

**Meeting of Veterans' Wellness Work Group, December 6, 2023, via Zoom
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.**

Persons present:

Melanie Lachman, Tallahassee Senior Center
Nancy O'Farrell, NAMI Tallahassee
Gabriel Trollinger, Family Promise of the Big Bend, SSVF
Randy Soule USAF Retired
Cindy Foster, NAMI Tallahassee
Derrick Sykes (Veterans Liaison @ Big Bend Hospice)
Barry Walker, American Legion
Rodney, American Legion
Kenny Nwoko, Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist
Florida Department of Commerce at CareerSource Capital Region
Matt Guse 211 Big Bend

After a review of the agenda, the group discussed items 1 and 3 of the Action Plan, with the following input. At the conclusion of the meeting, Rodney volunteered to work with the committee on Item 1; Gabriel volunteered to work with both 1 and 3; and Randy volunteered to work on 3.

A brief discussion was held regarding rotating our meeting places to other venues in the community. The January 3 meeting will be held at the American Legion building, while Family Promise is a possibility for February, and the Florida Vets Foundation offices in the Capitol for March (Barry offered to facilitate this one).

ACTION PLAN ITEMS, WITH GOALS:

1. Creating a handout with Veteran specific resources

- Karen Baur shared a resource booklet created by AMVETS in 2022-how often is updated/ who is responsible for updating? Gordon Lightfoot with AmVets updates at least once a year. Currently not online. To get the booklet, email AmVets, Post 1776, amvetstallahassee@gmail.com. (Melanie offered that Sr. Center has a vets resource that she can share. This is updated as needed. Will check to see if it's online.)
- What services are actually offered for Veterans from each agency and what is the funding source? 1. Reach out to all agencies in the Coalition and ask this

question. 2. Do you have adequate funding, or do you need more? 3. Are you trying to provide services with volunteers only? 4. What services do you think you need to offer? Realistic = create a brief questionnaire and send to agencies. Follow-up = committee analyzes questionnaire answers.

- What type of resource list for Veterans does 211 Big Bend have? Matt Guse, CEO, 211 Big Bend, has shared their current resource list. Suggestion is to work with Matt on this. Spreadsheet is attached.
- How can we as a coalition help keep resource list updated? 1. Form an update committee charged with updating quarterly, semi-annually, or other? 2. Request resource lists if they exist from all coalition members, and make a master list.
- Website compiled by the Commanders Coalition (Edward Hood)- could we use this to help us create ours? 1. Ask American Legion if we could add a landing page to their website. 2. If so, can a committee create a landing page? 3. What should be on the landing page? A. Resource guide that we create. 4. Be the One: Point of contact, with brief description.
- Idea for the coalition be a POC for resources, ie website, maintaining list

3. Utilize peer support to help bridge gaps between care

- Are the hospitals identifying who the Veterans are? 1. Do they ask? 2. What do they do with the information? 3. Are they willing the numbers (not the identities) with the coalition? 4. Are they willing to hand a vet a card with resources?

- What Hospitals are the Veterans going to? Bond, Neighborhood Services, HCA, TMH, Apalachee, CarePoint, South Ga. Medical Center. Check with Apalachee Mobile Response Team to see if they gather any data. Kearney Center, Ability 1st, LCSO HOST (Homeless Outreach Street Team).
- Need to gather data for number of Veterans being seen – depends on hospitals' willingness to share. Would data best be found with the Billing Department? How about social workers?
- Can we incentivize hospitals to capture this information as a means to help ensure payment via VA if the service is covered? We can ask, but they are probably already asking that. IDEA: Put the info on the resource page so vets know how to do this when they go to the hospital.
- Utilizing the Ask The Question to help the organizations in communities understand the why of asking if someone has served. What do they do with that information? This is where the resource guide could be utilized. 1. Start with a couple of agencies – Ability 1st and the Kearney Center. Ask the question; share the resource list IF they indicate they will ask the question.