule an examination(s) for the incarcerated Veteran.
3. The VBA contract vendor will contact the Department of Corrections (DOC) or Bureau of Prisons (BOP) point of contact (POC). *Each individual state will need to determine their DOC point(s) of contact for incarcerated Veteran exams.* RO Exam Liaisons may contact their local resources if the contract vendor is unable to determine the appropriate DOC or BOP POC.
4. If an ACE evaluation is deemed appropriate, the VBA contract vendor will contact the appropriate DOC or BOP POC and:
 - seek to obtain paperwork necessary to release prison medical records for VBA contract examiner review.
 - coordinate any necessary phone contact with the Veteran.
5. If a video teleconference is deemed appropriate:
 - seek to obtain paperwork necessary to release prison medical records for VBA contract examiner review.
 - schedule a video teleconference with the appropriate DOC or BOP POC.
6. If the incarcerated Veteran will be examined at the correctional facility, the contract vendor will coordinate the following with the DOC or BOP POC:
 - Complete paperwork that allows the VBA contract examiner to enter the correction facility.
 - Obtain paperwork necessary to release prison medical records for VBA contract examiner review.
 - Determine if the Veteran will need to have physical contact with the examiner during the examination.
 - Determine if any equipment is required for the examination and seek approval to utilize the correctional facility equipment or bring in equipment (goniometer etc.). If diagnostic equipment is unavailable, a review of the medical records will be conducted to determine if recent diagnostics are sufficient.
7. After the VBA contract vendor schedules the C&P examination; the contract vendor will mail a notification letter to the Veteran.
8. Once approved for an in-person examination or a video teleconference examination, the contract examiner will confirm the appointment(s) with the proper DOC or BOP POC the day before the examination, and before the examiner leaves for the correctional facility.

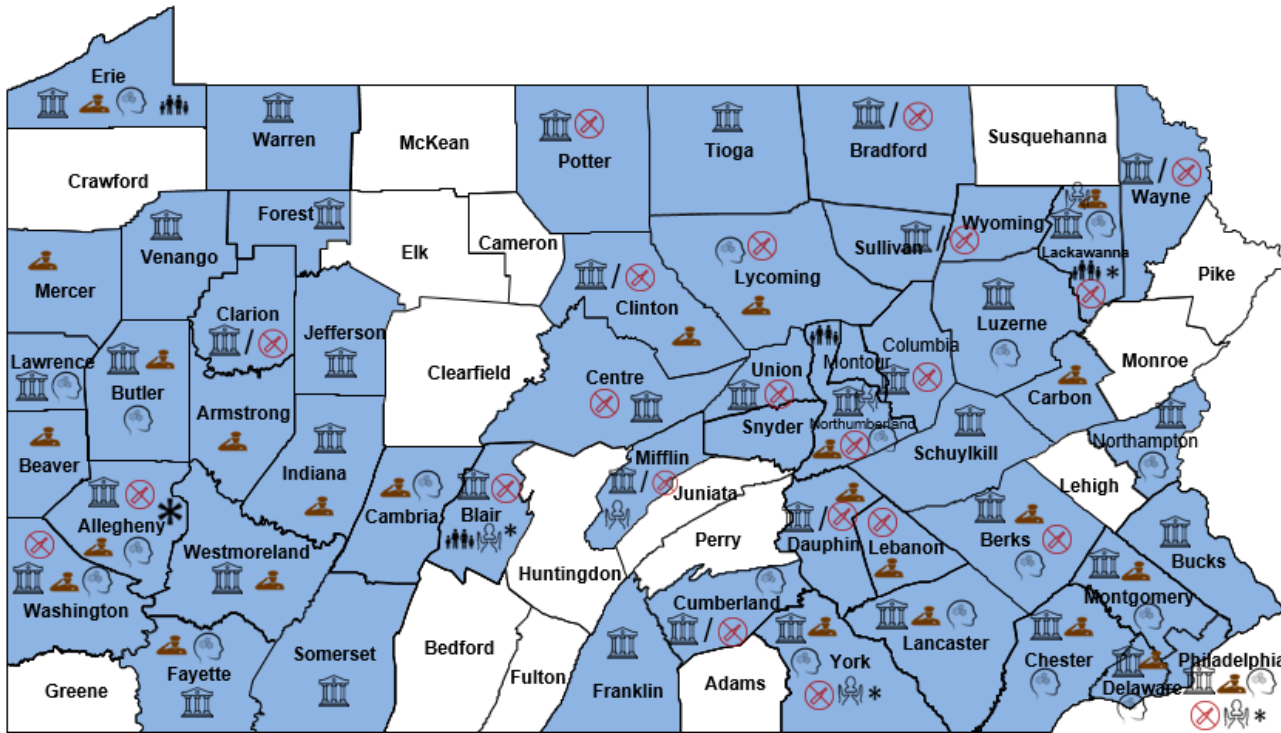
5 new Veterans Treatment Courts (VTCs) were added in the past year bringing the total to **25** VTCs statewide.



“As Americans, we owe a debt of gratitude to our military veterans. Veterans Courts help veterans by combining treatment and personal accountability, with the goal of breaking the cycle of addiction and criminal behavior.”

Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd

As of September 2019, 51 of 67 counties (76%) currently have a treatment court. This total is expected to grow in 2020.



If eligible for the respective program, veterans will participate in other existing treatment courts if a VTC is not available in a particular county.

- Have Problem Solving Courts
- Adult Drug Court
- Veterans Court
- DUI Court
- Adult Drug/DUI Hybrid Court
- Adult Mental Health Court
- Family Drug Court
- Juvenile Drug Court
- * Other Problem Solving Court

In September 2019, the 1st ever Veteran Mentor Boot Camp was held in Pennsylvania!



98
Year
Old
WWII
VTC
Mentor
!

403

Total number of veterans who graduated successfully from a veterans treatment court during a 2-year period from 2017-2018.

Technology Committee

Ms. Sandra Patterson
Chair

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

Name	Affiliation
Tim Irvin	DMVA – IT Director DMVA
Richard Hamp	DMVA – Special Assistant to Deputy Adjutant General of Veteran Affairs
Brian Natali	DMVA
Eric Felty	DMVA – Project Manager
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
Jason Swarthout	Office of Administration

Committee Purpose



Committee Purpose

To support GAC-VS sub-committees as requested to help facilitate business needs with potential IT solutions

Veterans Registry Statistics

Time frame	Counts
10/23/2015 to 12/31/2015	237
01/01/2016 to 12/31/2016	5439
01/01/2017 to 12/31/2017	5624
01/01/2018 to 12/31/2018	6401
01/01/2019 to 10/02/2019	7672
Total as of 10/2/2019	25,373

Accomplishments

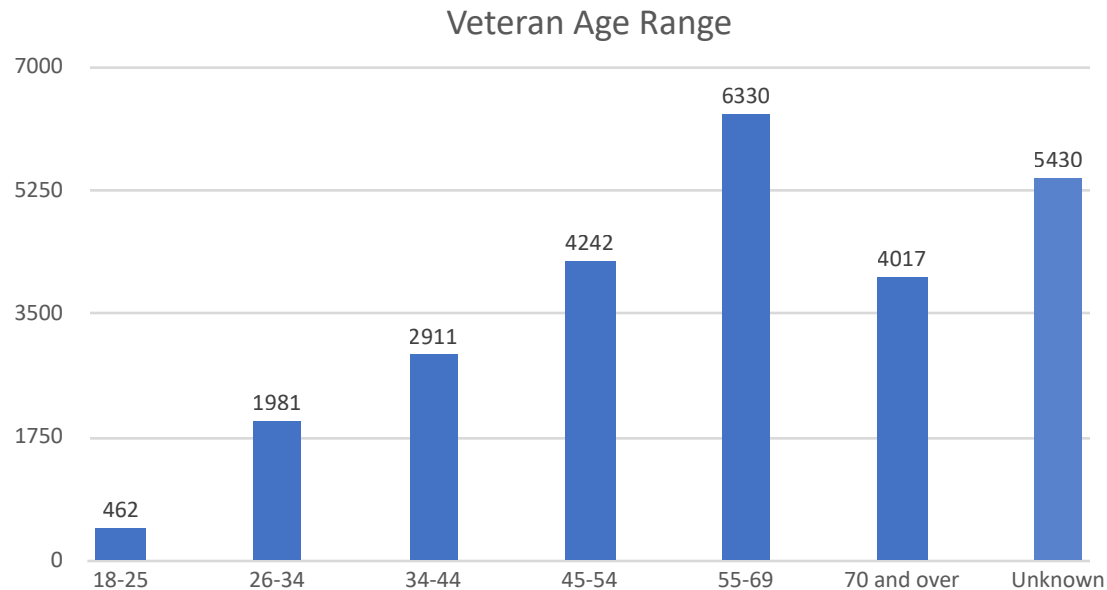
- Act 69 implementation – Go-live 02/2019
- Reporting capabilities
- Upload discharge documents
- Link to voters' registration

Projects in Process

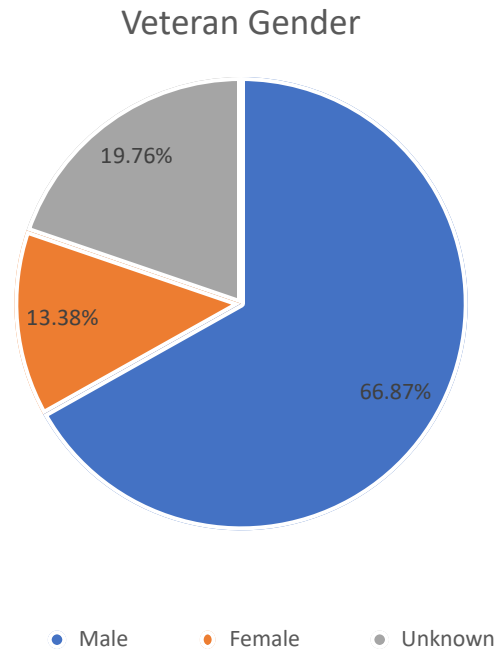
- Voter Registration - We continue to work with Dept of State and engage our website vendor to automate voters' registration from the Veterans Registry.
- Regionalization – DMVA Application Development Team continues to support this initiative with the development of an “one stop shop for veteran services”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

PA  VETCONNECT

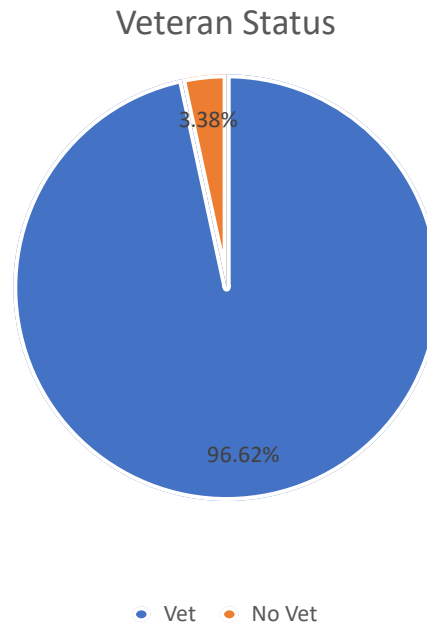
Metric 1 – Veterans Age Range



Metric 2 – Veteran Gender

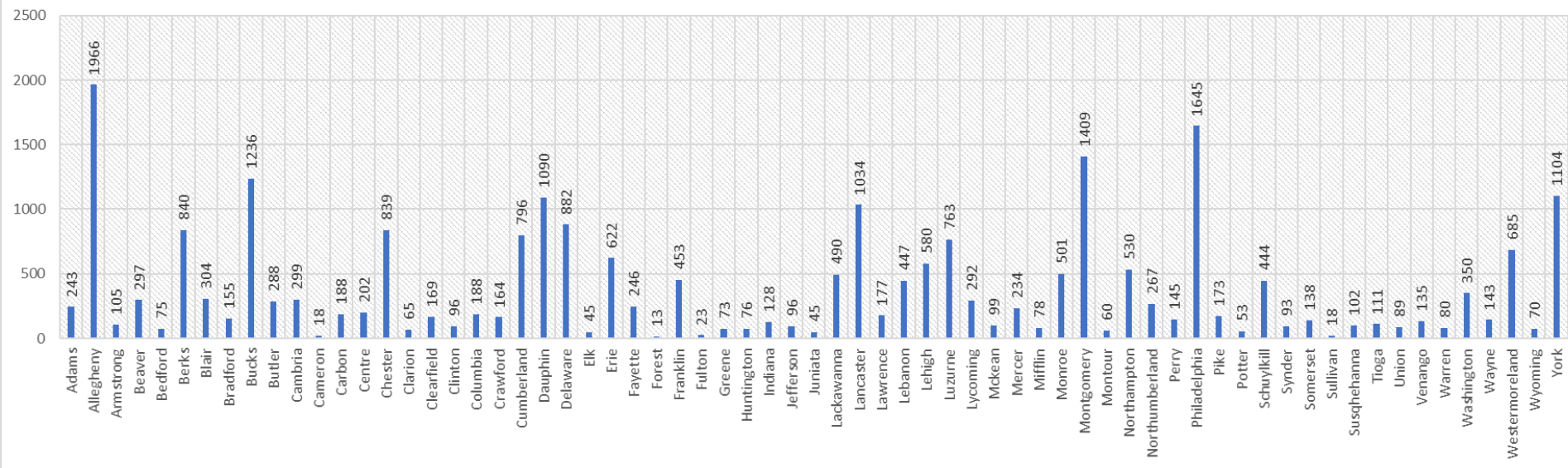


Metric 3 – Veteran Status



Metric 4 – Registered Veterans per County

Registrants per County



*Note – Number of Veterans with County Unknown is 509

➤ Executive Order Update

- Focuses coordinated efforts at the county and regional level
- Establishes that GAC-VS meetings will be quarterly and in each DMVA designated region
- Report findings will be handled through the Adjutant General to the Governor
- “Committees” added; chairperson will report on quarterly basis to the Council
- “Compensation” added; members of the commission, who are not Commonwealth employees shall receive no compensation for their services but shall receive reimbursement for their necessary and proper expenses for attendance at meetings
- Adds the following offices/agencies under composition:
 - Governor’s Policy Office
 - Dept of Aging
 - Dept of Agriculture
 - Dept of Banking and Securities
 - Dept of Community and Economic Development
 - Dept of Conservation and Natural Resources
 - Dept of Health
 - Dept of Human Services
 - Dept of Transportation
 - Office of Administration
 - Fish and Boat Commission
 - PA Council on the Arts

➤ **Questions/Remarks**

➤ **Next meeting:**

Wednesday, February 19, 2020 at

**Arrowhead's Community Club
Bldg 9-65, Fort Indiantown Gap**