

**Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)  
National Advisory Committee (NAC) Executive Committee (EC) Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 3, 2021 - 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST**

**Call to Order:** Mary Morgan, National Representative, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks (BPOE), Executive Committee (EC) Chairperson, and Chair NAC EC Membership Subcommittee, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

**Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance:** Charles Gallina, Knights of Columbus (KofC), gave the invocation, and Ron Rolfes, Forty and Eight (40&8), led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Todd Desgrosseilliers, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF) and EC Vice Chairperson, performed the roll call. EC attendance was duly recorded as follows:

	<b><u>Present (P)/ Absent (A)</u></b>	
American Gold Star Mothers	P	
American Legion	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary	P	
BPOE	P	
Corporation for National and Community Service		A
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Fleet Reserve Association		A
Home of the Brave	P	
Improved and BPOE of the World, Inc.	P	
Knights of Columbus	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	P	
Military Women Across the Nation	P	
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
National Society Sons of the American Revolution		A
Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc.	P	
Sons of the American Legion	P	
United Veterans Services	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW)	P	
VFW Auxiliary	P	

**VA Staff:**

Sabrina C. Clark, Ph.D., Director, VA Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDCE), VA Central Office (VACO), Designated Federal Officer, NAC

Prince Taylor, Deputy Director, CDCE VACO

Mary Barcikowski, Administrative Officer/NAC Meeting Planner, CDCE VACO

Virginia "Ginny" Hoover, Voluntary Service Specialist, CDCE VACO

Sanitria McKenzie, Program Specialist, CDCE VACO

CarolAnn Miragliuolo, Senior Advisor, CDCE VACO

Tyrone Green, Voluntary Service Specialist, CDCE VACO

Kevin Stanford, Outreach Coordinator, CDCE VACO

Nathan "Nate" Witt, Voluntary Service Specialist, CDCE VACO

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William "Bill" Ball, Chief, Palo Alto Health Care System/CDCE VACO

Jeffrey Moragne, Director, Advisory Committee Management Office, Office of the Secretary

Elizabeth Cazares, Assistant Chief, CDCE/NAC Meeting Planner, South Texas Veterans' Health Care System

Mike Davis, Attorney, Office of General Counsel

Tammy Finney, MSN, RN, CWC, Chief, Community Relations & Engagement/VISN 7 CDCE Liaison, Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center

Melissa Heinlein-Storti, Chief, Chief, Center for Development and Civic Engagement, Corporal Michael J. Crescenzo Veterans Affairs Medical Center, NAC EC Partnership Subcommittee

Lelia Jackson, Director, Assault and Harassment, Prevention Office

Karen O'Neal, Chief, Voluntary Service, Erie VA Medical Center and Co-Chair, NAC EC Partnership Subcommittee

Kimber Parry, LCSW, Population Scientist, Veterans Rural Health Resource Center

Suzanne "Suzy" Shirley, Director, Community Engagement, VHA Innovation Ecosystem

#### **Other Attendees:**

Charles Gallina, Chair, NAC EC Volunteer of the Year Subcommittee, KofC

Lawrence Kelly, Treasurer, VAVS Partners, Inc., PHWFF

Patricia Kranzow, NAC EC Standard Operating Procedure, American Legion Auxiliary

Joseph McClain, Chief Executive Officer, Help Heal Veterans

Anne Parker, Chair, NAC EC Recommendations Subcommittee, Blue Star Mothers of America

Ron Rolfes, Co-Chair, NAC EC Partnership Subcommittee, Forty and Eight

Vicki Sarracino, Chair, NAC EC Recruitment Subcommittee, Soldiers' Angels

#### **Opening Remarks:**

Chairperson Morgan opened the meeting hoping that everyone can step away informed and engaged. She is impressed with the wealth of knowledge and experience on this committee and hopes everyone feels welcomed. Dr. Clark thanked everyone for taking this virtual opportunity to join this meeting.

Chairperson Morgan asked how many VA facilities have made the transition from Voluntary Service to CDCE. Dr. Clark expressed a need to survey the field to see who has made this transition. This information will be shared once received. She did share that not all offices have, nor will make this transition. These offices are unique and have an overall umbrella which may include other departments, such as public affairs, community relations, patient advocates, and other offices.

**Office of Innovation Ecosystem:** Suzy Shirley shared that VHA Innovation Ecosystem (VHA IE) is the catalyst for enabling the discovery and spread of mission-driven health care innovation to advance care delivery and service that exceeds expectations, restores hope, and builds trust with the Veteran community. As part of the VHA Office of

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Discovery, Education and Affiliate Networks (DEAN), VHA IE leverages the collective power of innovation champions from across VA, academia, non-profit and industry to operationalize innovation in the nation's largest integrated health care system. She is excited to work with CDCE to design and develop new ideas, new innovative products, or processes. One of the most popular programs that come out of the VHA IE office, is the Shark Tank competition where our own Lori Murphy, from the Compassionate Contact Corps, won the "People Choice Award." VHA IE is moving forward to support our Vet Centers Shark Tank in the next couple of months. This will help identify needs and promote positive outcomes and Veteran experiences.

**Legal Update: Gifts & Donations:** Mike Davis introduced himself and let the group know that he supports CDCE with legal guidance regarding gifts and donations. He shared that General Post Funds are to be considered congressionally appropriated funds that carries the power of the purse from Congress, and it can't be utilized as a slush fund. As an example, he explained that funds cannot be used to support the individual Veteran with things like rent. He advocated that this type of request should be worked out through partnerships with local organizations.

**Shark Tank Competition:** Dr. Clark shared the video of Lori Murphy's Compassionate Contact Corps award-winning Shark Tank.

**Office of Rural Health:** Kimber Parry explained the Office of Rural Health's partnerships from the perspective of the Rural Veteran Wellness and Community Engagement Initiative. She shared the background and gave a brief history of her team and how they became involved. The Rural Veteran Wellness and Community Engagement Initiative will collaborate with community organizations to implement volunteer activities in rural areas. If you're interested in learning more, or if you'd like to brainstorm ideas about how your organization could potentially be involved, feel free to contact Kimber Parry at Kimber.Parry@va.gov.

**VHA Health Care Talent Academy:** Tammy Finney provided a brief overview and re-introduction of CDCE and information regarding the Megabus legislation that is authorizing us to provide shadowing and observation opportunities for volunteers. The legislation targets increased awareness, knowledge, and empathy for future health care professionals as they are looking toward healthcare professions serving Veterans. This legislation also gives us an opportunity to increase diversity of the recruitment pool for future physicians and other health care professionals through coordination with historically black colleges and universities and underserved populations. The language in the legislation is that it requires the VA Secretary to carry out a pilot program for a year and this will begin no later than August 15, 2022. The six host facilities selected are:

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Columbia, South Carolina
- Columbia, Missouri
- Albuquerque, New Mexico

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- Fresno, California
- Washington, D.C.

We look forward to sharing information on this pilot.

**ACMO Update:** Jeffrey Moragne expressed his gratitude to the committee for their coming support and shared that the NAC Executive Committee's leadership role is paramount to the success of the NAC. He advised the group to continue developing smart recommendations that go to the VA Secretary that are measurable, actionable, realistic, and time based. He highlighted the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual VAVS NAC Meeting and Conference, with the attendance of the VA Secretary and its impact to this group. Jeff encouraged the committee to continue reaching out for new members who can contribute to its success.

**Chat with the Chiefs:** EC members were given the opportunity to meet CDCE Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Liaisons from 14 of the 18 VISNs (VISN 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 23). Questions were answered concerning the pandemic, volunteer restrictions, vaccine mandate, youth volunteers, and the physical return of volunteers to facilities. The liaisons shared that this is currently being handled at the local level due to the different geographic prevalence of COVID. Each facility has different guidelines, and the committee members should reach out to their local Chief/Program Manager to discuss current volunteers and assignments. The liaisons expressed their availability to each NAC member. CDCE has adapted a new mentality to be more creative with virtual volunteer assignments.

**CDCE Position Description Modernization:** CarolAnn Miragliuolo provided an overview and timeline of the modernization project for CDCE position descriptions. This included an update of the memorandum from Workforce Management and Consulting regarding the timeline for new position description rollout. This memorandum is expected to be sent out to the field within the next few days, advising them on this standardization of CDCE position descriptions.

**White Ribbon Pledge:** Lelia Jackson explained that White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence across the Department of Veterans Affairs by promoting a positive change in culture so that the actions outlined in the pledge become the organizational norm. White Ribbon VA is an awareness movement where all, regardless of their gender, can participate. White Ribbon VA was inspired by the [White Ribbon organization](#), which is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, and its aim is to promote gender equity and healthy relationships. Lelia invited all in attendance to join in making a pledge to stop violence against others and to symbolically wear the white ribbon. It was suggested that this pledge be part of volunteer orientation.

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### **EC Subcommittee Reports:**

Recommendations: Anne Parker shared with the group that this committee discussed strategies for obtaining recommendations from members. She asked that recommendations be submitted on the form sent out by VA Central Office CDCE by March 15, 2022. She asked those who had submitted recommendations at the 2021 NAC to resubmit in the correct format.

Volunteer of the Year: Charles Gallina reported that the request for nominations for Volunteer of the Year has been distributed with a deadline of December 31, 2021. He encouraged members to follow all the guidelines to make submissions more amenable to the committee.

Recruitment: Vicki Sarracino shared the volunteer numbers and how we fared during the pandemic. She highlighted our vulnerable populations and the impact it played in reducing active volunteers. She encouraged the committee to allow this subcommittee to build better volunteer support and work to strengthen collaboration focusing on volunteer recruitment. She will be working towards creating a substantial virtual volunteer environment with an emphasis on rural areas.

Membership: Chairperson Morgan highlighted two new members to the NAC – Student Veterans of American and Warrior Rising. Both are coming in as Strategic Engagement Members. She shared that five organizations are seeking information about NAC membership and will continue to hold conversations with these organizations to talk through their commitment to the NAC.

Partnership: Ron Rolfes shared that the subcommittee had nothing to report and that there were no recommendations at this time. Karen O'Neal asked the status of the two recommendations submitted during the 75<sup>th</sup> NAC Meeting. Mary Barcikowski reported that the two recommendations were sent up for review and will be placed into the system for official forwarding.

**NAC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Revisions:** Patricia Kranzow, American Legion Auxiliary, referred members to the latest revision of the SOP. There were no changes in procedure or content. The only change was to note in the opening of the SOP that the VAVS NAC operates within the overall framework of CDCE. James Moss, VFW, provided the motion, Joseph Dooley, United Veteran Services, seconded the motion, and all were in favor of the revision.

**VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurer's Report:** Lawrence Kelly provided an overview of the account balance. He proposed that the draft financial report be accepted by the committee. Pam Schweitzer, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, seconded the motion and it carried without opposition.

**Annual Joint Reviews:** Nate Witt expressed an opportunity to improve the process for Annual Joint Reviews (AJR). The annual joint review serves to communicate data and

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information to national representatives and others for which the AJRs are shared and provides opportunities for national representatives to deliver feedback to local teams on current performance. The revamped AJR must support a movement away from solely capturing output to truly capturing impact. We want this to be a collaborative process involving NAC organization membership and CDCE field staff. If interested in being involved in this collaborative process, please reach out to him at Nathan.Witt@va.gov.

**76<sup>th</sup> Annual VAVS NAC Meeting & Conference:** Mary Barcikowski shared that the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual NAC Meeting & Conference is being held on April 27-29, 2022, at the Doubletree by Hilton in Denver. Our planning committee, which includes VAVS Partners Inc., met with the hotel to discuss our options if we cancel the event. To ensure no penalty costs must be absorbed by VAVS Partners a memorandum from the COVID Coordination Team and the VA Secretary disapproving a face-to-face conference would need to be provided. VA Secretary approval is needed for conferences with 50 or more attendees, and we anticipate his decision on the 76<sup>th</sup> NAC before the end of the year or early in 2022. We are prepared to move forward either way. If a face-to-face is disapproved, we will explore platforms to hold a virtual event. Mary will report back to the EC once a decision from Secretary McDonough is received.

**Help Heal Veterans:** Joseph McClain shared that for more than 45 years, Help Heal Veterans was known as Help Hospitalized Veterans. As technology and medical care have improved, many of the Veterans they serve are not hospitalized, in fact, many receive treatment in their homes and other locations. With that in mind, they have updated their name to Help Heal Veterans (HEAL VETS) to better reflect the modern reality of the work they do. The core of their organization remains the same as their mission is to provide therapeutic craft kits to every Veteran who wants them.

**TEDx VeteransAffairs:** Prince Taylor shared with the group how TEDx VeteransAffairs has been an avenue where VA employees, Veterans, and volunteers are sharing their stories. He shared one of the most inspiring TEDx talks that came from Eric McElvenny, an Afghanistan Veteran who recently competed in the Paralympics in Tokyo.

**Student Leadership Council:** Tyrone Green shared that the Student Leadership Council (SLC) is a national program that focuses on developing student volunteers into strong servant leaders. The program focuses on developing leadership skills and giving students the opportunity to collaborate with others from around the nation. Additionally, SLC serves to develop stronger volunteers who have a greater appreciation for Veteran-based servant leadership. Three students presented their projects to the group highlighting their accomplishments and how this program motivated them.

The EC recessed for the day at 4:40 p.m.

**Thursday, November 4, 2021 - 9 a.m.-Noon**

Chairperson Morgan called the meeting back to order at 9 a.m.

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**Unfinished Business:** None

**New Business:** A member asked if there is going to be a need for volunteers at the spring NAC. Chairperson Morgan responded that if we are given approval from the VA Secretary to move forward with a face-to-face meeting, we will need sponsorships from NAC organizations to help defer the costs of food during breaks. She noted outreach to organizations would occur once approval is received.

**Additions/Revisions to Minutes of the EC Meeting Held May 26-28, 2021:** Mr. Witt asked for approval of the minutes from the Annual VAVS NAC Meeting and Conference held on May 26-28, 2021. Melvin Brown, The American Legion, provided the motion, James Moss, VFW, seconded the motion, and all were in favor with no revisions.

**Other than Honorable (OTH) Discharge VA Enterprise Strategic Planning:** Kevin Stanford provided an overview of a two-day summit he attended on OTH Discharge VA Enterprise Strategic Planning. This discovery phase style summit on OTH discharges was composed of representation from across VA. Over the course of two days of facilitated virtual collaboration, we collectively built a foundational base for VA implementation of new guidelines regarding prior servicemembers with OTH discharges who identify in the following categories: PTSD/TBI survivors who were discharged for perceived discipline issues; Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors who were discharged for perceived discipline issues; Veterans of Color who disproportionately received stricter sentencing within the military justice system; and Veterans in the LGBTQ+ community who were discharged prior to the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and Transgender policies. Discussions determined the next steps needed in developing a VA-wide Veteran-centric approach to providing these populations the care and access to benefits they earned.

**Veterans Day Planning:** Kevin reached out to CDCE field offices asking about specific events being held for Veterans Day. A list was created and distributed. If you are interested in participating in any of these events, please reach out to your local CDCE office. We are also interested in what your organization is doing in connection with Veterans Day as we will be able to promote publicly any event you would like to report to Kevin.Stanford@va.gov.

**CDCE Portal:** Ginny Hoover provided an extensive overview of the Center for Development & Civic Engagement (CDEC) Portal. The Go-Live date was November 1, 2021, with CDCE field staff working through the changes. She shared that the new system offers scalability that was unavailable in the Voluntary Service System (VSS). She highlighted that the reporting capabilities will provide more accessible and accurate data, but will not be available until a future release with date to be determined.

**CDCE Strategic Direction:**

Dr. Clark provided an overview of the briefing she provided to VHA senior leadership. She expressed the importance of leadership, collaboration, and impact of CDCE, and

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defining success beyond just numbers. During this fiscal year, she promises a lot of training for staff to be able to perform their roles as leaders within CDCE, using our current systems and infrastructure. She mentioned the successful mentoring program led by Bill Ball, Chief, Palo Alto Health Care System/CDCE VACO. Bill shared that the success of the mentoring program hinged upon the engagement of seasoned Chiefs dedicating time to those they mentored. We look to continue this program to encourage growth within CDCE staff.

CDCE at VA Central Office continues to grow. Dr. Clark introduced Sanitria McKenzie as our newest employee. Sanitria explained that she will be working directly with VA Finance to ensure donations are received and tracked appropriately via [pay.gov/eDonate](https://www.pay.gov/eDonate). With that stated, Dr. Clark asked if any organizations participate in fundraising campaigns, i.e. Giving Tuesday. She encouraged organizations to support and engage in these philanthropic efforts.

Dr. Clark highlighted the new VHA Directive 1620 and its flexibility and noted how this flexibility relates to volunteer driver physicals and standardizing Employee Occupational Health processes across the field.

A highlight during Dr. Clark's remarks was a template that organizations may use to demonstrate impact. The group expressed interest in collaborating as a team to create this tool to better share their successes and demonstrate impact.

**Closing Remarks:** EC Chairperson Morgan adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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Designated Federal Officer, National Advisory Committee