

**MN Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Care Advisory Council Monthly Meeting Minutes April 21, 2009**

**Council Members Present:** Kathryn Roberts, Chair; James Birchem; Diane Windham; Michael Tripple; Dr. Kenneth Hughes; Brad Bennett; Julie Eszlinger-Jensen; Ronald Sanford

**Council Members Absent:** Tom Mullon

**MDVA Staff Present:** Clark Dyrud, Gilbert Acevedo, Anna Long, Robin Gaustad, Everette Wright, Pam Barrows, Jon Skillingstad, Charles Cox, Patty Ryan

Meeting was called to order at 1:35pm and adjourned at 3:30pm.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>
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**Welcoming Remarks**

<b>Chair Roberts</b>	Chair Roberts called the meeting to order at 1:35pm.	
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<b>Commissioner Dyrud</b>	Commissioner Dyrud welcomed everyone and thanked them for being there and gave a few brief opening announcements.	
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<b>Deputy Commissioner Acevedo</b>	Deputy Commissioner Gilbert Acevedo also welcome the Council and guests. He briefly explained that Robin Gaustad, Quality Assurance Director for the Department, would be presenting Quality Initiatives and Updates and Everette Wright, Facilities Director for the Department, would be presenting Construction Project Updates.	
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## MN Department of Veterans Affairs

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**Robin Gaustad,  
Director of Quality  
Assurance**

Robin presented to the Council the new Quality Strategic Plan and the newly chartered Quality Leadership Council. She also shared information from EQUIP and Pinnacle, two contracted companies that are providing comparative surveys. EQUIP compares our quality indicators to not only other long-term care facilities but also other Veterans Homes around the country. Pinnacle does satisfaction surveys for the homes, they survey residents, family members and staff.

**Everette Wright,  
Facilities Director**

Everette presented to the Council the many different construction projects going on at all 5 homes.

**MN Veterans Homes  
Updates**

**Deputy  
Commissioner  
Acevedo**

MVH- Minneapolis

The Minneapolis Home has been busy preparing for the demolition and new building 9. The process has been slowed by the Historical Society but is coming along. The new building will house 100 nursing home beds. There is still much discussion on the Domiciliary population and how to best serve them in the future. Both the MN Department of Health and the US Department of Veterans Affairs surveys have recently been completed and the home did well on both. There is still no word from CRIPA on their survey but they did say it might be several months before they had an official report. The campus is also undergoing some security upgrades.

MVH- Luverne

The Luverne home is using a Real Time Location System (RTLS). The RTLS is an electronic system that tracks residents, staff and equipment so they are all easily located.

MVH- Fergus Falls

Fergus Falls has recently been awarded a Federal grant for a new Alzheimer's Unit. This is a result of the Federal Stimulus Package - ARRA America's Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 which provided additional funding to the Federal VA's State Veterans Homes Programs.

MVH- Silver Bay

The Silver Bay renovation has begun!

MVH- Hastings

The Hastings home will be hosting a ground breaking ceremony some time in June for their new Supportive Housing Project.

Patty will send out info on the ground breaking once it is scheduled.

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**Other Updates**

The Central Office has recently received the preliminary report of the Metro Site Study and the Statewide Site Study is currently under way.

**Comments/  
Recommendations**

**CMS Certification**

Deputy Commissioner Acevedo asked the Council Members for their thoughts a bill being pushed by the Senate's Health and Human Services Committee. The Committee is trying to pass legislation that would require the Veterans Homes become CMS certified in some cases as soon as July of this year.

The Council discussed the many different pros and cons of this legislation. The Homes have been working on a CMS Feasibility Study and are in the process of choosing a contractor to conduct this study. The Council feels that it would be in the best interest of all parties if this legislation were to wait until the completion of this study to determine the cost benefits, if any.

Council Member Jim Birchem made a motion for the Advisory Council to write a letter to the Health and Human Services Committee in support of postponing the CMS certification until the feasibility study is completed. Council Member Julie Eszlinger-Jensen seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Roberts and Deputy Commissioner Acevedo will put together a rough draft and send it out to all Council Members for approval.

**Wrap-Up**

Chair Roberts commented on the wonderful things the Department is doing with the Quality Program. The information presented by Robin Gaustad was remarkable.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 20 at the Veterans Home in Fergus Falls.