

MN Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Care Advisory Council Monthly Meeting minutes September 23, 2008

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

MDVA Staff Present: Clark Dyrud, Gilbert Acevedo, Christine Kiel, Dennis Devereaux, Kim Lechner

Meeting was called to order at 1:38pm and adjourned at 3:38pm.

Subject	Discussion	Follow Up
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Welcoming Remarks

Chair Roberts	Chair Roberts called the meeting to order. She commented on a meeting that she recently attended regarding the next generation and how important it is to foresee what services this generation will be expecting. A booklet, "A Voice of the Silent Generation" was passed around the group to view. Chair Roberts stated that she will share a checklist of preparedness for this generation when it is available.	
Commissioner Dyrud	Commissioner Dyrud welcomed everyone and thanked them for being there.	
Deputy Commissioner Acevedo	Deputy Commissioner Acevedo reminded the Council that they are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses and they should contact Patty Ryan, Sherry Kromschroeder or Deputy Commissioner Acevedo at the MN DVA Central Office with questions.	

MN Veterans Homes Updates

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MVH- Minneapolis

**Deputy
Commissioner
Acevedo**

Deputy Commissioner Acevedo stated that they are continuing their search for an administrator for the Minneapolis campus. It has been a challenging task. A nationwide search was conducted, the position has been posted on the National Association of Stave Veterans Homes Association (NASVHA) web page, and a list of all MN licensed administrators was purchased and a mailing sent to them. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo explained that the salary level has been the problem, along with the high risk and exposure to the media, legislature etc. Council member Mullon asked if a waiver of state salary cap was possible. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo explained that this was discussed with the Department of Administration but no changes were foreseen. The current salary cap for this position is \$106,000 with full benefits. Commissioner Dyrud stated that he will be going before several committees in January and he hopes to bring this situation forward.

Chair Roberts proposed the Council submit a letter recommending a salary exception, all council members agreed.

MVH- Minneapolis

Deputy Commissioner Acevedo stated that the Minneapolis Home has done well on recent surveys. All correction orders have been cleared. They are due for their annual VA survey. The legislative auditors, which do a financial audit, have recently completed an audit of the home but the report has not been released yet. The monitoring is going well and includes a great deal of education. He also credited Jill Smith for doing an excellent job with the nursing staff. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo stated they will soon be demolishing Bldg 9 and will likely rebuild a state-of-the-art building that will be less institutional looking. They have received the 1/3 match but will not know if they have been awarded the 2/3 until October. They are currently in the informal solicitation process for a study of the best locations for future homes. Council member Dr. Hughes commented that all the public relations has been negative and there has been no focus on the positive. He also felt that more medical groups should be invited to participate with the homes.

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- MVH-Minneapolis The Department of Justice, Civil Rights for Institutional Persons Act (CRIPA), who monitors news media, self-reported incidents, fines etc. will be coming to the Minneapolis home to conduct their own investigation. The investigation will be care focused and they will be looking for any civil rights violations. they will be reviewing information back to 2006 and looking for patterns. Patty will e-mail out the website for CRIPA.
- MVH- Luverne The Luverne home recently held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their new addition. They have received notice confirming that the 2/3 grant has been awarded.
- MVH- Fergus Falls The Fergus Falls home recently completed a couple of projects including carpet replacement and fencing around the facility. They have also completed their Special Care Unit.
- MVH- Silver Bay The Silver Bay home currently has a project to give the building a more home-like environment, with an increase in privacy.
- MVH- Hastings The Hastings home has a Supportive Housing Project in which they will provide meals and medical support for a 60-unit apartment building.
- Other Updates Deputy Commissioner Acevedo distributed the MVH Statistical Report. Several Council members asked what the US DVA Groups were. Commissioner Dyrud explained that the numbers 1-8 determined the care level at the VAMC that a veteran would receive. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo clarified that this number is not related to per diems, which are determined by the level of care (domiciliary, skilled nursing care, adult day care etc). Deputy Commissioner Acevedo also reported that the final stage of strategic planning will be October 19-22. Patty will e-mail out US DVA Priority Group information.
- Comments/
Recommendations**
- The strategic direction of the MN Veterans Homes is to move away from traditional and become less institutional and more home-like, with increased levels of care. Patty will e-mail out the pre-design for the proposed new Bldg 9.
- Future possibilities also include the renovation of Bldg 17 on the Minneapolis campus, and/or build a 100-bed facility on the grounds.

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A council member asked if Adult Day Care was a possibility. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo explained that the VAMC has toured the Mpls campus for a possible partnership but no further discussion has occurred. There is a proposal for renovation of one of the buildings on the Mpls campus to create an Adult Day Care that is currently on a waiting list at the federal level.

Council member Dr. Hughes suggested looking into a number of items. The geographic distribution of services, the demographics of the future, what changes would make the homes functions, what makes people comfortable, and the possible integration with the larger medical community.

A council member commented that the org chart should reflect who is responsible for the development of new programs (i.e. culture change). Deputy Commissioner Acevedo stated that programs such as that would be developed at the Central Office level.

A council member questioned if the federal VA was looking to the future. Deputy Commissioner Acevedo stated yes, and that the VA was looking toward home care, telemedicine, hospice care etc. The VA currently does not have many medium-level care options. He also stated that the VA is heavily invested in culture change, nationwide the US VA has received a 10% increase in their budgets for culture change.

As a final thought to the future Chair Roberts stated that the more alternatives to care, the better it is for the veterans.

MVH- Minneapolis
Organizational chart

Wrap-Up

Deputy Commissioner Acevedo thanked MVH- Hastings for hosting this meeting.

Commissioner Dyrud spoke briefly about a recent incident that occurred at the Hastings home and that the staff handled the situation very well.

Next Meeting

The Council members decided that the Veterans Health Care Advisory Council will meet quarterly, possibly on the third Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held in January 2009, on the 5th floor of the Central Office building.