

DATE: November 10, 2015

LEADER: Ben Maas

TIME: 4:00-6:00 p.m.

RECORDER: Lisa Gjerde

| COUNCIL MEMBERS | | | LIAISON MEMBERS | | | GUESTS |
|-----------------|---|---|-----------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Name | P | A | Name | P | A | Name |
| Caroline Beise | √ | | Alene Chelman | √ | | Dan Tengwall, Veterans' Services |
| Sam Deweese | √ | | Melissa Hanson | √ | | |
| Lisa Gjerde | √ | | Gary Norman | √ | | |
| Lisa Inman | √ | | | | | |
| Sue Kunitz | √ | | | | | |
| Becky Maas | | √ | | | | |
| Ben Maas | √ | | | | | |
| Rod Sawtell | √ | | | | | |
| Twyla Sawtell | √ | | | | | |
| Becky Sorenson | √ | | | | | |
| Eddie Tipton | √ | | | | | |
| Virginia Wright | √ | | | | | |

| Agenda | Activity/Discussion | Decision/Action |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Call to Order | Ben called the meeting to order. | Approved by consensus. |
| Approve November agenda | Ben announced that the guest speaker would be late, so he moved to amend the agenda accordingly. Sam seconded. | Approved by consensus. |
| Approve October minutes | Ben made the motion to approve the October minutes; Lisa I. seconded. | Approved by consensus. |

Roundtable Discussion

Ben announced that he will be moving to Willmar, MN, January 1, 2016, and thus will be resigning from the LAC. The group will need to consider if elections should be held, or if an interim chair should be selected.

Guest Speaker, Dan Tengwall, Veterans' Services Officer

Some background information:

- 1. The state has mandated that every county have at least one veterans' services officer.
- 2. Prior to his post in Waconia, Dan worked in the same capacity for Hennepin County; before that he was a veterans' advocate for 8 years.
- 3. Dan is also active in the Carver County Veterans' Council, a rehabilitation program for veterans who are convicted of crimes.
- 4. Dan's job is to help veterans and their families determine for what benefits and/or compensation they might be eligible.

VA Choice Act:

- 1. Veterans shouldn't have to wait more than 30 days for an appointment or drive more than 40 miles.
- 2. Dan said he could connect us to the coordinator of the Choice program in the county to ask questions regarding how we can honor the Choice Act in Carver County.

VA compensation:

- 1. Let's say, for example, the VA doesn't recognize a veteran's mental health issue as a condition due to military service. Dan helps to look for evidence to support the veteran's claims.
- 2. There is a Community Based Outreach Clinic in Shakopee, with 3 mental health providers.

4 Basic Ways to Get Help from the VA:

- 1. Been active duty within last 5 years (any condition).
- 2. Boots on Ground in Vietnam (Agent Orange).
- 3. Low income (less than \$30,000). No longer determined by assets.
- 4. A service-connected disability.

Guest Speaker Q&A

Who is eligible for a VA pension?

Age 65 or older; receiving Social Security; in a nursing home; a war-time veteran; or earning less than \$80,000/year.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Guest Speaker Q&A cont.</p> | <p>Is healthcare accessible to veterans? Obama Care program has made it easier to access healthcare. A 65-year-old veteran needs to meet eligibility requirements to receive VA insurance (see p. 2). Because of the 8 priorities for VA service, eligibility is often transparent and thus it is difficult for the VA to say no. It often takes time for veterans to seek help for mental health services because they might think their “hyper vigilance” is “normal.”</p> <p>Does type of discharge affect benefits? Yes, but most veterans receive an honorable discharge. Medical discharges are equally honorable.</p> <p>Do veterans need to notify VA about residency changes? Yes, they need to update the VA and Dan’s office. Dan works with Sue Worley, a veteran’s technician, and Paul Thorn, who is active in the veterans’ court. On a similar vein, veterans should keep all their records. Dan referred to this as “Positive Control,” empowering the client to be as independent as possible.</p> <p>Is there a veterans’ retirement program? Yes, there is a pension scheme, independent of Social Security, that veterans are eligible for when they are 59 ½ years old. Also, at this age, they receive Tri-Care, a world-wide medical insurance plan.</p> <p>What unmet (mental health) needs are identified among veterans? Dan said it’s helpful to have an overall understanding of conditions and their symptoms.</p> <p>What advice would Dan give to a young person considering going into the military? You are in control of your own career, including all your medical records. Be sure to stay on top of your records!</p> | |
| <p>Roundtable Discussion Cont.</p> | <p>Continued discussion regarding veterans’ topics: There are no drop-in centers for veterans, other than the Scott County counseling center. Mental health needs, especially regarding Substance Use Disorders, are often not being met. Sam said National Guard members are not considered veterans and therefore not eligible for VA benefits. Eddie said the military does provide a psychological screening prior to admission to the military, unless there is a blanket waiver due to war-time (or other circumstances). Lisa I. said that the Navy’s Sea Cadets wouldn’t allow people to join if they’re taking any psychiatric medications. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</p> | |

Roundtable cont.

Is a retrospective disorder, often developing years after the traumatic incident occurred. Gary said the veterans' court, which is a diversion court in which offenders choose treatment over jail time, is a 15-18 month program and has had 2 graduates so far. It is not for felonies; 95% of offenders have chemical health related incidents, such as DUI's, theft, disorderly conduct, etc.

Lisa G. presented information on stigma that she learned from the Twin Cities Jewish Community's 15th Annual Conference on Mental Health, Nov. 8th. She discussed the six different types of stigma: self; family and friends; employers; medical professionals; media; and government.

Eddie talked about what he learned at the same conference, particularly the session on guilt. There are a lot of things that teach people how to feel guilty; parents should not make their kids feel guilty.

Sam noted that recent articles in the StarTribune regarding sheltered workshops and group homes have been rather negative. Lisa I. talked about "employment purgatory" – when someone with a disability is unable to advance in the workplace and/or have a career because of said disability.

Ben asked what can be done to help kids who "fall through the cracks" in the mental health system and cannot find someone willing to foster them. Virginia said a potential foster parent should consider the child's age and educate one's self about the child's diagnosis first. Also, it's critical to make sure the (in-home) therapist knows the child's situation. Finally, judges need to be more firm in their decisions.

AMHI Grant – Unmet Needs

Melissa asked the LAC to consider gaps in mental health services/unmet needs for the Adult Mental Health Initiative Grant. DHS needs to report to the state legislature every two years to show how the grant monies are being used and what those outcomes are. (AMHI and Crisis are separate grants.)

Areas that need more help include: housing subsidies; employment services; client flex funds; and transportation. Ben noted that assistance should be given to help clients navigate the healthcare system. Another need continues to be client outreach/activities. Lisa I. and Ben both brought up the waiting list at First Street Center for appointments for therapy and medication management. It's also important to look at having more psychiatric beds and staff.

Gary mentioned that Carver County is generally conservative, and county administrator Dave Hemse needs to approve every new (county) position. The Commissioners supervise the administrator. Also,

